

It was such fun to pass a grouping and be able to answer my husband's constant question: "What is this called?"

But one plant truly stumped me. I had never seen it before and although the entrance ticket includes a small flower and plant guide to the most popular species in the garden, I didn't know what this plant was. Thankfully, The Butchart Gardens has a Plant Identification Center with knowledgeable plant people. I snapped a photo and showed it to the expert. "This is a tropical plant that we will soon put in the greenhouse to overwinter. It's called a 'Popcorn Plant' because it smells like buttered popcorn." How marvelous to learn something new every day!

The camellias and rhododendrons were budding but not in bloom and I can only imagine how sensational the grounds must be when they burst into flower. Every season brings new annuals and bulbs. Spring is filled with tulips, crocus, and daffodils reflecting a love for the Netherlands. There are over 900 bedding plant varieties, 26 greenhouses, and 50 full-time gardeners.

A forest of trees including maples, madrones, dogwoods, magnolias, flowering cherry, weeping sequoias, poplars, beeches, and Golden chain trees anchor the scene. There were two unusual and unique trees encased in a rock-walled garden, the Monkey Puzzle Tree, definitely a conifer, but not one I'd seen before.

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