

Vancouver Cherry Blossom Festival



Cherry Scout Handbook

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What's important

This handbook gives new scouts an idea of how to take pictures and share them with festival participants.

The most important thing:

- ❖ **Enjoy the blossoms**

The only other important things:

- ❖ Record where your photos were taken
- ❖ Put your photo information in your photo names

And last:

- ❖ Remember to click **Post Reply**, when you finish your posting on the forum.

The rest are details.

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1. Scout vision, mission and objectives

1. Vision

The cherry scouts are the eyes of the festival.

2. Mission

Provide on-time, reliable and dependable information on cherry blossom viewing and cherry tree locations for Vancouver Cherry Blossom Festival activities.

3. Objectives

Report on the festival favourites coming into peak bloom in the coming week, with description and photos. Reports will be on time, reliable and dependable.

Report on potential future festival favourite locations, and suggest interesting walks in each neighbourhood.

Locate and identify trees of interest, to contribute to official inventories of trees.

Bring together a growing number of involved people from the community. Help develop their knowledge and reporting skills.

So, the scout program is a two-way street. We educate you about cherries by providing Talks and Walks, resource materials like Douglas Justice's *Ornamental Cherries in Vancouver* book, and examples of the cherry cultivars.

In return, you tell us when the trees in your neighbourhood are ready for viewing so that people outside the neighbourhood know when it's worth a trip to go see them.

You also check out your neighbourhood for that are not yet on our festival map.

An extra bonus is that you get to show off your great photos and meet some of the nicest people. Note the festival slogan: “**There is no stranger under the cherry tree...**”, Kobayashi Issa, 1763-1827.

2. Find cherries in your neighbourhood

2.1. Sources of information

Check out these sources on where to find cherries:

2.1.1. Festival map

See the festival map at <http://maps.vcbf.ca/map/>. You can opt to view only certain cultivars or locations or blooming dates.

2.1.2. Reports on UBC Botanical Garden Forums

Look in your **Neighbourhood Blog** on the <https://forums.botanicalgarden.ubc.ca/forums/vcbf-neighbourhood-blogs.278/> for what the scouts found in previous years. Every Vancouver neighbourhood has its own blog, and there are blogs for almost all the surrounding municipalities. Check the second page, too.

If you **subscribe** to the threads that interest you, you will be notified when a new posting has been added. As long as you visit after each notification, you will continue to receive notifications.

To subscribe to a forum or thread, after logging in, click **Watch Forum Tools or Watch Thread** at the upper right of the screen.

Also check out the other VCBF forums under the <https://forums.botanicalgarden.ubc.ca/forums/vancouver-cherry-blossom-festival.277/>.

2.2. Try to identify your cherries

Here are sources to help you identify cherries as you walk or drive around. There are no assigned neighbourhoods – all cherries are fair game.

1. Check the [festival map](#) for the location – is that location already known, with the cultivar identified?
2. Check the previous years' postings in the <https://forums.botanicalgarden.ubc.ca/forums/vcbf-neighbourhood-blogs.278/>. Did someone find it before and was it identified?
3. Look for a similar tree, supposed to be blooming at the same time, in Douglas Justice's *Ornamental Cherries in Vancouver*. This book was written for scouts; it shows 55 of the cultivars we know are in the city. But there may be more than 55 cultivars in the city – you may have found one not in the book. A note about blooming times in the book: some trees that bloomed in April in 2009 bloomed in February in 2010. The times given in the book are “normal” times – and how often does that happen!? But you can still get an idea of which trees to expect early and which to expect late, and adjust the times in the book for the situation each year.

4. Check the <https://forums.botanicgarden.ubc.ca/link-forums/ornamental-cherries.334/> on the <https://forums.botanicgarden.ubc.ca/forums/vancouver-cherry-blossom-festival.277/>.
5. Post questions in the <https://forums.botanicgarden.ubc.ca/link-forums/ornamental-cherries.334/>, with a title like “What cherry?” followed by a very brief description. Then give a good description, and show a photo of the trees and blossom photos showing as much detail on the front and back of the blossoms as you can.

