

*Washington Park Arboretum*  
**BULLETIN**



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## Washington Park Arboretum

The Arboretum is a 230-acre living museum displaying internationally renowned collections of oaks, conifers, camellias, Japanese maples, hollies and a profusion of woody plants from the Pacific Northwest and around the world. Aesthetic enjoyment gracefully co-exists with science in this spectacular urban green space on the shores of Lake Washington. Visitors come to learn, explore, relax or reflect in Seattle's largest public garden.

The Washington Park Arboretum is managed cooperatively by the University of Washington and Seattle Parks and Recreation; the Arboretum Foundation is its major support organization.

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The Arboretum is accessible by Metro bus #43 from downtown Seattle and the University of Washington campus

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The Arboretum Foundation is a nonprofit organization established in 1935 to ensure stewardship for the Washington Park Arboretum and to provide horticultural leadership for the region. The Foundation provides funding, volunteer services, membership programs and public information in support of the Arboretum, its plant collections and programs. Volunteers operate the gift shop, conduct major fund-raising events, and further their gardening knowledge through study groups and hands-on work in the greenhouse or grounds.

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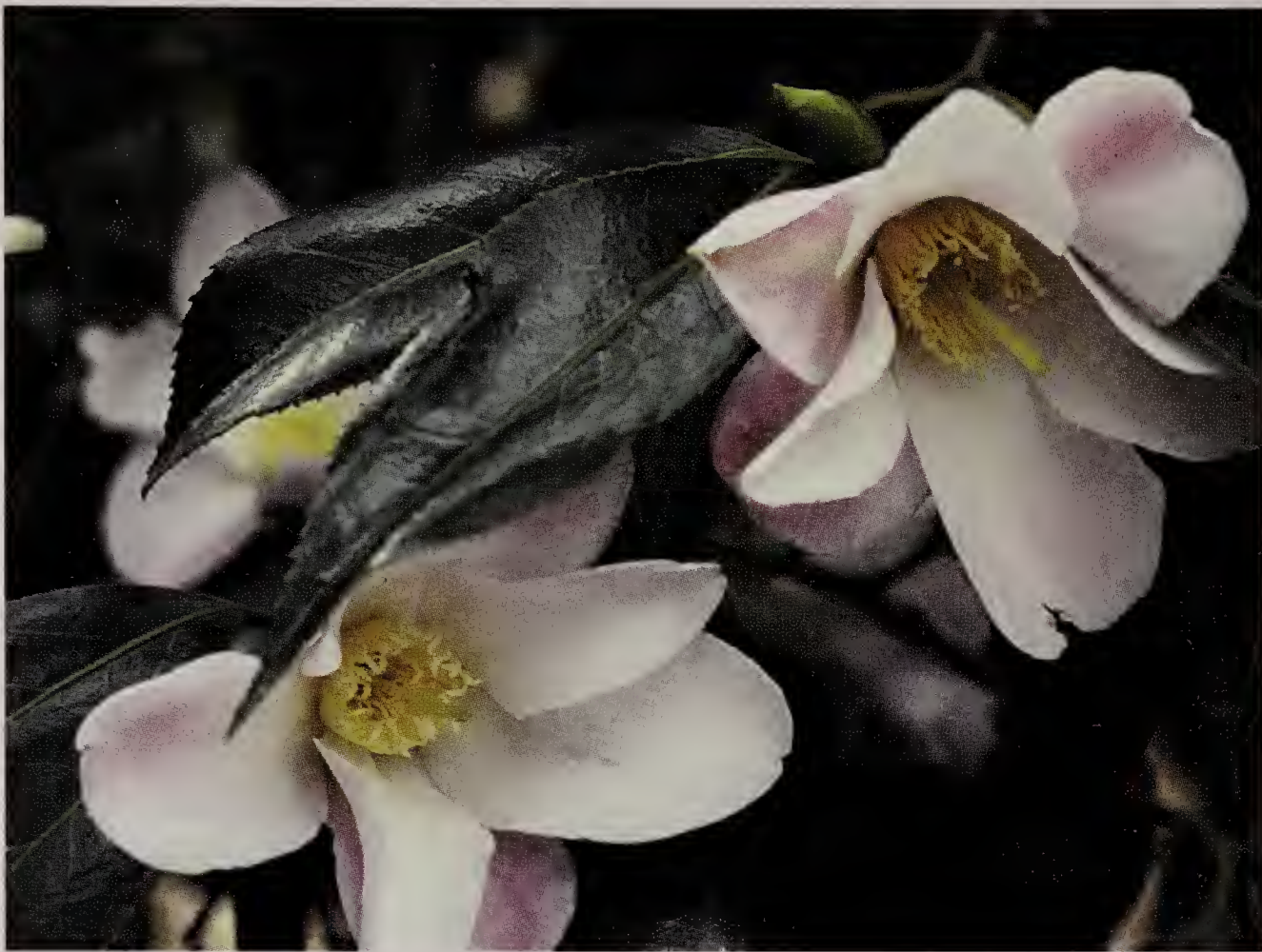


**ABOVE:** This yellow-variegated cultivar of the commonly known silverberry or thorny oleaster—*Elaeagnus pungens* 'Maculata'—grows to about 8 feet; it tolerates sun, partial shade and drought, while brightening the winter garden. It may be seen in the Arboretum at grid location 25-5W.

**ON THE COVER:** "Wasp Nest," by William Sutton of Seattle, was awarded first prize in the "Life in the Arboretum" professional division in last year's Arboretum photo contest.



# A Time for Restoration



An English hybrid between *Camellia japonica* and *C. saluensis*, winter-blooming *Camellia x williamsii* has an open habit and performs well in the Northwest. It may be seen at Arboretum grid location 10-6E. Cultivars of *C. x williamsii* will inspire those who visit the Arboretum's camellia collection in the upper Rhododendron Glen.

down Lake Washington Boulevard will offer a glimpse of the work that was accomplished.

