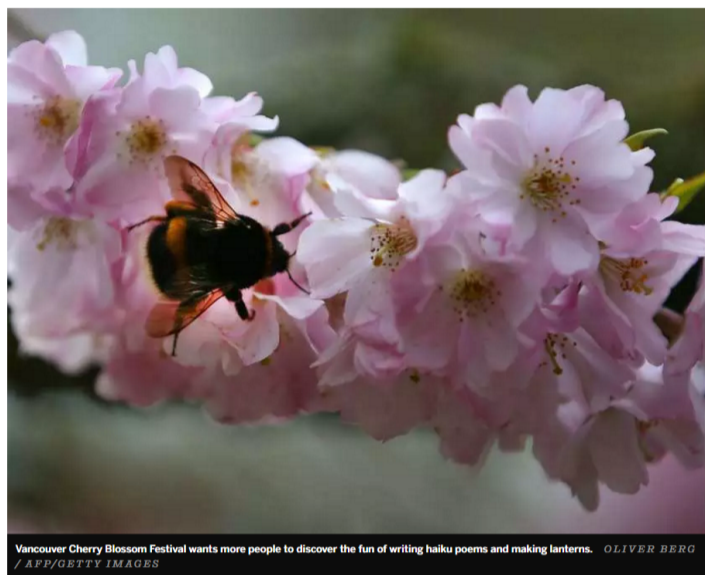


Write a poem, build a lantern to celebrate cherry blossoms

**STEVE WHYSALL**[More from Steve Whysall](#)

Published on: January 31, 2017 | Last Updated: January 31, 2017 10:45 AM PST



Vancouver Cherry Blossom Festival wants more people to discover the fun of writing haiku poems and making lanterns. OLIVER BERG / AFP/GETTY IMAGES



SHARE

Vancouver Cherry Blossom Festival, which doesn't officially get under way until March 30, is trying to get more people involved earlier this year by putting on free workshops on how to write haiku poems and build beautiful lanterns.



ADJUST

Each year the festival holds an international "haiku invitational" contest that celebrates the unique traditional Japanese 17-syllable poetic form. Entries come from all over the world.



COMMENT

This year, the festival wants to encourage more people to take part in writing haiku poems and has arranged three free teaching workshops.



PRINT



Vancouver Cherry Blossom Festival wants more people to discover the fun of writing haiku poems

The first will be from 10:30 to 1:30 on Feb. 13 at West Point Grey Community Centre.

The second will be from 1 to 5 p.m. Feb 18 at Queen Elizabeth Park/Vancouver Public Library (Terry Salmon Branch).

And the third will be from 1 to 4:30 pm at Joy Kogawa House.

For more information on locations and how to register go to the festival website at www.vcbf.ca



Giant koinobori /carp streamer art installation composed of haiku poems.

The festival plans to erect a giant koinobori (carp streamer) art installation featuring the poems at Sakura Days, the key Japan Fair celebration at VanDusen Botanical Garden in April during the month-long celebration of cherry blossoms.

The giant fish will be adorned from head to tail with hundreds of round scales made of fabric, on which people have written their haiku poems.

To help people learn how to write haiku, poets and authors Michael Dylan Welch and Jacquie Pearce will lead the three workshops.

Haiku writers will compose their poems on large decorated koinobori scales, which will be provided along with art supplies.

Participants can share an original haiku or write out one of the winning haiku from the festival's annual contest.

"Traditionally, we've always flown smaller koinobori windsocks at VanDusen during the Japan Fair," said festival creator and executive director Linda Poole.

"The cherry trees have such a magical effect on everyone who sees them, so we're delighted this year to provide people with an even bigger way to express their love for our favourite tree."

Lantern workshops are for ages 14-plus or children accompanied by an adult. Materials are supplied but there is a charge of \$5 per lantern.

Space is limited, so it is necessary to register early. Participants will be encouraged to bring their lanterns to the Spring Lights Illumination event March 31 and April 1.

The lantern workshops will be held from 1 to 4 p.m. Feb 11 at West Point Grey Community Centre; 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Feb. 12 at the Roundhouse Community Centre; from 1 to 4 p.m. Feb 18 at Kerrisdale Community Centre; from 6:30 to 9:30 p.m. Feb 23 at St. Andrew's Wesley Church and from 2 to 5 p.m. Feb 26 at Killarney Community Centre.

For more information about registration go to www.vcbf.ca

The Vancouver Cherry Blossom Festival is a not-for-profit organization with an objective to sustain and renew Vancouver's cherry tree heritage, while educating and actively engaging diverse communities in local arts and culture to celebrate the fragile beauty of the iconic cherry blossom.

The festival's goal is also to provide "a happy occasion to bring us all together outside in our urban nature with cherry trees to enjoy this awe-inspiring event."

swhysall@postmedia.com

[@twitter/stewehysall](https://twitter.com/stewehysall)