

Central Park: Vancouver cherry blossoms bloom in new guidebook

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Ornamental Cherries in Vancouver is described as the definitive guidebook to the more than 40,000 flowering cherry trees that brighten up our city. photo Dan Toulgoet

Vancouver is blessed with more than 40,000 flowering cherry trees and, as of this week, a book is available for purchase celebrating this city's bounty of pink and white blossoms.

Ornamental Cherries in Vancouver is described as the definitive guidebook to these trees, which have attracted residents and visitors to celebrate their colourful blossoms for almost 100 years.

The guidebook is a project of the Vancouver Cherry Blossom Festival and was written by Douglas Justice, associate director and curator of collections at the University of B.C. Botanical Garden.

The book includes detailed information, locations and photographs of this city's 54 varieties of blossoming trees, including 19 new cultivars discovered since a previous guidebook was published just two years ago.

The guidebook includes information on how some of the most rare of these cultivators are being successfully micropropagated in the BCIT Biotechnology Program in collaboration with the Vancouver Park Board and UBC Botanical Garden.

Justice provides the history, distinctive markings, photos and locations for each variety — from the most recent finds to the Ito-kukuri, which has a history dating back to 1681 Japan.

The timing of the publication coincides with the 125th anniversary of the Japanese Consulate General in Vancouver. Festival organizers hope Ornamental Cherries in Vancouver will play a pivotal role in helping the event's brigade of volunteer "Cherry Scouts" search for blossoms and provide invaluable feedback to the "What's Blooming Now?" section of the organization's website.

The book includes indexes in both Chinese and Japanese. For more information and to buy a book, visit vcbf.ca.

Lawsuit lag

The case between six of the city's community centre associations and the Vancouver Park Board, which was to have been heard earlier this month, has been postponed until Dec. 9 because there was no judge available then.

Just in case you've been out of the country or living under a rock for the past several months, here's a short background.

The six community centres — Hillcrest, Killarney, Hastings, Kerrisdale, Sunset and Kensington — launched a lawsuit in September requesting an injunction of the use of the OneCard, a universal access card that eliminates the need for individual memberships at any community centre in the city. On Oct. 28, Supreme Court Justice Bruce Cohen ruled against the associations. The argument over the use of the OneCard is a minor component of a much larger lawsuit about what the centres are calling the park board's continual violations of the decades-old joint-operating agreement.

In response to the complaints filed against the park board by the associations in Supreme Court, in August the six associations were given eviction notices by the board dated for Dec. 31, 2013.

In October, the associations asked the court for an injunction to stop their eviction from their community centres. In response the court ordered the park board to cease implementing its takeover plans until the matter can be heard in Supreme Court, which was scheduled for Nov. 18 alongside the fight over the joint-operating agreement.

Now that court case has also been postponed until Dec. 9.

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