Restoration is also the theme of two other articles

While we often think of winter as a quiet, reflective time for gardeners, it is anything but quiet around the Arboretum. Restoration and renewal are keeping us busy. Be sure to visit the newly contoured and planted area along the Duck Bay shoreline. John Wott's article in this issue will introduce you to all these wonderful improvements in this beloved area of the Arboretum. Additional changes are coming as plans are currently being developed for the first new gardens to be built in the Arboretum for many years. The South Entry of the Arboretum will enjoy a much overdue cleanup, enhanced trails, new gardens and a shelter. The amazing rockery that is currently hidden by overgrowth is also slated for restoration.

Restoration was also the theme of the two-day Seattle Parks and Recreation-sponsored Arboretum work jamboree in late October of last year. Staff from Parks and Recreation, the University of Washington grounds crew and the Arboretum Foundation, as well as many volunteers, spent hours working on a variety of projects. A drive

in this issue of the Bulletin. Visits to Whidbey Island's Earth Sanctuary (which has a 500-year plan!) and to the Center for Urban Horticulture's newly restored Merrill Hall will definitely lift our spirits.

And for the ultimate feeling of renewal, and a glimpse of the spring to come, be sure to visit the Northwest Flower and Garden Show. This year we are pleased, once again, to welcome Brad and Laurie Pugh as design partners for the Arboretum's display garden. Their design theme, Passion for an Urban Oasis, will demonstrate practical ideas for the home gardener. In addition to our display garden, we are pleased to present "Arbor Eden," the annual Flower and Garden Show Preview Gala. Since the Gala falls on "Fat Tuesday" this year (February 8), we are all excited about the Mardi Gras theme the date inspires.

With all of these opportunities to anticipate, how could we not feel restored! ~

Deborah Andrews, Executive Director,  
Arboretum Foundation



COMBINATIONS UNLOCKED

# The Whys & Wherefores of Favorite Plant Combinations

## # 8 Winter Inspiration

BY CARRIE BECKER

PHOTOS BY LYNNE HARRISON

Winter still seems to be the season when gardeners put less effort into creating lovely garden pictures, even though thoughtful plantings can do a lot to carry us through the darker part of the year. This sad situation is not because there is little choice of what to plant; rather,

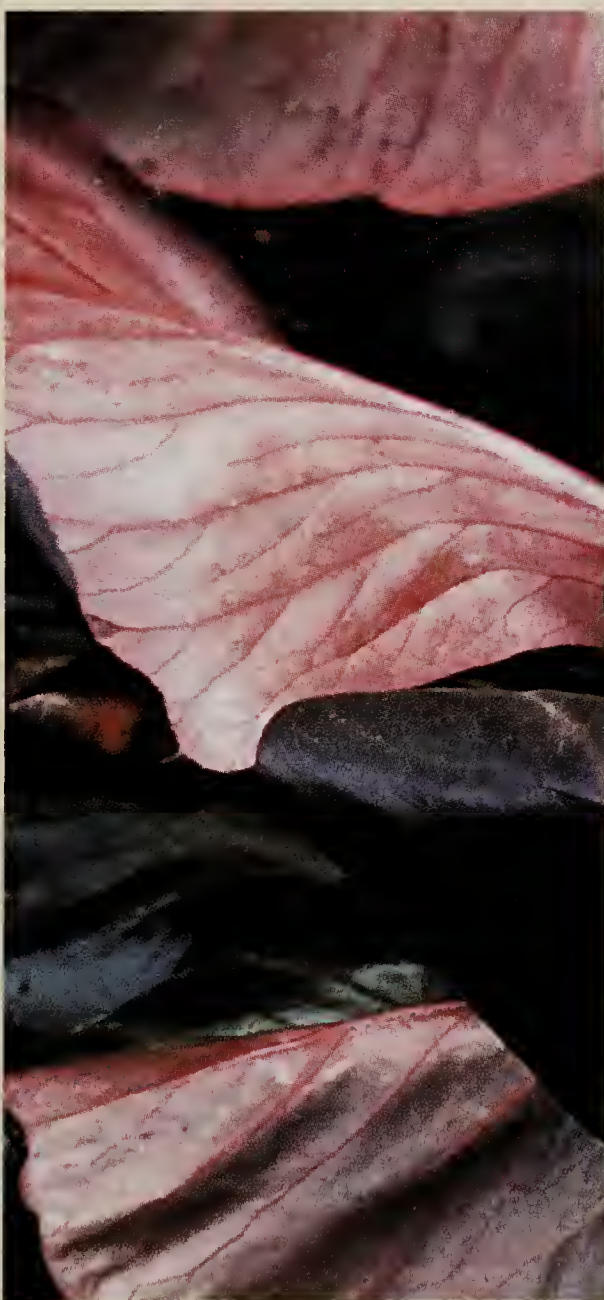
perhaps, there is less information about the beauty that is possible in the winter garden.

### *Just Imagine...*

It is winter—perhaps February. Imagine a fairly mature witch hazel, such as *Hamamelis* x *intermedia* 'Diane,' a deep red-flowered

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A collection of winter-garden stars: **LEFT**, the dark green, red-tinged leaves of *Helleborus foetidus* Wester Flisk Group; **CENTER**, a *Bergenia* chosen particularly for its rich red winter leaves; and **RIGHT**, the fall fruiting stems of *Arum italicum* 'Pictum,' which shares its elegant green and white foliage during winter.





form of this winter-blooming genus. In your mind's eye, 'Diane' is in full bloom, with wiry red blossoms on bare stems.

This would actually be a beautiful sight by itself! But in this daydream, under and around the shrub, are multiple plants of *Helleborus foetidus* Wester Flisk Group, an evergreen perennial with deep green-fingered leaves and milky green flowers with garnet lips.

Other plants in multiples include *Arum italicum* 'Pictum' and patches of snowdrops (*Galanthus nivalis*). Arums have new leaves that last all winter; they are green and arrow-shaped, about 12 inches long with white marbling. In fall, arums' fruiting stems—10-inch tall spikes covered with tightly packed, orange fruit—are very visible in the garden.

One can never have too many snowdrops. There are many varieties, but, to keep it simple, just plant the species *Galanthus nivalis* in big patches: white flowers with green tips on short stems. Nodding in the woodland,

there is nothing quite so uplifting on a winter morning as drifts of these gems.

