

## ALIEN INVESTIGATION TAKING PLACE ON VANCOUVER ISLAND

An RBCM botany curator is investigating the distribution of alien plants on Southern Vancouver Island. Because the Island's temperate climate makes it easy for alien species to become invasive, early detection is critical. However, they are an under-collected and -documented group. Ken Marr has plans to change that.

This summer, Marr is setting out on six collecting expeditions to retrieve samples of alien species from various ports of entry on the Island – these tend to be areas of international exchange such as shipping and cruise ship terminals.

With his Victoria fieldwork almost complete, Marr plans to move on to sites in **Crofton, Harmac, Cowichan, Port Alberni** and **Campbell River** throughout July. "We expect to gather and document 500 specimens, which we will keep in the collection," says Marr, adding that the results of his work will be compiled in a report, set to be released this fall.

The report will outline the findings from each location, noting any species new to the Island and whether they're likely to spread. The information will also be entered into the Ministry of Forests Invasive Alien Plant Program on-line database.

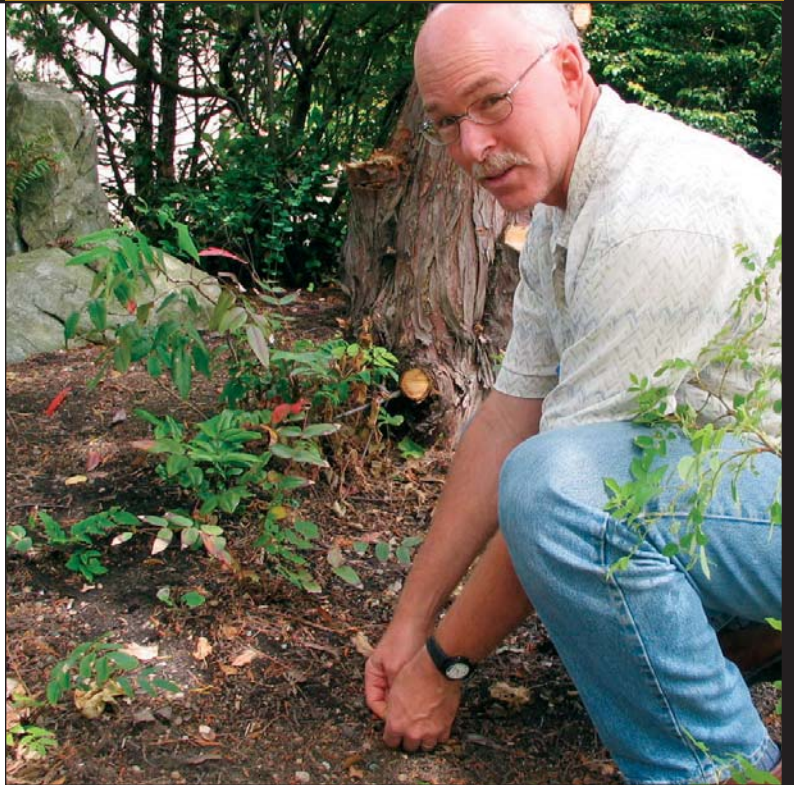
While this project keeps Marr close to home, he'll be heading to the other end of the province – the northern Rockies – for fieldwork on a different project at the end of July. Marr is one of many RBCM staffers who conduct collecting expeditions every summer for museum research projects.

## THREE VOLUNTEERS CONTRIBUTE 90 YEARS OF SERVICE TO RBCM

Three Royal BC Museum volunteers are marking milestones this week – they've each contributed 30 years of service to the RBCM. Since 1976, Carol Elder, Sharon Ireland and Eva Vizsla have been enhancing the experience of the museum's visitors.

The women cite similar reasons for why, after three decades, they're still enjoying their time at the museum. "I love the kids to start with," says Vizsla. "And there's so much to learn – there's always something new happening."

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Ken Marr, RBCM botany curator, conducts fieldwork in Victoria in June.

Below: Marr examines a yet-to-be-classified alien specimen found in Victoria. The plant is believed to be invasive and render the land on which it grows virtually unusable.