2.3. Remember there are plums out there

There are 17,000 plums on Vancouver streets. Try to remember that this is a cherry blossom festival and don't get seduced by the plums. Check out what plums look like in the Plums thread on the UBC Botanical Garden forums:

<https://forums.botanicgarden.ubc.ca/threads/plums.36163/> .

3. Taking photos

We want to show what these trees look like, both to help people find the trees, and to help the festival's Team Sakura decide on the Festival Favourites for next year. As well, if you want help identifying your trees, you'll need good photos. Here are some tips.

3.1. Take a lot of photos

If you're trying to get a blossom photo, many of them will not be in focus. Take a lot of photos so you end up with at least one good shot.

3.2. Use the best quality setting on your camera or device

If you want to zoom in on a section of your photo, you will need to use the highest quality setting on your camera. That setting helps ensure that the cropped photo will still look good. Also, you might take a great photo and want to print an enlargement.

Remember, you can always reduce the resolution of your photos. But if you don't capture the image at the best resolution possible, there's nothing you can do about it later.

3.3. Try for diffused light

Bright sunlight often washes out the colour in photos, or shows up as white reflected off the petals. You can usually get better colour on a bright but slightly overcast day. Try holding your hand or a book over the flower to block out the sun.

3.4. Find your macro setting

Make sure you know how to take close-up photos that are in focus. Usually, that means using your camera's Macro setting. Often, you can access that easily with a single click somewhere on a camera dial.

3.5. For blossom identification, take photos from many angles

Try to get the front of the blossoms, the back of the blossoms to show the sepals, some buds to show their colour and shape, the stems to show their arrangement and length.

3.6. Show size of the tree and blossoms

There's a ruler on the inside back cover of the *Ornamental Cherries* booklet. Either make a note of the blossom size, or include the ruler next to the blossom in your photo. Maybe have a person, one who doesn't mind his/her photo being on the forum, standing next to the tree to indicate the relative size of the tree. Or, make a note of how tall it is in relation to buildings nearby.

3.7. Include leaves if they're out with the blossoms

Leaves are an identifying feature of cherry trees. Are the leaves out or not with the blossoms? The colour and size of the leaves, what the edges look like, what the backs look like, and whether there are hairs on the leaf tops or bottoms are also important.

3.8. Fill the screen

For just pretty pictures, the subject should fill the whole screen. If half your photo is a driveway, crop that out.

4. Locating the photos you took

Recording the locations of your photos is the most important and hardest part. You have to consistently follow a system that you set up.

4.1. Devise a system to record where each photo was taken

Suggestions for systems:

1. Remember to write down every photo number and the location where that photo was taken.
2. Or, use your camera as part of the system. For instance, always take a photo of the street sign first, then take photos of the tree next, then photos of the blossoms.

Whatever you decide, make it a rule and follow it. You'd be surprised how hard it is to tell where the photos were taken, even if they're in your own neighbourhood that you think you know so well.

4.2. Rename your photos

Rename your photos while they are still in your directory surrounded by the other photos you took and while you still remember what you saw and where you were. One day's photos look much like the next day's. We particularly want to know the date, where you were, and your name. The format is less important than including all the information. If you don't know the cultivar, you may omit that and still do your posting.

Please **rename** your photos into this

format: **•Whitcomb_10thCambie_Cutler_20210310_IMG1023.jpg**, where

- Whitcomb** is the cultivar, only if you know it, else don't include it
- 10thCambie** is the street or intersection, naming the street the tree is on first, so this tree is on 10th; name it Cambie10th if the tree is on Cambie)
- Cutler** is the photographer's name
- 20210310** is the date in `yyyymmdd` format (so they can be sorted by date)
- IMG1023** is the sequence number your camera gave the photo

For location, name the street the tree is on first, then the cross street. There's usually no need to include "st", "ave", "dr", or "east" or "west" indicators.