For later in the winter and into early spring, add many plants of *Primula* 'Velvet Moon.' Its foliage is deep green and heavily veined, and when it first emerges, it has a burgundy cast to its foliage that still remains when the large, deep maroon flowers open. What a rich and satisfying sight. Just shut your eyes. You will see it.

There are lots of other plants that might be added to this picture, but part of the appeal of this combination comes from its simplicity: Not too many different kinds of plants and a three-color palette—deep red, white and green. This simplicity allows room for a quiet garden experience at the most reflective time of the year.

This planting would be best in a "verge" situation—in the foreground of the woodland, with partial sun and humus-rich, moist soil and more shade in the summer when the witch hazel and other larger plants leaf out.



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In fall, comes the bonus of good fall color on *Hamamelis x intermedia* 'Diane.' Red, orange and maroon leaves complement the orange fruit of the arums among the deep green fingers of the hellebore foliage. Simple: dark green, white and burgundy, repeated in various sizes and shapes.

### ***And If More Is Always Better...***

If you want to make your composition more complex or cover a lot of ground, here are a few more fine companions that come to mind: *Bergenias* at the edge, ones with big burgundy leaves in winter along with *Carex conica* 'Snowline,' *Iris foetidissima* and *I. foetidissima* 'Variegata.' Then add pulmonarias with silver-spotted leaves, *Cyclamen coum*, and climbing somewhere nearby, *Clematis cirrhosa* 'Freckles.'

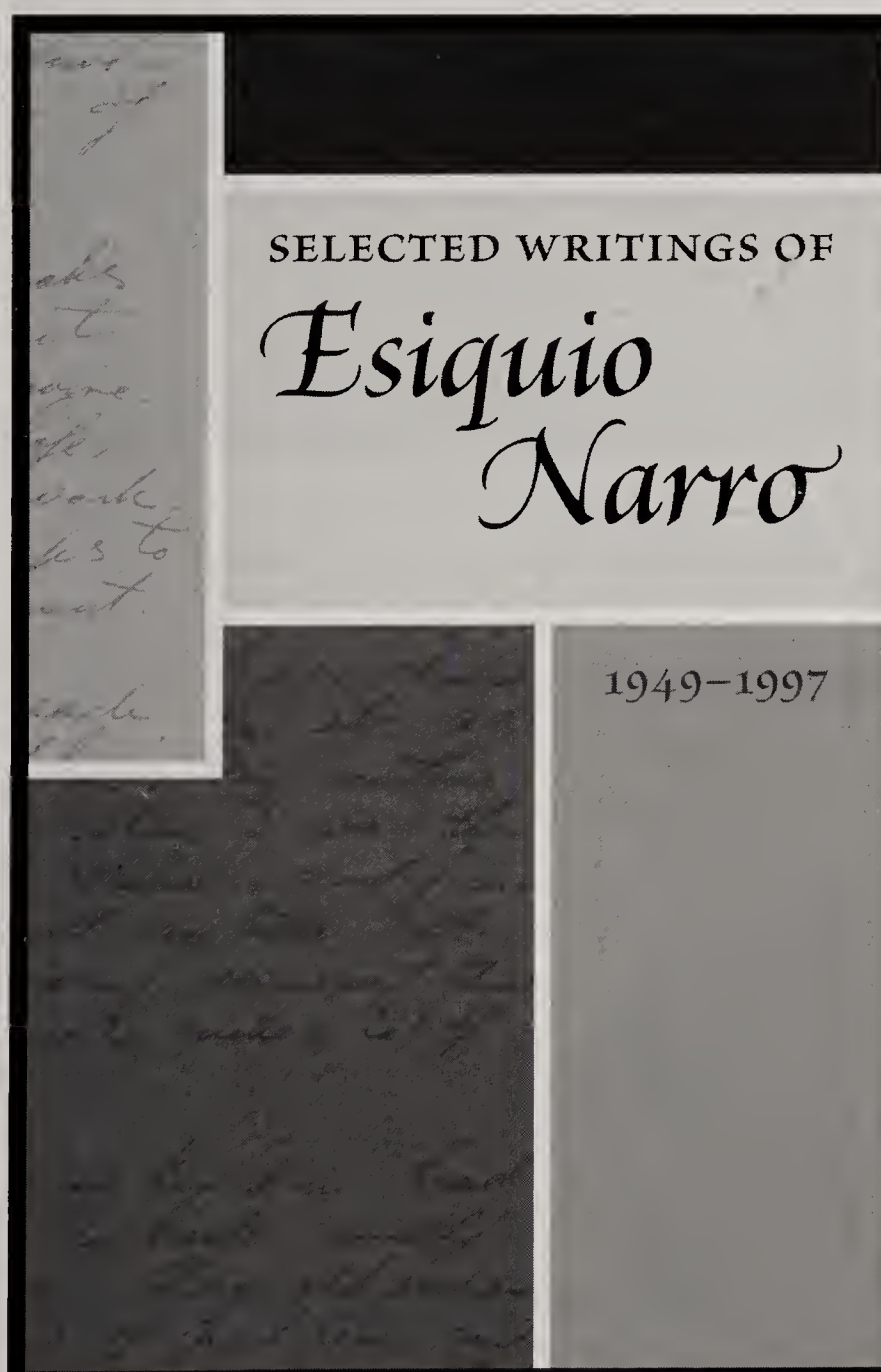
Another wave of thought for the same area: *Anemone nemorosa* 'Vestal,' to bloom later in winter in scattered patches, backed by

*Enkianthus perulatus*, with scarlet foliage in fall, along with the red stems of variegated *Cornus alba* 'Elegantissima,' *Viburnum tinus*, and variegated boxwood (*Buxus sempervirens* 'Argenteovariegata').

And much further back, another wave of color: A fine, red-barked Japanese maple, some Hinoki cypress (*Chamaecyparis obtusa*), a variegated Portuguese laurel (*Prunus lusitanica* 'Variegata') and even a few *Cornus sanguinea* 'Midwinter Fire.' And if there is a spot with more sunlight than the rest and a little protection from wind, the elegant *Camellia sasanqua* 'Yuletide.' Irresistible. ∞

---

**CARRIE BECKER** imagines new plant combinations as a garden designer, a horticultural instructor at Edmonds Community College and as one of the designers of the perennial border at the Bellevue Botanical Garden. She may be reached at 206-632-6237.