Viszlai, originally from Hungary, has taught more than 30 RBCM school programs and served as a docent during numerous special exhibits.

“All three of them have spent most of their time here as school docents,” says Gail Miller, RBCM volunteer services manager. “So when you think of how many people they’ve impacted over 30 years, it’s absolutely amazing.”

This week, these dedicated volunteers will be honoured for their years of service and not surprisingly, they are using the occasion to give back to the community. When asked individually how they would like to be recognized, they echoed the same sentiment – each would like an addition to RBCM’s Native Plant Gardens planted in her honour. (Fittingly, Viszlai chose a high-bush cranberry for the gardens, which grows in the mountain streams of BC and Hungary.)

Pauline Rafferty will recognize and thank these volunteers for their extraordinary dedication to the RBCM this **Thursday, June 28**, in the Native Plant Garden in front of the BC Archives.

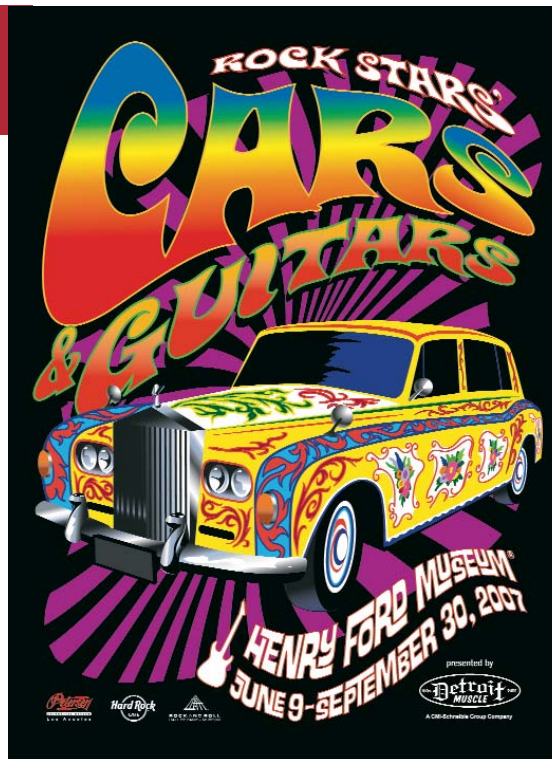
The ways RBCM volunteers impact the museum are countless. Thankfully, the effect is felt both ways...

“I came to Victoria in 1998 from Ontario, in the belief this would be a great place to retire but soon after arriving, I became very homesick. One day, I visited the museum and met several volunteers – I was impressed by what they were doing and I thought I’d love to be part of that too. The interaction with staff, other volunteers and tourists helped me settle into this new environment. I am now doing gallery animation, and looking back over the past eight years, the constant stimulation of learning about new exhibits has added greatly to my life.”

~ Val Blume, RBCM Docent

## Updates

- Possibly the most psychedelic piece in the Royal BC Museum’s collection, John Lennon’s widely-recognizable 1965 Rolls Royce Phantom V, is currently in Michigan as part of the Henry Ford Museum’s special exhibit, **Rockstars’ Cars and Guitars** ([www.thehenryford.org/museum/rockstars/index.html](http://www.thehenryford.org/museum/rockstars/index.html)). Visitors to the Royal BC Museum won’t be able to miss the bright yellow car this fall – when it’s scheduled to return to the RBCM lobby.



- RBCM botany curators Ken Marr and Richard Hebda are the co-authors of a 27-page section on reed grasses in **Flora of North America, North of Mexico**. Published by Oxford University Press in April, this multi-volume series includes all the plants of the US, Canada, Greenland and the islands of St. Pierre and Miquelon.
- Starting July 1 and continuing to Oct. 14, the RBCM is extending its regular hours. The museum will be open from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m. – an hour later than usual – to accommodate visitors to **Titanic: The Artifact Exhibition**. The museum will also be open until 10 p.m. on most Friday and Saturday evenings. (Check the **What’s On** calendar, at [www.royalbcmuseum.bc.ca](http://www.royalbcmuseum.bc.ca), for exception dates.)

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