

# March sees a burst of blooms

From F1

Garden, the scout-training workshop will be held from 7 to 9 p.m. Feb. 13 in the Floral Hall at VanDusen Botanical Garden.

At the workshop, scouts will learn about the history, biology, culture and horticultural background of flowering cherries. "This exciting new program will give enthusiasts a unique opportunity to gain a greater understanding and appreciation of our city's spectacular spring blooms," says Linda Poole, organizer of the cherry blossom festival which gets under way on March 22 at the Burrard Street Sky Train station, home to some of the finest Yoshino cherries.

"We have about 18 scouts already, but there are 22 neighbourhoods and we need at least one scout per neighbourhood," she says. "Early enrolment is encouraged as space is limited in the scout program," says Poole, who started the festival last year after returning to Vancouver from Chicago where her husband, Christopher Poole, had been Canada's consul-general.

On seeing Vancouver streets lined with the billowing pink blooms of cherry trees, Poole says she was momentarily mesmerized.

It was at that moment she says she realized something should be done not only to celebrate the glory of the city's cherry blossoms but to remind everyone what a special time of year it is when the trees burst into bloom.

Other events planned for this year's festival include a haiku poetry competition (the winning poem will be displayed on 500 TransLink buses and trains); plein-air blossom painting (artists will be invited to capture the exuberance of the blossoming on canvases in the tradition of the Group of Seven) and various tree tours and talks (details to be announced closer to the event).



Cherry blossom scouts gathered this week in Kerrisdale, including (from left) Sandra McLeod, Lorraine Porter and Gillian Chetty. The scouts learn about the history, biology, culture and horticultural background of flowering cherries at a workshop.

One of Queen Elizabeth Park's finest examples of a cherry tree (above right) illustrates the power of its full bloom.

IAN LINDSAY/VANCOUVER SUN

The first cherry trees to bloom here are early-blooming cultivars of *Prunus subhirtella*, notably "Autumnalis" and "Whitcomb," which bloom as early as January and February.

The true burst of blooms, however, begins in March with "Shidare-zakura" and "Pendula" the Yoshino cherry (*Prunus yedoensis*) and varieties of *Prunus serrulata* such as "Shirotae" and "Takahara." The Takasago cherry (*Prunus x sieboldii*) also usually blooms in

March. By April, there are other popular cultivars of *P. serrulata* in bloom such as "Ukon," "Shogetsu," "Shirofugen," and a profusion of "Kwanzan" cherries, the most widely planted cherry in the city. This flowers through April and into May.

Volunteers can sign up to become scouts by going to the festival's website at [www.vcb.ca](http://www.vcb.ca) or by e-mailing their name, contact information and address to [info@vcb.ca](mailto:info@vcb.ca).

[whysall@png.comwest.com](mailto:whysall@png.comwest.com)



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**Word of the Day**  
**unabashed**  
 un-uh-BASHT  
 DEFINITION: not disconcerted; undisguised, unapologetic  
 Many marveled at Sean's unabashed rudeness, astonished that he could be so obnoxious without a trace of remorse.

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