

## Hiking Directions to Mt. Gardner on Bowen Is.

Here are some directions for the hike to Mt. Gardner on Wed. June 18 based on a recent walk there. Although free schoolbus transit from Gage Residence to Horseshoe Bay is offered (departing at 6:45) some may want to self-organize and take public transit. It is easy to get a bit lost on this trail and the trails do change, so even locals may find this useful. Hikers take the Bowen Island ferry from Horseshoe Bay (check online for sailing times and note that both the regular 9:20 am and 4:40 pm sailings do not run on Wed.; the organized group will take the 8:05 sailing).

The pleasant hike is about 3 hours up and 2.5 hours down with an elevation gain of 700m. It can be slippery on the way down so please take care and take your time. There is no water along the trail.

After leaving the ferry at Snug Cove keep to the right and take the first right (Cardena Rd.) towards Crippen Park. [If you are in need of coffee/snack, the Snug Cove Cafe has good sandwiches and coffee and is open 5am-4pm. It is a bit farther along the main road and you may want to take a slight detour there first.]

Walk through Crippen Park towards Killarney Lake until you reach Miller Rd. Turn right and shortly after turn left and cross the road at the pedestrian crossing where the trail through Crippen Park continues. Follow the trail until you reach Killarney Lake. Follow the trail to the left along the lake shore to the picnic area where the last rest room of the day is found. From the picnic area you leave the lake and cross Mt. Gardner Rd., heading up the gravel path with a signpost pointing to Mt. Gardner Trails. After a bit there is a fainter trail heading straight where you should instead bear right on the main trail and continue until you hit a T-intersection. Turn left here onto Skid Trail (or Lower Skid Trail as they sometimes call this part). Follow Skid Trail as it climbs steeply through the forest. Watch carefully for orange markers on the trees throughout the hike. After a steep climb through the forest you come to a sign post where you should turn left following the sign to Mid Skid trail and Dennis Lynn Trail which is on the back of the signpost (!). You then come to another sign post where these two trails split—you turn right going up the mountain on Mid Skid Trail, leaving the Dennis Lynn Trail. Next you emerge at a T-intersection where you turn left on Upper Skid Trail "To Summit". As you walk, avoid the side trail on the right labelled South Summit Grind. The trail levels off in places and soon you will come to a viewpoint looking back to Vancouver where you may want to catch your breath. It is now only 30-40 min. to the North Summit—you can skip the short side trail to the South Summit as there is little to see there. The North Summit has two platforms, one offering great views to Vancouver on the south and the other equally nice views to Howe Sound on the north. Just ignore the unsightly radio towers on the summit itself.

To return, follow the trail down from the North side of the summit. As you leave the north platform to the right facing Howe Sound, keep to your left and follow the orange markers descending along a steep gully trail with ropes. After about 30-40 min you arrive at another marvellous view of Howe Sound from some rocks to the left of the trail—enjoy this spot. [If you stray a bit to your right at the top you may miss the steeped roped section and nice view. If so, when you come to an unsigned T-intersection, turning left is the more direct route; the orange tags go in either direction.]

You should head along the path, following the orange markers and signs for Hikers Trail Road, which you may reach at various access points depending on which trail you end up taking. Take this rather tedious but easy road through the yellow/rust gate and down to Mt. Gardner Road. You are now about 45 min. of steady walking from the ferry. Turn right and walk along the road carefully (there is traffic with little shoulder) until you soon come to a path to the left which takes you into Crippen Park next to Killarney Lake. Turn right on the lake trail to head back to the picnic area you left on the way up. On the way you will soon encounter a gravel beach at Killarney Lake (it is by a wooden bridge). On a nice day it is a good opportunity for a quick dip so you may want to bring a bathing suit.

On the return, keep in mind your collective potential to overwhelm the bus system from Horseshoe Bay. And of course you should feel free to come and go earlier or later with your own group. Ferry schedules are easy to find online at <https://www.bcferries.com>