



Three blocks of west 37th Avenue bordering Vancouver's VanDusen Botanical Garden are planted with *Parrotia persica* on 2m standards, pictured here with unusually poor fall colour (November 2008), with *Robinia pseudoacacia* (black locust) and *Pseudotsuga menziesii*. (Douglas fir) behind.

## Vancouver's parrotias

Among the many street trees in Vancouver are numerous parrotias including two cultivars not mentioned in last year's "Tree of the year". CLIVE JUSTICE gives further details.

Street and boulevard trees in the city of Vancouver are many and varied. One of the few cities in the mild climate of North America's Pacific Northwest that still enjoys the post-colonial tradition of the 'English disease' (that of collecting trees). Vancouver boasts a great diversity of trees both on its streets and in its parks. While there are only three large Persian ironwoods (*Parrotia persica*) in the city's arboretum at Queen Elizabeth Park, there are 775 on the streets of Vancouver. The majority (443) are *P. persica*, and the remainder are upright cultivars of the species, either 'Vanessa' or 'Ruby Vase'. I was pleased to see *P. persica* chosen as the IDS "tree of the year" for 2007, but in the discussion of *Parrotia* cultivars in North American cultivation in the Yearbook, Susyn Andrews lists only the cultivar 'Select' ('Vanessa', see pp. 17-18 of the 2007 yearbook), not the two commonly sold and used as street trees

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**Left**

*Parrotia persica* 'Inge's Ruby Vase' one of the two cultivars commonly planted as a street tree in Vancouver. Like 'Upright' it has a columnar habit and good autumn colour (*inset*).



in Vancouver. These are 'Upright' which has as its name suggests a columnar habit and was selected in 1972 by Ed Scanlon, a Ohio nurseryman; and 'Inge's Ruby Vase', an introduction by Kris Johnsen, founder and general manager of Specimen Trees Wholesale Nurseries Ltd, at Pitt Meadows in British Columbia and named for his wife.

The city's street trees are under the care and management of a division of Vancouver Parks, headed by Chief Arborist Paul Montpelier, who tells me the city's inventory lists over 40,000 trees, each cited by species, cultivar, street, and its location on the street. The Persian ironwoods are planted mostly in threes and sixes usually on one side of a block along many of the city's streets. Their numbers make Parrotia one of the 50 most common Vancouver street trees, and they provide early spring bloom and splashes of spectacular fall colour. The inventory is also a continuing management tool as it indicates when the next maintenance is due.