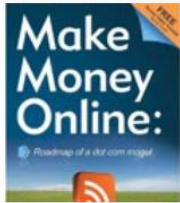




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The Telltale Sign that Spring Has Sprung in Vancouver

March 13th, 2015 by [Michael Kwan](#)



When you live in the frozen part of the country, you can declare that spring has arrived when the snow starts to melt. Here in Vancouver, where it rains most months out of the year, we can't rely on melting snow as our indicator. Instead, we have the good fortune of seeing so many of our city streets brighten up with pink cherry blossoms. Yes, the sakura trees are in bloom a little early this year and it's a beautiful sight to behold.

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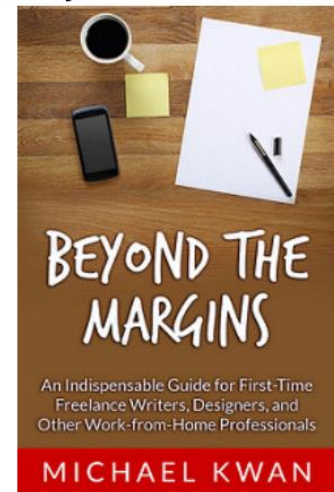
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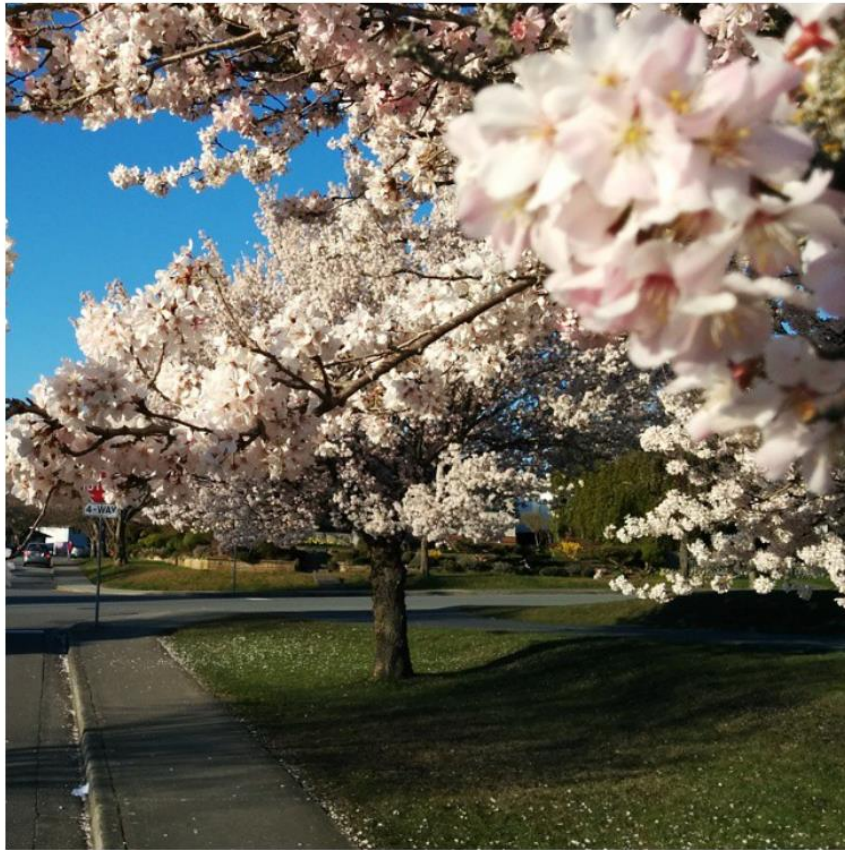
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Interestingly enough, the cherry blossom is a flower that can be found on quite a few different species of trees. The most common and the most well-known is the Japanese Cherry tree and that is why so many of us have come to know them by their Japanese name: sakura. Wikipedia says that the cherry blossom "is speculated to be native to the Himalayas," but it has since been widely distributed through South Korea, China, Europe and here in Canada too.

And despite its name, most of the trees with sakura do not bear actual cherries that you can eat. Go figure.

It is estimated that Vancouver has some 40,000 trees with cherry blossoms and there are significant collections in neighborhoods all around town and into the suburbs. There's even an annual Cherry Blossom Festival to mark the occasion, as well as several other community events like Sakura Days at VanDusen Botanical Gardens and the Sakura Night Gala at Tojo's Restaurant.

I suppose given our love of sushi and ramen, as well as the widespread "otaku" culture of manga and anime, it really shouldn't surprise anyone that spring in Vancouver is yet another time to celebrate Japanese culture. The blossoms may stick to our cars and clog up storm drains, but they sure are pretty!

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