

Vancouver Cherry Blossom Festival Outdoor Events Connect Communities and Bring Joy to Vancouver (April 2-26)

VANCOUVER, BC (March 12, 2020) - The 14th annual Vancouver Cherry Blossom Festival (VCBF) presented by Coromandel Properties and Vancouver Board of Parks & Recreation officially launches April 2 to 26 to celebrate the arrival of spring and the city's spectacular 43,000 blossoming cherry trees. The Festival kicks off with an extended two-day Cherry Jam Downtown Concert presented by Downtown Vancouver Business Improvement Association. The Festival includes seven featured events, including a haiku contest, downtown concerts, a community picnic, bike tour, a new BLOOM! School Outreach program for grade three to five students, sponsored by Miller Thomson LLP, and nine guided walks and talks.

"The Vancouver Park Board is pleased to once again be a presenting sponsor for the Vancouver Cherry Blossom Festival," said Vancouver Park Board Chair Camil Dumont. "We encourage people to visit parks and gardens throughout Vancouver, including VanDusen Botanical Garden, the Stanley Park rose garden, Queen Elizabeth Park, and David Lam Park, to catch the fleeting beauty of pink and white cherry blossoms."

"With world events discouraging many people from traveling, there has never been a more important time for the Vancouver Cherry Blossom Festival," added Linda Poole, Founder and Creative Director, VCBF. "The Festival and the beautiful trees we celebrate remind us that Vancouver is blessed with an amazing diversity of people, cultures and natural splendor. We have so much to appreciate and celebrate in our own city and our Festival looks forward to "connecting our communities" through accessible, free cultural events and activities for all ages in beautiful outdoor settings."

Additional Festival details are available at www.vcbf.ca. Programs are subject to change and are bloom and weather dependent. Sign up to stay connected and up to date on the latest program details.

FESTIVAL HIGHLIGHTS ON NOW:

Haiku Invitational Contest (until June 1)

Submit up to two unpublished poems on the theme of cherry blossoms to the internationally acclaimed Haiku Invitational Contest presented by Leith Wheeler Investment Counsel. Participants have the chance for their haiku to be recognized as a Top Winner in six categories, Sakura Award or Honourable Mention. The contest will be judged by Beth Skala (Vancouver), Gary Hotham (USA), and Agnes Eva Savich (USA) and celebrated in creative ways! Over 10,000 entries from 40 countries have been submitted since 2006.

Neighbourhood Maps Show What's Blooming Now

Report on the cherries! The cherries have started to bloom, with the Accolade cultivar blooming in the West End. Help us keep track of the bloom by tagging [@vancherryblossomfest](https://twitter.com/vancherryblossomfest) in your social media posts. Or, check out the online Neighbourhood Maps tool and What's Blooming Now page to discover which favourite cherry blossom hotspots are in bloom and where you can celebrate and have a picnic with your friends and family.

BLOOM! School Outreach Program (February 24 - March 13)

This Spring, VCBF will visit Vancouver elementary schools for 26 interactive cherry blossom workshops with grade three to five students. Sponsored by Miller Thomson LLP, the program teaches Vancouver youth about the history of the Festival, the diversity of our cherry tree cultivars and how they can participate in our citywide celebration. The program is also teaching students the daily practice of discovering the beauty in their world.

COMING SOON:

Cherry Jam Downtown Concerts (Thursday April 2 & Friday April 3)

April 2-3 from 12pm to 1:30pm: Media launch and extended two-day Cherry Jam Downtown concerts presented by Downtown Vancouver Business Improvement Association at Burrard SkyTrain Station. The event is also sponsored by G&F Financial Group and made possible in partnership with TransLink.

BC Blossom Photo Watch (April 2-26)

April 2 to 26: BC Blossom Photo Watch presented by TELUS wants to capture your best cherry blossom photos! Submit your favourite cherry blossom moments on social media using both #VCBFBCBW20 and #TELUS hashtags for a chance to win awesome prizes!

Tree Talks & Walks (April 2-26)

April 2 to 26: Tree Talks & Walks, a guided exploration of the blossoms at more than nine Vancouver parks and neighbourhoods.

The Big Picnic (April 11)

April 11 from 12pm to 4pm: The Big Picnic presented by TD Bank Group unites hundreds of cherry blossom fans under the highly Instagrammable blossom moments at Queen Elizabeth Park. A variety of food trucks will appeal to diverse palates and community vendors will have interactive kid-friendly activities for all ages. The event has been extended for an extra hour this year to bring more cherry blossom joy to everyone.

Sakura Night (April 23)

Support the annual cherry blossom fundraiser, Sakura Night presented by McMillan LLP, on April 23 from 6-9pm: Our 6th annual fundraiser returns on a weekday at Stanley Park Pavilion, and early bird tickets are on sale NOW until March 20 for \$125 at vcbf.ca (regular tickets are \$150). Our talented restaurant and chef line-up this year includes custom creations by The Victor at Parq Vancouver, Shangri-La Hotel Vancouver, Chef Will Lew (previously at Fairmont Pacific Rim and Vancouver) and Benkei Ramen. ARC Iberico Imports will also be sampling gourmet Spanish products. Alcohol partners include: Winemaker's CUT, Salt Spring Wild Cider, Stanley Park Brewing, Central City Brewers + Distillers. The event promotes the work of our charitable non-profit society and to raise money to help fund our free, accessible events focused on "connecting our communities".

Sakura Days Japan Fair which was to take place April 18-19 at VanDusen Botanical Garden during the Cherry Blossom Festival will not take place in 2020. The volunteer organization which organizes the event, Japan Fair Association of Vancouver, has made the difficult decision to cancel this year's event. We look forward to the event's return in 2021.

"We are aware of and are monitoring local and global public health developments," said Poole. "While we currently anticipate proceeding with our full roster of currently scheduled programming, we will make any necessary changes that may be required if further social distancing measures are recommended by health authorities. We will provide updates relating to such required changes as they arise."

About the Vancouver Cherry Blossom Festival

The Vancouver Cherry Blossom is a charitable, not-for-profit society whose mission is to sustain and renew Vancouver's cherry tree heritage while educating and actively engaging diverse communities in arts and culture to celebrate the fragile beauty of the cherry blossom. Our intra-community arts and culture festival values diversity, inclusiveness, and accessibility, which is why we embrace the mantra, "there is no

stranger under the cherry tree”. We curate free, family-friendly, cultural performances and interactive activities “connecting our communities”, to promote intercultural understanding and awareness, helping to break down cultural and societal barriers. Through our community-building events, we are helping to make the arts accessible to and representative of all people across all backgrounds.

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For more information on this year’s Festival, contact:

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