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# *Arctostaphylos*

BY MARTY WINGATE

PHOTOS BY RICHIE STEFFEN

The West is manzanita country. Most of the more than 50 species of *Arctostaphylos*, known commonly as manzanita, range from California to British Columbia. That being said, it should be pointed out that



the majority lives in California, and as you head north, the number of species dwindles down to a precious few.

Manzanita is a word taken from Spanish meaning "little apple," and it refers to the red, brown or black berry-



like fruit produced by these evergreen shrubs. Most *Arctostaphylos* bloom in late winter and early spring and set fruit by summer. The timing ensures that plants spend energy (and water) when it's available, during the West's wet winters, and when the dry summer comes, they can coast, so to speak.

The genus *Arctostaphylos* shares many characteristics with its ericaceous relatives—including *Arbutus*, *Pieris*, and *Vaccinium*, such as clusters of small, urn-shaped flowers in pink or white. The bark of most species of *Arctostaphylos* is smooth and cinnamon-colored; branches are sinuous, and the twists and turns add interest to a plant's habit.

"Warm, dry and well-drained"—the best growing conditions for most *Arctostaphylos*—sounds like a remedy for the Northwest winter blues. But most manzanitas, while they require good drainage and may grow along sandy beaches in their native habitat, such as the dune manzanita (*A. pumila*), don't necessarily need extreme heat. Some prefer mild summer temperatures, and even those growing in more montane circumstances, such as *A. patula* (greenleaf manzanita) prefer a winter chill.

### **A Variety of Species**

Manzanita species range in size; some are small trees, such as *A. manzanita* (the common manzanita), which may reach 20 feet, while its cultivar *A. manzanita* 'Dr. Hurd' grows to 15 feet. Others, such as the Northwest native kinnikinnik, *A. uva-ursi*, are mat-forming. Whether tall and upright or low and mounding, all *Arctostaphylos*, except the trailing ground covers, have a stiff form. The leaves are alternate and with smooth margins;

and on many manzanitas they are held perpendicular to the sun, as a defense against too much sun exposure.

The common manzanita grows inland of the California coast, in the foothills, and would require particularly careful siting in the cooler climate of the Pacific Northwest. But the many species that grow closer to the coast might suit a sunny, south-facing wall if their roots were in well-drained soil.

Many *Arctostaphylos* species have had forms selected and named as cultivars. These represent variations in the wild, but they may also represent the manzanita's ability to hybridize when the native ranges of species overlap. In fact, California boasts so many species with overlapping native ranges that the resulting natural hybridizing has taxonomists continually trying to corral all the manzanitas.

In Washington and Oregon there is a hybrid *Arctostaphylos* that makes not only a useful example of this occurrence, but also a fine garden plant. It is a natural cross between the mat-forming kinnikinnik (*A. uva-ursi*) and the 5-foot shrub *A. columbiana* (hairy manzanita). Where these two species share ground, a shrub of medial characteristics appears, known eponymously as *A. x media*.

Where kinnikinnik is low with small, glossy green leaves and the hairy manzanita is a medium-sized shrub with a mounding habit and light, gray-green, softly pubescent leaves, their cross takes on some characteristics of each. It grows to about 3 feet, and so is part groundcover and part mounding shrub; its foliage is gray-green and may have a slight sheen to it.

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**OPPOSITE TOP:** The elegant red-brown trunks of common manzanita, *Arctostaphylos manzanita*, which can reach 20 feet tall, are decorative at any time of year. To see for yourself, visit the Arboretum's specimen at grid coordinates 1S-3E.

**OPPOSITE INSET:** The attractive flowers of *Arctostaphylos densiflora* 'Howard McMinn' bloom from February to April. This trouble-free evergreen shrub may grow to be 6 feet high and 7 feet wide.

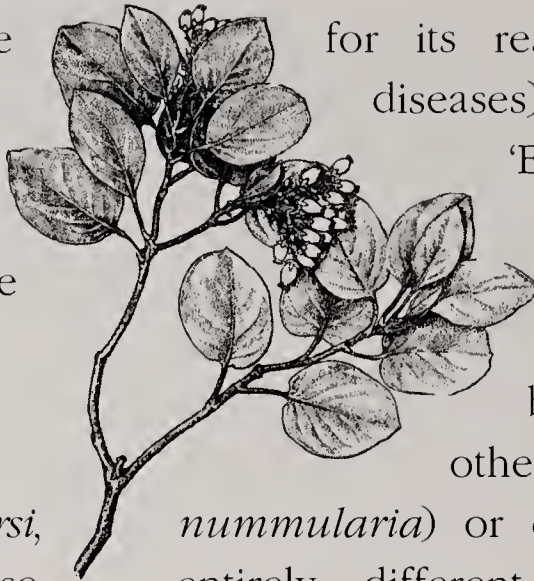


As with other crosses, whether in nature or by accident in the garden, someone has slapped a cultivar name on *Arctostaphylos x media*, and that someone was apparently from Oregon, because the cultivar is listed as 'Oregon Hybrid.'

### Most Accommodating

When it comes to *Arctostaphylos uva-ursi*, it's raining cultivars, in part because kinnikinnik (also known as bearberry) is such an accommodating plant in the garden, growing in rockeries, on flat ground, or under the high branches of trees. But it's also because *A. uva-ursi* is native not just to the Northwest; it's a circumpolar species, found in the Northern ranges of both North America and Eurasia.

Kinnikinnik cultivars are a mixed bag. Some plants have been selected locally, such as 'Vancouver Jade' from the University of British Columbia Botanical Garden. But there are some that come from afar, including *Arctostaphylos uva-ursi* 'Massachusetts' (noted



for its resistance to foliar fungal diseases) and others, such as 'Emerald Carpet,' that bear the name bearberry (*A. uva-ursi* 'Emerald Carpet') in some places, but are listed as a hybrid in others (*A. uva-ursi* x *A. nummularia*) or even as belonging to an entirely different species (*A. densiflora* 'Emerald Carpet'). Other cultivars are noted for a less-trailing habit (*A. uva-ursi* 'Wood's Compact') or for more vigorous growth (*A. uva-ursi* 'Point Reyes').

