

January in the Garden

Although the weather ranges from cold and wet to the bright days of early spring, a January walk in the garden reminds us that every flower is a joy and there is always something in bloom. You might have to look harder to find the flowers but there is so much else to see and hear. Birdsong reminds us that Spring is not so far away and the bald eagles make their daily appearance near the top of one of the oldest trees in the David C. Lam Asian Garden. If you stand with your back to the tunnel and look up to the left you will see the tree with its snag top. It is about 600 years old and escaped the logging during the late 19th and early 20th centuries due to malformation of its trunk.

January is the time to admire the tree bark, especially of the deciduous species. As you walk through the Asian Garden, it does not take long to appreciate the wonderful ornamental qualities provided by the bark diversity of both Asian and North American trees. The bark variety in one well represented genus, *Stewartia*, ranges from *S. koreana* (back cover), which becomes mottled as patches of the bark flake off exposing different layers from rusty brown, khaki, grey and tan, to *S. sinensis* with its cinnamon coloured bark that flakes off, not unlike the native *Arbutus menziesii*. The old bark of *S. pseudocamellia* is taupe coloured and flakes off exposing the rich cinnamon of the new cork. One of my favourite *Stewartia* can be seen from the black top path just before the tunnel. *S. monodelpha* has wonderful sinewy branches that curve and twist. The bark is a rich brown but on closer inspection you will see that the old bark is a dark brown covered with various green lichens. The new bark is a warm tan colour.

When I think of birch, I picture *Betula papyrifera*, the tree from which birch-bark canoes are made. We have two very nice specimens of *Betula utilis* var. *jacquemontii* which can be seen from the bottom path in the Asian Garden alongside a small stream between the two bridges. They are close enough together to see the contrast between the cream coloured bark of one and the other's much whiter bark.

In the North American section of the E. H. Lohbrunner Alpine Garden

there is a beautiful *Arctostaphylos manzanita* (front cover), which has a very dark red-brown bark. It is evergreen, with soft grey green foliage and its clusters of pink flowers are typical of the Ericaceae in January. It is related to our native *Arbutus menziesii* that has a peeling cinnamon coloured bark. There are several arbutus located outside the gate on 16th Avenue and a younger one in the Mary Ewanchuck garden near the native garden.

Look out for other trees with great bark, such as *Acer davidii*, *Acer griseum*, *Eucalyptus*, *Broussonetia papyrifera* as well as the wonderful texture of the bark of the less showy trees.

Have a great walk.

Climatological Data 2002

	Oct	Nov	Dec
Average Maximum Temperature (°C)	12.3	10.4	7.8
Average Minimum Temperature (°C)	7.2	5.5	3.1
Highest Maximum Temperature (°C)	17.4	17.5	12.5
Lowest Minimum Temperature (°C)	-0.9	-1.1	-0.7
Average Air Temperature (°C)	9.6	7.8	5.5
Rainfall (mm)/# days with rain	15.3/7	159.0/18	119.9/19
Total Rainfall (mm) since Jan 1, 2002	523.7	682.7	802.6

Location: 49° 15' 29" N, 123° 14' 58" W

Elevation: 104.4 m

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