

Editorial

It is a very great pleasure to edit the first issue of **Davidsonia** since the financial crisis in the early 1980s caused publication to discontinue. The legacy of the resurrected journal has not been broken. Roy Taylor, the founding editor, has provided the first article in this issue, and the original managing editor, Sylvia Taylor, has agreed to serve on the editorial board. No doubt she will keep her watchful, critical and grammatically sharp eye on our copy.

Our mission is still the same. **Davidsonia** is a peer-reviewed journal of botanical garden science devoted to issues of conservation affecting our natural heritage. Much has happened in the 20 years since we last published. This issue contains an article by Douglas Justice, curator of collections and acting director, which traces the history of our internationally acclaimed Plant Introduction Scheme of the Botanical Garden (PISBG). Last September, I was delighted to find a healthy specimen of the first release (*Genista pilosa* ‘Vancouver Gold’) at a garden centre in Berkshire, England, complete with a small label that told me that it was a UBC introduction. New releases and recommendations are planned, and we all look forward to continuing the exemplary standards set by Roy Taylor and Bruce Macdonald.

Visitors to the garden, I am sure, will notice that there have been major changes in the last 20 years. In 1991, after 23 years in old army huts, the unused president’s residence - with the best view on the campus - and in the former home economics training house, the full garden staff moved into their own garden headquarters located at the north end of the David C. Lam Asian Garden. This was made possible thanks to a donation from David Lam, who later became the British Columbia lieutenant-governor from 1991 to 1996. The changing views across the Strait of Georgia from the pagoda and the ever changing vegetation beside the paths into the remnants of old growth forest that tower over the Asian Garden provide a different entrance experience to the garden every day, in rain, sun, wind or snow. The Asian Garden has grown under the enthusiastic curatorship of Peter Wharton,

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who has established some very exciting opportunities for the UBC Botanical Garden to be part of major international exploration expeditions into China and southeast Asia. The E.H. Lohbrunner Alpine Garden is always changing thanks to Brent Hine's active management and collecting. Even the seemingly changeless Nitobe Memorial Garden has been renovated. It remains one of the biggest tourist attractions on the UBC campus, yet it is also a place where people can go for a peaceful moment away from the rush of life. The Harold and Frances Holt Physick Garden was renovated in 1998 thanks to a donation from their family. The Food Garden continues to provide information and display that allows even the green-thumb challenged to take heart and try something new.

As in all living collections, change is the order of the day. Tom Wheeler's expert eye and supportive garden staff keep things under remarkable control in spite of frankly outrageous budgetary constraints. In spite of strenuous efforts to keep as much of the garden open as possible, most of the BC Native Garden has been closed for several years because funds are not available for proper curatorial care. The section around the lake was refurbished by Peter Kohler before he left in the winter of 1995-96 and more than 1000 first-year biology students undertake field studies at that site each year. There are high priority plans to renovate the BC Native Garden in the foreseeable future, but the key is secure funding for the curator position.

Perhaps the biggest recent change has been the redirection of the garden's research effort. I joined the staff in January 2000 at the end of my term as head of the botany department and have evolved into the research coordinator. We appointed our first fully committed research faculty member in September 2000. Andrew Riseman is a plant breeder with established research activity on *Exacum* species, who is also developing a woody plant breeding program. He has set up a tissue culture facility and obtained considerable support from various agencies, including the BC Landscape and Nursery Association and the Henry M. Eddie Foundation. The bridges being built by Andrew Riseman and Douglas Justice are strong and well-supported by the industry. We hope that we will have a new director by July 2002 and that we will be able to submit a multi-million dollar proposal for a new research facility within 12 months.

Throughout the past 20 years, the garden staff has continued to teach within the Faculty of Agricultural Sciences. Our public outreach effort has

continued and flourished. David Tarrant's television program, *Canadian Gardener*, ran for 19 years, and he, Judy Newton, our education coordinator, and Douglas Justice are in constant demand as speakers throughout North America.

Many features of garden work have been possible only because of the tireless efforts of the Friends of the Garden, who have been a pillar of strength for the garden over the years. They celebrated their 25th anniversary in 2001, and they continue to bring thousands of people to the garden each year for the Indoor Plant Sale for students in September, the October Apple Fest and the Perennial Plant Sale on Mother's Day. John Davidson would be proud of us for having such wonderful and committed Friends.

Recently, there has been increased mutual interest, and even small signs of collaboration, between the various botanical gardens in BC and across Canada. The emphasis seems to be more on small, effective cooperation rather than big dream projects, which may fall by the wayside when personnel change and initial enthusiasm wanes. I hope that the revitalized **Davidsonia** can be a useful contribution to the on-going growth and development in botanical garden science both locally and on the wider scale.

I hope that **Davidsonia** can attract active researchers and horticulturists as authors. I am very pleased that so many well-known and respected colleagues from all areas of plant biology have agreed to serve on the editorial boards. I am confident that you will see informed, well-illustrated and sometimes controversial articles. I hope that we will provide reliable information, rational debate and some of the healthy skepticism without which our research will not progress.

Welcome to botanical gardeners old and new. It is good to be back!