The vine hill manzanita (*Arctostaphylos densiflora*) is another species often planted in gardens, and this has led to selections that highlight particularly useful characteristics. *Arctostaphylos densiflora* is usually a mounding species to about 2 feet that can root where its branches touch the ground (much like *A. uva-ursi*), but it can be found in a more impressive mound (*A. densiflora* 'Howard McMinn' or 'Harmony') as well as the more tree-like form of *A. densiflora* 'Sentinel.'

Other selections contribute to the horticultural scene, including a hybrid of *Arctostaphylos hookeri* and *A. pajaroensis*, called *A. x* 'Sunset,' which is known for its copper-colored new growth. And of suspect parentage is *A. x* 'Pacific Mist,' a dense ground cover to about a foot high.

Given their necessary requirements, even Pacific Northwest gardens can extend their palette of *Arctostaphylos* to include one or two of these selections. Already well suited to this region's rainfall pattern, they need only to be thoughtfully placed in good sun and sharp-draining soil. ~

---

**MARTY WINGATE** writes widely about gardening and is a member of the Bulletin's editorial board. Her new book, "The Big Book of Northwest Perennials," will be published by Sasquatch Books in February 2005.

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# Duck Bay Shoreline and Trails Restoration

BY JOHN A. WOTT

PHOTOS BY BRENDA CHRYSTIE

Imagine paddling into Washington Park Arboretum's Duck Bay and heading toward one of several new canoe landing sites with a scrumptious picnic lunch aboard—then pulling into the landing and strolling along a new, dry path to find a

patch of sunny ground, just perfect for a picnic. Miraculously, this lovely day on the shore of Duck Bay is now possible. In addition, observation points have been established along the shoreline so that visitors can walk right down to the shore's edge to peer

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Ashley Clark, Arboretum Foundation Director of Development and Major Gifts, joins John Wott on a stroll across the new bridge to Foster Island.





The new bridge to Foster Island, made of Alaskan yellow cedar, makes a picturesque image, reflected in the water with the trunks of large trees.

into the water. And if you are a fisherman, a new area has been created to make fishing both more enjoyable and less damaging to the fragile shoreline.

Included in the Duck Bay shoreline restoration project is the creation of an ADA accessible trail starting at the edge of Foster Island Drive and entering Foster Island. A new, wider bridge, which even can be used by emergency vehicles, is constructed of Alaskan yellow cedar. It was marvelous to see a large crane nestle the bridge among the collection of willows nearby. An irrigation line, long broken, has been re-connected to Foster Island.

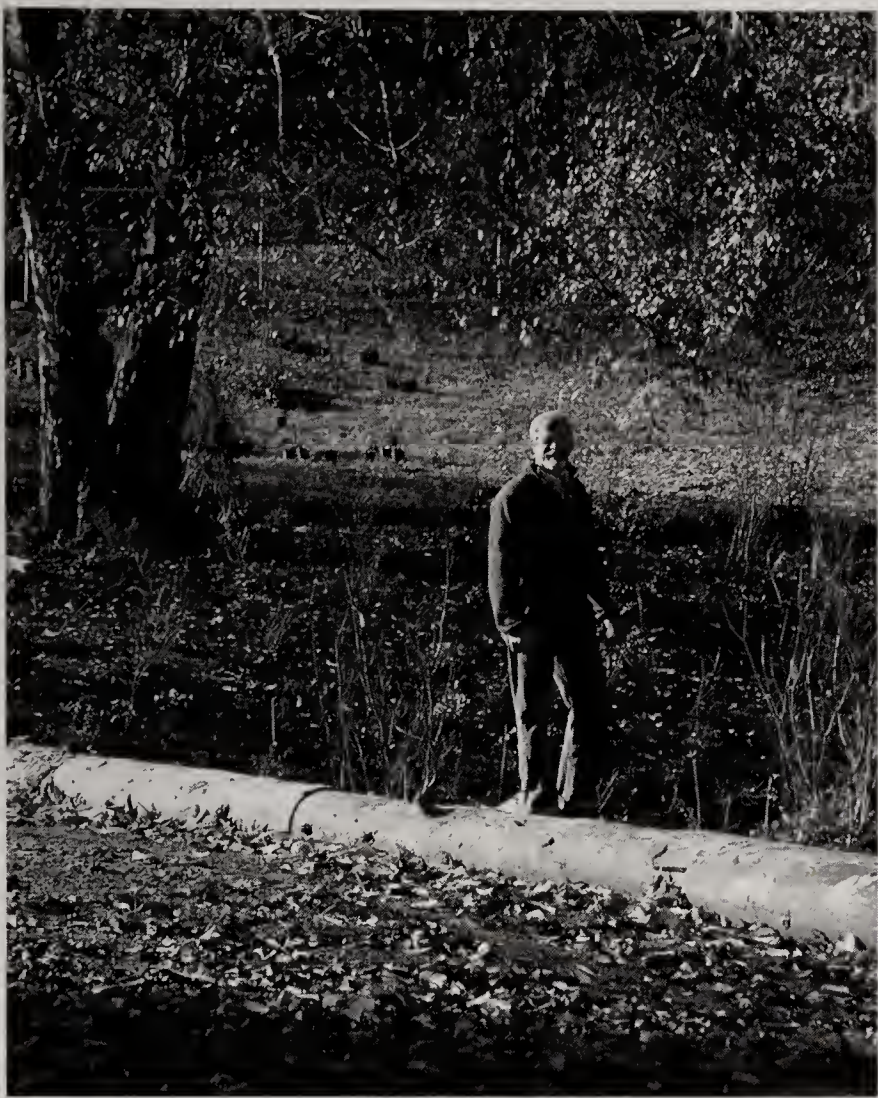
The funding for this Arboretum master plan renovation project—improvement of both Duck Bay and the Foster Island shoreline—came from the Seattle Parks and Recreation Shoreline Park Improvement Fund (SPIF). The \$1,230,000 project has been under study and design for nearly five years, and as the Bulletin goes to press, work is nearly completed. Because this

project involved shoreline restoration as well as wildlife habitat, it required a complicated permitting process that took two years and was led by Seattle Parks and Recreation project managers Colleen Brown and Tim Motzer.

