



Birthday Blossoms

CELEBRATING VANCOUVER
CHERRY BLOSSOM FESTIVAL
10TH ANNIVERSARY



CHERRY BLOSSOM FESTIVAL CELEBRATES 10TH ANNIVERSARY WITH CAMPAIGN TO PLANT 1,000 CHERRY TREES

VANCOUVER, BC (Oct. 15, 2015) – After 10 years of celebrating Greater Vancouver’s beloved cherry trees and playing a key role in having thousands of new trees added to public and park spaces, the Vancouver Cherry Blossom Festival (VCBF) is kicking off preparations for the 10th anniversary festival with a campaign to have 1,000 cherry trees planted on private properties.

The Birthday Blossoms campaign supports Vancouver’s Greenest City Action Plan Goal of adding another 150,000 trees to the city by 2020 and is in loving memory of the Honourable Dr. David C. Lam’s dream to “pink up Vancouver with more cherry blossoms to become the West Coast Cherry Blossom Capital.”

Ornamental cherry trees have been an iconic part of Vancouver’s landscape and cultural history since the 1930s when its sister city of Yokohama and Kobe, gifted them as a gesture of friendship. Since it was launched in 2006, the Cherry Blossom Festival has celebrated the fragile beauty of Vancouver’s 40,000 cherry blossoms with a wide range of programming such as the Umbrella Dance, Plein-air Blossom Painting, interpretive Tree Talks and Walks, Petal Mat Picnics under the blossoms, ceremonial tree plantings, an indispensable field guide to the cherries – “Ornamental Cherries in Vancouver”, Sakura Days Japan Fair, Blossom Biology education, ikebana flower arranging courses, traditional tea ceremonies, Kite Dances, and the international Haiku Invitational that attracts poems from more than from 40 countries.

VCBF has also modernized the ancient Japanese Sakura festival tradition to make it distinctively Vancouver with events such as Bike the Blossoms along cherry tree routes, Cherry Jam free concerts, film screenings, BC Blossom Photo Watch contest, interactive light installations on cherry tree canopies (Sakura Illumination), and online Neighborhood Maps pinpointing the exact location and blossom times of cherry trees across the Lower Mainland. In recognition of its efforts, the Festival was awarded the 2015 Garden Festival of the Year award last year by the Canada Garden Tourism Council.

“We urge everyone to share the joy and beauty of the flowering cherry by planting a Birthday Blossoms tree as a legacy for future generations,” says VCBF creator and Executive Director

Linda Poole. "Planting a cherry tree on your property will not only help keep Vancouver beautiful, it's a great way for residents, companies, churches, schools and other organizations to support the Festival and commemorate joyous occasions like birthdays, Mother's Day, weddings, graduations, memorials and anniversaries."

Birthday Blossoms cherry trees are available in seven cultivars with bloom dates that span from February through May. They can be reserved now for \$49.99 through the Festival website (vcbf.ca) and then picked up from VanDusen Botanical Garden this spring (April 30/May 1, 2016), at which time they will be four years old. Funds raised through the Birthday Blossoms campaign will be used to deliver annual Festival programming.

"The Vancouver Park Board has a long history of planting and caring for cherry trees on city boulevards and parks and we're pleased to celebrate the Vancouver Cherry Blossom Festival's 10th anniversary by supporting the Birthday Blossoms campaign," said Vancouver Park Board Chair John Coupar. "Adding 1,000 flowering cherry trees to front or backyards is a great way for residents to grow the tree canopy while supporting Vancouver's Urban Forest Strategy."

For more information on how to order a cherry tree online, the various cultivars for adoption, how to prepare for a new cherry, planting and care instructions, please visit: <http://vcbf.ca/communityevent/10th-anniversary-birthday-blossoms> .

The Vancouver Cherry Blossom Festival gratefully acknowledges the generous support of the David and Dorothy Lam Foundation and the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation.

About the Vancouver Cherry Blossom Festival

Vancouver's signature springtime event, the ***Vancouver Cherry Blossom Festival*** is a month-long celebration of the cherry tree (sakura) through unique cultural programming including the performing and visual arts, literary, film screenings, design installations, exhibitions, culinary and creative cultural arts. The Vancouver Cherry Blossom Festival is a charitable, not-for-profit society whose mandate is to sustain and renew Vancouver's cherry tree heritage while educating and engaging community in a cultural celebration of the fragile beauty of the cherry blossom.

Charitable number: 84529 8678 RR 0001

-30-

For photos and information please contact:

Linda Poole, Executive Director

[604-767-9044](tel:604-767-9044)

linda.poole@telus.net

www.facebook.com/VancouverCherryBlossomFestival

www.twitter.com/OfficialVCFB