5. Sharing the information you find

Scouts share their findings by posting them on the [UBC Botanical Garden forums](#). The specific forum to post your information and photos on is [Neighbourhood Blogs](#) Forum. Look for the Neighbourhood Blogs thread for the neighbourhood where the trees live, and click **Post Reply** inside that thread. You can find a map of the Vancouver neighbourhoods at [Scout Corner - Vancouver Cherry Blossom Festival \(vcbf.ca\)](#)

[Festival flickr.com account](#): If you have a lot of photos and want to reach more people, you can also post your photos on the festival flickr.com account, in the **vcbf_cherry_scout** album. That's the logon id; get the password from the Scout Co-ordinator. Or post them to your own flickr account, and then add them to the vancouvercherry blossomfestival group at [Vancouver Cherry Blossom Festival | Flickr](#).

6. Posting to the UBC Botanical Garden Forums

Here are instructions for posting your information and photos on the forums. You don't have to worry about doing everything correctly. . The scout co-ordinator and the forum manager and administrators have the ability to correct most problems. You can check out <https://forums.botanicalgarden.ubc.ca/resources/categories/using-the-forums-help-tips-and-guides.2/> to see if what you want to know is answered there (Click the Help and Resources button at the upper right).

6.1. Make sure you're registered

Click **Register** at the upper right of any forum posting. One of the first posts in any forum is usually "Plans for the Forum" and includes a link to instructions on how to register.

Once you register, you have to sign in every time to do any posting and to ensure your display options are working. You can tick a box that says "remember me" if you're not working on a public computer.

6.2. Try some test postings?

There is a Test Bed area where you can test how to do your postings. Scroll down the page on the Forums home page – The Test Bed is listed near or at the bottom

6.3. Locate the proper forum

The list of our forums is at

<https://forums.botanicalgarden.ubc.ca/forums/vancouver-cherry-blossom-festival.277/>

Click on the Neighbourhood Blogs forum

<https://forums.botanicalgarden.ubc.ca/forums/vcbf-neighbourhood-blogs.278/>

Select the Neighbourhood where the tree lives. You can find a map of the Vancouver neighbourhoods at <https://vcbf.ca/support/scout-corner/> . The forums are sorted by the neighbourhood with the most recent posting at the top. If you're having trouble finding the neighbourhood blog, you can click the Thread link above the list to sort them alphabetically by neighbourhood name. Or do a search from the box in the upper right corner.

The postings under the forums are called *threads*. Each thread has postings on the same topic that are *tied together* under that thread title.

6.4. Reply in the thread

- Navigate to the neighbourhood blog for the tree location. There are probably many pages of postings in each neighbourhood. Navigate to the last page to see what, if anything, has been posted lately.
- Start typing in the reply area at the bottom of the page.

6.5. Upload photos

Make sure you have already renamed your photos to the scout standard naming convention. Photos take a while to load, so it saves some time to get the upload process started and do your typing while they're uploading. You do not have to resize your photos, as the system will do that for you. If you want to resize your photos, make sure that you keep the photo display dimension to about screen size. If you don't know how to do that, better to let the system do the resizing.

- To attach photos, scroll down and click **Upload a File**. A new window will open using your computer's file management system. Here is a video showing how to attach files: <https://forums.botanicalgarden.ubc.ca/resources/attach-photos-and-files.4/> .
- You can attach up to ten files in a single posting.

6.6. Type in your text

In the Write your reply area, type what you want to say, something like “These ‘Accolade’ trees on Beach Avenue at Thurlow are worth a visit now”. There are formatting buttons you can use if you want.

6.7. Extra credit – position your photos

You can ignore this section totally and your postings will be fine.

If you want to have

Some text like “these trees with white blossoms are at 2nd and Larch...” and then have

And then you want “these trees with pink blossoms are at 3rd and Larch” and then have

you can position your cursor, then click the Thumbnail button for the photo you want to appear there.

6.8. Post Reply

You must remember to do this (third time for this warning!), otherwise everything you did will be lost, although some browsers will keep your posting for a while.

- When you're ready to submit your post, click the **Post Reply** button under the text entry area. You will see your posting as the latest one in the thread.