Early in the planning phase, the University of Washington and Seattle Parks and Recreation crews, guided by Fred Hoyt, David Zuckerman, and Rory Denoven, evaluated Arboretum collections as well as native species growing in the area. A major portion of the work, undertaken by Caicos construction company, required grading and stabilization of the shoreline, since much of this area had been heavily overused and invaded by weedy species.

Anchor Design, led by John Small and Peter Hummel, worked with Arboretum staff to select a large number of native plants for shoreline plantings and stabilization of tidal waters. The plantings have been designed to protect the shoreline as well as to offer view corridors. Watch the woody cuttings of





Fred Hoyt, Center for Urban Horticulture/  
Washington Park Arboretum Grounds and  
Facilities Manager, inspects a new planting bed,  
stabilized by one of the stockpiled cedar logs.

dogwoods and willow hedges sprout and grow. A few special spots will be planted with accessioned Arboretum collections.

Stabilization of the shoreline and planting beds was also accomplished by more than sixty cedar logs that were stockpiled when trees were removed from city parks and the Arboretum. Logs with root wads were placed in the water to add further strength and to provide fish habitat. Also noteworthy is the use of recycled granite curbing to stabilize several areas. If you look closely, you will still see the red or yellow paint of its former life.

Please enjoy this newly renovated shoreline—one of many master plan projects that will rejuvenate the Arboretum in the years ahead. ∞

**JOHN A. WOTT**, Ph. D., is Director of Washington Park Arboretum and Acting Director of the Center for Urban Horticulture.

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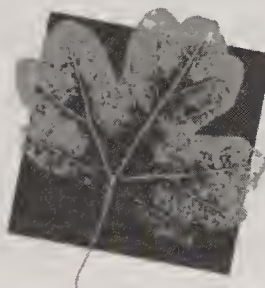
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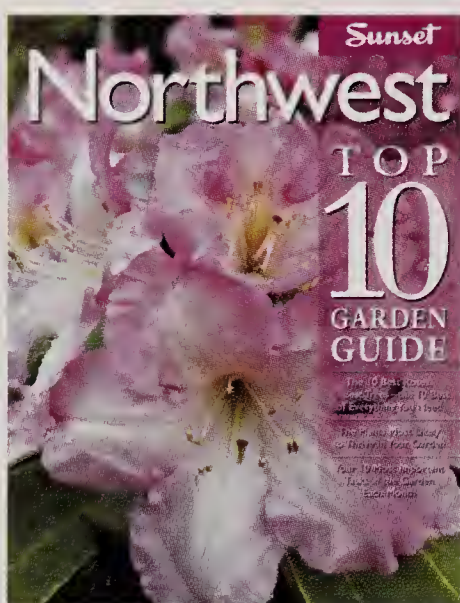
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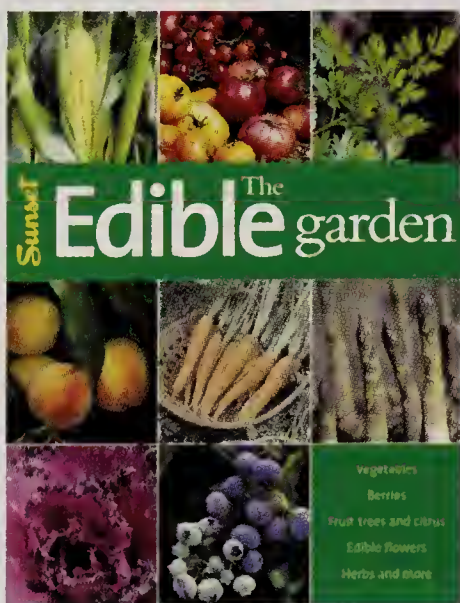


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# Hortus Non Gratis

BY STEVEN R. LORTON

It probably all began with Esther Schamp. Esther was my fourth grade Sunday school teacher at the First Christian Church in Sidney, Ohio. It was 1954. Esther was a wiry little bird of a woman with crimped auburn hair that she had “done” every Saturday for church on Sunday. And her cheeks were circles of rouge that glowed through a thick layer of powder.

Those mornings began with a prayer. Then we’d color something. Then Esther would hit



the piano. She’d whip us into a frenzy of faith as we belted out a couple of her favorites: A Volunteer for Jesus and maybe Onward Christian Soldiers. And seconds before the bell rang for the regular service in the sanctuary, Esther would jump off her piano stool and say, “Now close your eyes little children, close your eyes. Think about the good little girl or the good little boy that God wants you to be. And remember, there are no bad children. There are only bad situations that children get into.

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The large, glossy leaves of *Fatsia japonica*: “Before you dare scoff at this noble plant, buy a ticket to Kyoto and visit any five gardens. Your prejudice will deflate.”



PHOTO BY RICHARD HARTLAGE



So be careful and remember this too, all of you: every one of you is equal in the eyes of our Lord."

### ***Fast Forward to Fatsia japonica***

It's 1972. I'm in my first year as a garden writer for Sunset magazine's Northwest office. My friend and mentor, the great and inimitable Nancy Davidson, has encouraged me to go to a horticultural society meeting.

It starts out innocuously enough. There is social time with friendly chatter. Then a slide show, followed by questions. Then, as the cookies and coffee are set out, people begin chatting about their favorite plants. A young, attractive and articulate member who seems to know her way around the group turns to me and says, "Tell us about a favorite plant of yours, Steve."

And I say, "Well, coming from Ohio, where it doesn't grow, I really like *Fatsia japonica*." There is stunned silence, followed by a rustle of discomfort. Then a rather elegant man, with an arrogant sneer says, "I so love to go to low budget, World War II movies and see all the Japanese running around the jungles of *Fatsia japonica*." This is followed by laughter, applause, and a quick move to the next person.

Looking back, I think I felt like I'd just stood up at the Republican national convention and shouted out, "I love Hillary!"

But when I got over being embarrassed, I got mad. What's wrong with *Fatsia japonica*? Come on! I'd been all over Japan by that point and seen how the Japanese revere it, stripping its leaves off to expose the bottom three-fourths of those handsome stalks, leaving big, glossy, deeply-cut leaves at the top. It's a Shogun among plants, and, dang it, I intended to plant some in my new garden. And I did, too.

