



Sarika Cullis-Suzuki officially debuts as co-host of *The Nature of Things* tonight on CBC and CBC Gem. CBC

Victoria's Sarika Cullis-Suzuki continues her father's legacy on *The Nature of Things*

THE NATURE OF THINGS

Where: CBC TV
When: Thursday, Jan. 11, 9 p.m. (episodes are also available on gem.cbc.ca)

MIKE DEVLIN
Times Colonist

Victoria marine biologist Sarika Cullis-Suzuki didn't expect to follow in her father's footsteps as the host of *The Nature of Things*, despite being raised in and around the longest-running science series on television.

"My dad has been the host since before I was born," the Vancouver-born Cullis-Suzuki said of her father, David Suzuki. "Watching him through the years has been incredible. But it wasn't something I spent my whole life [thinking about]. I was really interested in marine biology, and that was my focus."

The Nature of Things launched its 63rd season last week with an episode hosted by Toronto's Anthony Morgan, who will share co-hosting duties with Cullis-Suzuki for the current season — the program's first since 1979 without David Suzuki, who retired last year after 44 years. Cullis-Suzuki officially debuts as co-host tonight, with the episode, *The Mystery of the Walking Whale*.

She remains an honorary board member of the David

Suzuki Foundation, and has been named to several ocean advisory committees. Prior to accepting the job with CBC, she worked for Ocean Networks Canada, an ocean research facility based at the University of Victoria and managed by the not-for-profit ONC Society. But after realizing the ecological crisis was getting worse by the year, she decided on pursuing a career in media, where she could relay her concerns.

"Science is absolutely integral to a lot of our processes, and how we determine information and get data, but it takes a long time. I needed to do something more immediate."

The new position marries her passions — science, nature and media. She has plenty of experience in the latter, having hosted several documentaries for CBC, The Knowledge Network and PBS, among others. Despite hosting a half-dozen episodes of the series in years prior, Cullis-Suzuki was not bequeathed the job by her father. She had to fight like anyone else to be hired for *The Nature of Things*, which has aired in more than 80 countries since its debut in 1960.

"Of course, I had an upper hand, in that I had seen my dad go through this and knew the type of work that would be involved," she said. "But the process of determining who the

next hosts would be was actually quite interesting."

Executive producers at CBC shortlisted 10 candidates who they felt would best suit the position. A two-minute video of each host was sent to a focus group of 1,500 people, who ranked the results. Cullis-Suzuki said when she didn't hear back from the network, she assumed another host had been hired. She had "mentally moved on" from the idea when she was told the co-hosting gig was hers, one year after she applied. But she gladly accepted.

"There is something magical about *The Nature of Things*," she said. "There's a reason why it has been on air for over 60 years. There's a trust, and a history that has been built up."

With hosts stationed on opposite sides of the country, Cullis-Suzuki likes what she and Morgan have to offer. They are aiming for a slightly more laid-back approach, she said, while keeping the focus on science.

"I just really hope the viewers will trust Anthony and myself with continuing on the show, because I think it's so important. What it means to be a human being in a changing world, and what are our responsibilities as people to the earth and to each other, these principles are what make up the core of *The Nature of Things*."

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Raise a glass for local charities at the Victoria Whisky Festival

The Victoria Whisky Festival returns to Victoria for a week-end of "spirit-ual" exploration, with events that will appeal to whisky enthusiasts and foodies alike, at the Hotel Grand Pacific, Jan. 18 to 21.

The four-day festival includes the Canadian Whisky Awards, grand tastings, masterclasses and consumer tastings.

The lineup includes two five-course dinners with an emphasis on local, seasonal, farm to table ingredients, paired with five whiskies selected based on the

unique style of each distillery.

Packages includes the Saturday evening consumer tasting as well as a custom bundle of grand tastings and masterclasses.

Part of the proceeds from the event benefit local charitable organizations. The fest gave more than \$40,000 in 2023.

Tickets range from \$49 for individual events to \$345 for packages. The event runs Jan. 18 to 21 at Hotel Grand Pacific, 463 Belleville St. Details at victoriawhiskyfestival.com. — Pedro Arrais, Times Colonist

Learn about Victoria Harbour at the Maritime Museum of B.C.

Join the Maritime Museum of B.C. as it presents Victoria Harbour, its feature exhibit that takes visitors back in time to explore the changes that have taken place to the waterfront in the heart of the city, now until April 6.

The seasonal feature exhibit explores everything about Victoria Harbour, from the natural environment, to early industry, to how people work and play in and around the harbour today.

Visitors can also view Detail Beyond Measure, the museum's permanent exhibit, which displays models, half hulls and name plates from historic vessels, especially those plying local waters at the height of the era of transpacific and transatlantic steamships, collectively known as the Steamship era.

Admission is \$10 adults, \$8 seniors and students, \$5 youth and free for children 12 and under. The museum is open 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily at 744 Douglas St. Details at mmbc.bc.ca/exhibits. — Pedro Arrais, TC

Help wake the fruit trees at a modern wassail

Join in a modern version of a wassail (Waes Hael or "be of good health") — an old English tradition to wake fruit trees from their winter slumber and scare away evil spirits — at Banfield Park on Saturday.

The tradition of wassailing, a ceremony performed to ensure a good harvest, dates back to the 1500s.

At the event, organized by the Vic West Food Security Collective, attendees can sip hot cider made from Vic West apples, crown the Wassail King and Queen, and sing and dance with the Island Thyme Morris dancers.

The event is free but feel free to bring along a few sixpence (or dollars) to add to the hat in appreciation.

The wassail starts with the crowning at 2:30 p.m., followed by a dance performance at 3. The ceremony takes place at 3:30, with a 'feast' of rustic snacks at 4 p.m. at Banfield Park Community Orchard, 452 Craigflower Rd. Dress for the outdoors and bring a mug for mulled cider.

For more information, go to victoriawest.ca/neighbourhood/food-security.