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Spring has arrived in Metro Vancouver, and that means it's time for cherry blossoms

Two times a year the streets around Metro Vancouver come alive with colour.

In the fall, an array of yellows, oranges and reds line the streets, and in the spring the city is scattered with beautiful soft pink cloud-like canopies for all to enjoy.

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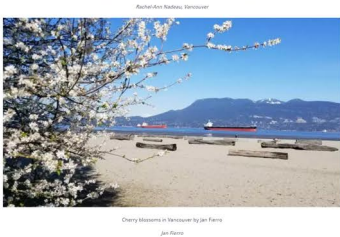
Cherry blossoms in Chilliwack by Nicole McInosh
Nicole McInosh



Cherry blossoms along West 22nd Avenue near Arbutus. Rachel-Ann Nadeau, Vancouver
Rachel-Ann Nadeau, Vancouver



Cherry blossoms along West 22nd Avenue near Arbutus. Rachel-Ann Nadeau, Vancouver
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Cherry Blossoms in Vancouver by Jan Ferro
Jan Ferro



Cherry Blossoms in Chilliwack by Nicole McInosh
Nicole McInosh, Chilliwack

During these breathtaking but brief periods photographers, both amateur and professional, inundate our Weather Window inbox with the most stunning photos — and this year's pop of pink has come a little early.

"If it warms quickly we tend to get early flowering," says Douglas Justice, associate director of horticulture and collections at the UBC Botanical Garden.

The quick transition from our long, cold February into record-breaking warmth this March helped trigger the blossoms earlier than normal. In an average March with milder conditions the flowers would develop a bit slower.

READ MORE: Warm weather continues to break records in British Columbia

Linda Poole, executive director of the Vancouver Cherry Blossom Festival, is very excited.

"Right now, we're seeing mostly plums," she said. "But cherries are starting to come out."

That's right, the blossoms you see around the city are not only cherries, many of them are plums. From a distance they look very alike but if you take a closer look you'll see some significant differences.



The difference between cherry tree petals and plum tree petals.
Jessica Tremblay, <http://www.usbf.ca> blog by Cherry Society

One easy way to tell the difference is by looking at the petals. Cherry tree petals have a little cut or slit at the tip, while plum tree petals curve at the tip.

There are 54 varieties of cherry trees around the region. All bloom at slightly various times, but you can expect most to be in full bloom on April 4.

READ MORE: Temperature records tumble as early spring-like weather arrives in B.C.

But full bloom doesn't last long — just two weeks, assuming we don't get significant wind or rain — so if you would like to enjoy the stunning pink lined streets, you'd better get out there soon.



Burrard Skytrain station-cherry trees
Kriszi Gordon



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Poole's personal favourite spots are the Burrard Street SkyTrain station, Lost Lagoon (west of Georgia Street and south of the lagoon), and in Queen Elizabeth Park (near 33 Avenue & Cambie Street).

If you'd prefer to drive through the pink canopy, the following routes are sure to not disappoint.

There are hundreds of other locations all around the Lower Mainland.

To find one near you, check out the Vancouver Cherry Blossom Festival [map](#) and be sure to email your photos to weatherwindow@GlobalTV.com.