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No blooming way: Early cherry blossoms in Steveston

At least one local was stunned to see the flowers in January.

Megan Devlin / Richmond News

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Steveston resident Nora H. spotted these cherry blossoms on her morning walk Jan. 24. Photo: @nomnomYVR

A set of cherry blossom trees in Steveston are out in pink flowers very early this year, to the delight of at least one local resident.

Nora H., who didn't want to use her last name to protect her privacy, was out for her morning walk Thursday when she spotted the bright flowers on the trees on Chatham Street, between first and second avenues.

"I was like, oh my ... Is this a trick?"

She loves the picturesque blossoms because they're usually a sure sign spring is on the way. This set of trees, near the bus stop, usually flower earlier than ones in Garry Point Park, she said.

But the Jan. 24 blooms were the earliest she's ever seen.

"We live close to the water, maybe the warmer air is messing with them," Nora said, wondering if climate change could have contributed to the early blossoms.

Linda Poole, founder of the Vancouver Cherry Blossom Festival, said different types of trees blossom at different times, with one type even starting in December.

But after taking a look at Nora's photo, she agreed this tree was blooming early. She said it's most likely a Whitcomb, which usually come out in February or March.

"What it needs is temperatures of 10 degrees. It's cumulative, it needs many days of warmth to bring it out in bloom," Poole said.

She added certain outlying trees sometimes bloom early because they're sheltered from the wind by buildings.

Last year, Richmond celebrated its second annual Cherry Blossom Festival on April 8, and Vancouver's usually happens in March or April.

Nora has seen early blossoms in February before, but said these ones in January were an unexpected surprise.

"It was really nice on a dreary day like this to see a beautiful pop of colour in a grey sky."