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CHERRY BLOSSOM FESTIVAL KICKS OFF APRIL 1 WITH THE BIG PICNIC AT DAVID LAM PARK

VANCOUVER, BC (March 29, 2023) - The month-long Vancouver Cherry Blossom Festival (VCBF) gets underway this Saturday, April 1st with **The Big Picnic** at David Lam Park, Vancouver's largest outdoor picnic. The month-long schedule of events also features the **Sakura Days Japan Fair** at VanDusen Botanical Garden (April 15-16).

The Big Picnic takes place from 10:00 am to 4:30 pm under the blossoms of 100 Akebono cherry trees donated by the Honorable Dr David Lam in 2010. The free family event will feature: a mindful yoga class led by Carolyn Anne Budgell, a Kagami-biraki sake keg-breaking ceremony; a haiku installation celebrating the 2022 Haiku Invitational winning poems by Squamish, Musqueam, and Tsleil-Waututh nation visual artists and with the winning haiku being read by City of Vancouver's first local Indigenous Poet Laureate, Christie Lee Charles, Musqueam Indian Band. The full event will also include local vendors and partners who will share sustainable living practices and interactive arts activities. Bring your own lunch, treat yourself to delicious meals from local food trucks, or savour a **Blossom Bento** from Private Sushi Chefs (Pre-order yours for pick-up at the picnic).

Once again, The Big Picnic includes the popular Cherry Jam Concert, which will feature a superb line-up of local talent, including Zimbamoto, Serengeti, and Raincity, with a special performance from Vancouver Okinawa Taiko. The YaletownBIA Cherry Grove stage will feature DJ ICE B with hip-hop/breakdancing by Now or Never Crew.

The Big Picnic is inspired by the more than one thousand-year-old Japanese tradition of sitting under flowering cherry trees and writing poems inspired by the blossoms and celebrates the community-building notion that "there are no strangers under the cherry tree". Nowadays in Japan, friends and families gather under the cherry blossoms in the local parks eating homemade food or convenience store bento boxes, singing songs and partaking in simple, fun activities such as photography and haiku writing. *The Big Picnic is presented by TD Bank in partnership with the Yaletown BIA.*

On April 15 and 16, the **Sakura Days Japan Fair** will return to the VanDusen Botanical Garden for a two-day celebration of all things Japan. From Japanese food, taiko drumming, Ikebana displays and theatre performances, to sake sampling, woodworking demonstrations, tea ceremonies, hands-on workshops (origami, calligraphy) and cultural performances, Sakura Days offers a wide range of family-friendly activities set among the cherry blossoms in one of the world's most beautiful municipal gardens.

Most activities will take place out of doors, with selected vendors, tea ceremony, and experiences indoors. This year's Sakura Days Japan Fair will also feature double the amount of food trucks and vendors compared to 2022 after the record-breaking attendance numbers. [Tickets](#) on sale now. *Co-Produced with the [Japan Fair Association of Vancouver](#).*

Across the Lower Mainland, cherry trees are blossoming in every shade of pink and white, bringing joy to residents and visitors of all ages and announcing in spectacular fashion that spring has finally arrived. To

find all those beautiful trees, visit the VBCF [Blossom Maps](#) page on any device and zoom in and see, street by street, what type of cherry tree grows where, photos of them and the dates when they're in peak bloom. *Supported by Vancouver Board of Parks & Recreation.*

VBCF invites everyone inspired by the cherry blossoms and the Festival's pink and teal banners lining Oak Street to submit a haiku to its internationally acclaimed [Haiku Invitational](#) poetry contest. Each year, the Festival receives thousands of entries from 40+ countries around the world from budding poets competing in six categories: Best Vancouver, Best BC, Best Canada, Best United States, Best International and Best Youth haiku, with additional haiku recognized in the Sakura Award and Honourable Mentions categories.

About the 2023 Vancouver Cherry Blossom Festival (April 1–23):

Presented by Edge Construction, the Vancouver Cherry Blossom Festival is a charitable not-for-profit organization with the objective to educate and actively engage diverse communities through accessible local arts and culture to celebrate the fragile beauty of the cherry blossom. Events throughout the city bring people together to celebrate nature, creativity, and Vancouver's cherry tree heritage. Cherry blossom viewing has become a joyful Festival springtime tradition in our city now as people marvel as 54 different varieties blossom across our city. For more information about the festival and upcoming programs and events, visit www.vcbf.ca

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2022 VANCOUVER CHERRY BLOSSOM FESTIVAL EVENTS April 1-23, 2022

MARCH 1-JUNE 1

HAIKU INVITATIONAL

Our online international poetry contest invites established and budding poets to submit up to two unpublished haiku, which are judged in six categories: Best Vancouver, Best BC, Best Canada, Best United States, Best International and Best Youth haiku. Attracts thousands of entries from 40+ countries around the world each year. To submit a haiku, visit the Festival [haiku submission page](#).

APRIL 1

10 am – 4:30 pm

THE BIG PICNIC featuring the Cherry Jam Concert

David Lam Park in Yaletown

Enjoy Vancouver's largest outdoor picnic under the blossoms of 100 Akebono cherry trees in Yaletown's spectacular David Lam Park. The full day of free family activities includes: a tree dedication ceremony; a Haiku Installation by Squamish, Musqueam, and Tsleil-Waututh nation artists; interactive arts activities; and Cherry Jam Concert. Bring your own lunch, treat yourself to delicious meals from one of our food trucks, or enjoy a Blossom Bento from one of our Sushi Chefs ([Reservations](#) required for Blossom Bento.)

APRIL 2-23

TREE TALKS AND WALKS

Guided walks to discover historical, horticultural and cultural features of the cherry tree and other extraordinary trees. Free, but registration required via our [website](#).

April 2	3 pm - 4:30 pm	At UBC w/ Douglas Justice
April 7	10 am – Noon	1302 Arbutus St at Creelman Ave. w/ Jacqueline Lee (Mandarin only)
April 8	1:30 pm - 3 pm	At Stanley Park w/ author Nina Shoroplova
April 9	1:30 pm- 3:30 pm	At Burrard SkyTrain Station w/ Wendy Cutler
April 10	1 pm – 2:30 pm	At Queen Elizabeth Park w/ Alex Downie
April 22	8 pm – 9:30 pm	At Mountainview Cemetery w/ Egan Davis
April 23	1:30 pm - 3 pm	At Callister Park w/ Egan Davis

APRIL 15 & 16

10am-6pm (Sat.)

10am-5pm (Sun.)

SAKURA DAYS JAPAN FAIR

VanDusen Botanical Garden

Sakura Days Japan Fair is a two-day celebrates all things Japan. From Japanese food, taiko drumming, Ikebana displays and theatre performances, to sake sampling, woodworking demonstrations, tea ceremonies, hands-on workshops (origami, calligraphy) and cultural performances, Sakura Days offers a wide range of family-friendly activities set among the cherry blossoms in one of the world's most beautiful municipal gardens. [Tickets](#) on sale now.

APRIL 22

11 am -2 pm

BIKE THE BLOSSOMS

Starts at Trout Lake Park. A leisurely ride in partnership with Velopalooza, through tunnels of the stunning hot pink Kanzan cherry blossom cultivar on the East Side. The ride will conclude with a gathering under a grove of cherry trees where Scavenger Coffee will serve coffee and tea for participants.