### ***Fearlessly Defending the Maligned***

This resoundingly annoying moment has

**"I felt like  
I'd just stood  
up at the  
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national  
convention  
and shouted  
out, 'I love  
Hillary'"**

led me to a life-long campaign to  
1) discover the merits of plants  
that have fallen from favor  
and 2) defend them with  
snarling fearlessness. It  
feels good!

Now it's true, plant  
snobbery is nearly a thing  
of the past. With modern  
propagation techniques, a  
plethora of growers, and a  
buying public always on the hunt  
for the new thing, any plant can  
enjoy rising star status for a year or

so. I remember when a couple of serious plant  
people had *Rheum palmatum* and, for a short  
blip in horticultural history, people sneaked  
around like Sherlock Holmes in search of a  
secret source.

Even funnier, I remember when having  
*Heuchera micrantha* 'Palace Purple' was a  
source of smugness. All that is over. Fluff your  
feathers over having any plant that no one  
else has and within a year you'll look like a  
wet rooster. Esther Schamp lives! Stand up for  
the oppressed! Speak out for Hortus Non  
Gratis! There are no bad plants. There are  
only bad situations that plants get into!

Favorite among my list of maligned plants  
are *Fatsia japonica*, *Pachysandra terminalis*,  
*Photinia x fraseri*, *Thuja occidentalis* (arbor-  
vitae), and *Vinca minor*. These are not sissies.  
Every one of them is a hard-working, un-  
demanding, and good-looking thing, ready to  
do the work that few other plants could tackle.

### ***You Dare Scoff?***

Let's start with *Fatsia japonica*. The  
Japanese know what they are doing when it  
comes to gardening. Before you dare scoff at  
this noble plant, buy a ticket to Kyoto and visit  
any five gardens. Your prejudice will deflate.  
But let me tell you my story. When my wife,  
Anna Lou, and I were a young couple living  
in Seattle, we were penniless, but we enjoyed  
throwing dinner parties for interesting people.



Normally we invited one other couple, making a total of four at the table. But on one occasion we invited two couples, a total of six people. Anna Lou had done a beautiful grated carrot and raisin salad to accompany the entree. As I scurried about, getting candles in sticks, positioning flowers, I heard her in the kitchen saying, "Oh, no! Oh no!"

I rushed out. What was the trouble? We had eight salad plates, at this point—four for salad and four for dessert. But with six people coming, I would have to clear the table, step into the kitchen and wash plates before dessert could be served. I remember the frustration in her voice and my feeling of inadequacy as a provider as she uttered the horrendous word, "Tacky!"

I stepped to the window and stared out in a panic. And then...and then...my eyes lit on our *Fatsia japonica*. I shot outside, plucked six big glossy leaves, came in and washed them, put them top left, next to the dinner plates, and Anna Lou spooned on the carrot and raisin salad. Gorgeous! Ding-dong, the doorbell rang. In came the guests, and the lavish praise for our daring and style lasted all evening, even spilling into post-party thank-you notes.

I'm not done. My mother-in-law, a highfalutin gardener from Ohio, came out, took home a cut branch of our *Fatsia japonica*, rooted it in water, planted it in a pot and grew it indoors for two decades in her Ohio sun room. She regularly referred to her beloved house-plant as "Fat-so."

### ***More Unheralded Elegance***

*Pachysandra terminalis*? You have dry shade? You want a sweep of deep, low maintenance green on the north side? Want to fill ground while you decide what else to do? *Pachysandra*. There's an American member of the genus, but again, the Japanese species has

proven the workhorse. I once saw it at the shady end of a large stone terrace. A semi-circle of *Cotoneaster horizontalis* zig-zagged, 20 feet from one side of the patio to the other, arching out 10 feet. Inside this semi-circle was a lush green carpet of *Pachysandra*. And smack-dab in the middle of this sea of green, rising up from the ground, was a huge, silver gazing ball. That was all. Stunning!

As for *Photinia x fraseri*, I couldn't love it more. I have three plants I've grown as trees for nearly 30 years in my Seattle garden. Messy? Yes. Any messier than an oak? No. I prune them up, exposing their shapely trunks, and they bless me with a street-screening crop of shinning, vivid, evergreen (and ever-red) leaves at the top. Once, when I briefly succumbed to plant snobbery (I'm still ashamed of myself for that), I visited a garden on the Olympic Peninsula. As I walked around with a delightfully rambunctious gardener, wearing the rain-shedding jacket of her bowling league, I spotted, not far from the rear of the house, a row of *Photinia x fraseri*. "Oh," I said, temporarily bereft of my senses and the guiding spirit of Esther Schamp, "what made you choose *Photinia*?" The lady stepped forward, "Well, look here. It's the only thing I could find that would hide my propane tank and do it pretty quick." So it had. As Rosemary Verey often said, "Well done!"

Could there be a more stately spire of green to punctuate a garden than good, old fashioned arborvitae (*Thuja occidentalis*)? It's sculptural, standing alone. It works as a handsome and solid screen. It will mask a chimney or flank a garage door. My friend Akira Takeda needed a tight, vertical statement to mark the end of his city garden. He bought one, two,

**"Esther  
Schamp lives!  
Stand up for  
the oppressed!  
Speak out for  
Hortus Non  
Gratis!"**

*continues on page 29*



# EARTH SANCTUARY

TEXT AND PHOTOS BY DAN BORROFF

*"It is not enough to understand the natural world.  
The point is to defend and preserve it." —Edward Abbey*

Five hundred years from now the restoration of Earth Sanctuary will be complete. Seventy-two acres of woodlands, wetlands and open water on Whidbey Island, Earth Sanctuary is a meditation parkland with the goal of bringing together "ancient art forms, a profound connection with nature and diverse global spiritual traditions."

