

British Columbia - Photos

## Plum blossoms smell better, emerge first, but cherry blooms get the love, expert says



Cherry blossoms are associated with warmer weather, have greater cultural cachet: expert

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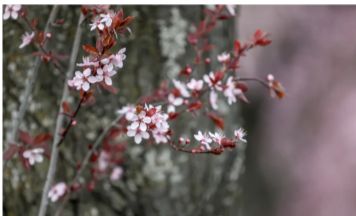


Plum trees bloom in the Grandview-Woodland neighbourhood of Vancouver on March 26, 2019. (Evan Mitsui/CBC)

While coastal B.C. is famous for its spring cherry blossoms, a Vancouver-based tree expert wants to remind local flower fans that plum blossoms are just as prevalent this time of year.

"Plum blossoms don't get the love that cherry blossoms do," said David Tracey, executive director of the Tree City Canada Association and author of *Vancouver Tree Book: A Living City Field Guide*.

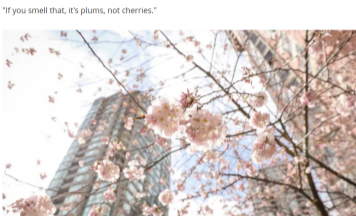
Tracey said plum blossoms have a "delightful" fragrance that can be smelled on a warm day — compared to cherry blossoms which have a more subdued aroma.



Plum blossoms, with their distinctive rounded petals, tend to emerge earlier than cherry blossoms. (Evan Mitsui/CBC)

"On a sunny day ... it will be like you're walking through a celestial palace with an intoxicating aroma that makes everybody happy," said Tracey.

"If you smell that, it's plums, not cherries."



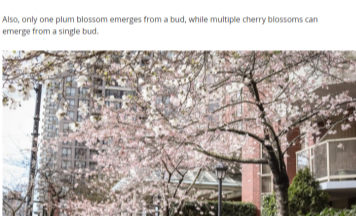
Cherry trees, like these ones in full bloom on Hamilton, St., were donated in the early 1930s by the mayors of Kobe and Yokohama, Japan. (Evan Mitsui/CBC)

### How you can tell them apart

The blossoms can be differentiated with close inspection.

Both flowers have five petals but cherry blossoms have a distinctive split at the end of each petal.

Also, only one plum blossom emerges from a bud, while multiple cherry blossoms can emerge from a single bud.



The annual Cherry Blossom Festival runs April 4-28. These trees on Hamilton St., didn't get the memo and bloomed early. (Evan Mitsui/CBC)



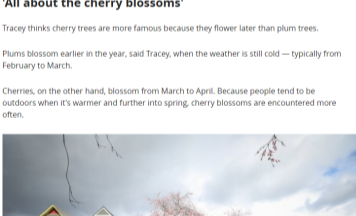
The flowers in plum blossoms lack the distinctive split found at the end of the petals of cherry blossom flowers. (Evan Mitsui/CBC)

### 'All about the cherry blossoms'

Tracey thinks cherry trees are more famous because they flower later than plum trees.

Plums blossom earlier in the year, said Tracey, when the weather is still cold — typically from February to March.

Cherries, on the other hand, blossom from March to April. Because people tend to be outdoors when it's warmer and further into spring, cherry blossoms are encountered more often.



Flowering plum and cherry trees, including this sour cherry in bloom on East Pender St., of the genus *Prunus* make up nearly 40 per cent of Vancouver's street tree inventory. (Evan Mitsui/CBC)

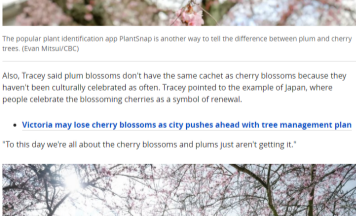


The popular plant identification app PlantSnap is another way to tell the difference between plum and cherry trees. (Evan Mitsui/CBC)

Also, Tracey said plum blossoms don't have the same cachet as cherry blossoms because they haven't been culturally celebrated as often. Tracey pointed to the example of Japan, where people celebrate the blossoming cherries as a symbol of renewal.

- [Victoria may lose cherry blossoms as city pushes ahead with tree management plan](#)

"To this day we're all about the cherry blossoms and plums just aren't getting it."



A cherry tree blossoms in McSpadden Park on March 26. (Evan Mitsui/CBC)

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