The inspiration of Chuck Pettis, founder and president of Brand Solutions, Inc., Earth Sanctuary came into being when Pettis chose to turn a financial windfall into a retreat center. Pettis' earlier experiences with His Holiness Jigdal Dagchen Sakya (Rinpoche), Head Lama of Sakya Monastery in Seattle, were inspirational. Rinpoche reminded Pettis that the smallest creatures are of equal importance to larger charismatic species, the insect no less than the osprey. Indeed, without the insects there would be no birds. "I realized that whatever I created in the future needed to be not only a sacred space—but also a space for sacred ecology, for the whole web of life." The result is a place for healing—the healing of nature and of the human spirit.

The site of Earth Sanctuary, near Freeland, which Pettis purchased in 2000, is a "Habitat of Local Importance" for Island County and for

the Whidbey Island Audubon Society. It includes three large ponds: The West and Middle Ponds were created by the US Soil Conservation Service (SCS) in the 1970s. Fen Pond, a post-glacial pond, contains a five-acre floating bog. An area of this bog, about 5 feet above the surrounding marsh surface, is unique, for raised bogs are rare in Western Washington. This is a dangerous and fascinating place. Logs and other woody floating debris support the Fen Pond mat. Bog species make the water acidic enough to keep the logs pickled for



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**BACKGROUND:** In front of Middle Pond, the warmth of the stones of Earth Sanctuary's Labyrinth has melted the snow also dusting the salal. In the still morning air, snow dripping from branches and occasional birdcalls provide the only sound.

**INSET:** The Dolmen, constructed of Montana sandstone, is surrounded by crushed basalt for meditative walking. Hidden behind the Dolmen is a small arm of West Pond covered in duckweed.



millennia. Some trees found in the fen bog habitat are hundreds of years old. To fall in would be disaster. In addition to trees, similar bogs have preserved people from prehistoric times, their skin tanned like leather.

### ***In the Beginning***

The Earth Sanctuary team's first site-visit four years ago was greeted by rain. We felt immersed in the rain, nearly under water. The site seemed to be hundreds of acres, although we covered less than half of its acreage in four hours. At the end of our trek, the weather

beginning to clear, we emerged on the road; the sights, sounds and smells of the woods felt immediately distant, a reminder that convenience comes with the loss of wildness.

### ***Three Years into the 500-Year Restoration Plan***

Early morning, late fall 2004: The calls of winter wrens, song sparrows, American robins, chickadees, nuthatches and golden-crowned kinglets fill the air near Middle Pond. We are surrounded by birds. Snags from a drowned forest rise from Middle Pond; a remnant mist





hangs low on the water. On a small peninsula in the pond is a stone labyrinth. Instead of raised stones and turf paths, salal fills the spaces between stone pathways, since native grasses, clump formers, are unsuitable for turf. A dozen species of native plants surround the labyrinth. In a few years these will shield the pond from visitors in summer nesting season.

Middle Pond is ringed on its north shore by swaths of shrubby willows and alders, their branches amber, dull gold and soft vermillion. Next spring's buds and catkins are a haze echoing the mist. Behind them on the hillside is a backdrop of fir and hemlock. Sheltered by the trees, the calm air inspires exuberant flight and song. In spring there will be teals, mallards, mergansers, band-tailed pigeons, flycatchers, cedar waxwings, tanagers, and black-headed grosbeaks, the most lyrical of all. At dusk they will be joined by dozens of swallows.

The cares of the modern world drop away. Wonder at the combination of calm water and animated birds remains. Winter here seems a blessing. The thicket of trees and shrubs calms the wind and quiets the storm. The sound of raindrops on the ponds is a delight. They hang like jewels on the twigs and lacquer the trunks of the trees. Damp earth and the sounds of this environment in winter affect us deeply, something rarely considered in the built environment, with its exposed and windswept pavements. With leaves gone from the alders and willows, the forest opens, and light reaches the forest floor. Winter here is a sweet season.

### ***Buried in Blackberry***

In 2000, this Middle Pond peninsula was buried in Himalayan blackberry, a discouraging prospect for those responsible for clearing the site. Mike Sweeney, the artist of the team, honored the blackberries' vitality by weaving them into large rings. The rings were then wired together into spheres and hung from trees over, and near, the paths. When Mike fabricated a jig to speed the making of the rings, there was



**LEFT:** Himalayan blackberries cleared from the site were woven into large circles placed near Earth Sanctuary trails. **RIGHT:** Delicate Llenroc stones, which form the Fen Stone Circle, cast long, dramatic shadows on short winter days.

immediate, tangible and handsome proof of the efforts of the blackberry-clearing crew. Over the period of a few weeks, the spheres turned from green to rich dark burgundy. Everyone was affected by the fact that something so despised could become so striking. Spirits lifted and clearing accelerated.

### ***Late Successional Forest***

Kevin Fetherston, wetland ecologist, author of Earth Sanctuary's "500-Year Plan," chose one of the few remaining island groves of mature forest at South Whidbey State Park as the model ecosystem for the Earth Sanctuary restoration. This late successional forest serves as inspiration for all aspects of Earth Sanctuary's design—ecological, spiritual and aesthetic.

The Western hemlock, Douglas fir forests of Whidbey Island take on old growth characteristics between 175 and 250 years of age. The young, dense forest stands grow into a multi-layered forest with understory, mid-story and canopy trees interspersed with an abundant population of snags and downed logs. Understory vegetation includes sword fern, huckleberry, Oregon grape and twinflower, among others. The structural complexity of these ancient forests creates a diversity of plant and animal habitats. Birds fly easily. Similarities



to the Gothic cathedrals of Europe make one wonder if forests like these were the inspiration for architects of the Middle Ages.

### ***An Integrated Design***

*"Style is a matter of taste,  
Design a matter of principles."  
—Thomas Church, Landscape Architect*

Our first connection to the land is visceral, not intellectual, and many of us find emotional and spiritual rejuvenation in woods, water and mountains. At Earth Sanctuary, the integration of science, spirituality, art and design has presented both opportunity and challenge. Good restoration science is available, but there is little precedent for "spiritual" design, except, perhaps, for soft textures, sacred objects inserted into the design and pretty flowers. This approach to spiritual design seemed inadequate at Earth Sanctuary. Of the seven restoration projects undertaken to date, four centered on "sacred" sites—stone artworks—incorporate three principles key to meditation: focus, clarity and balance.

### ***Sacred Artworks***

The Fen Stone Circle site was primarily a species-poor mix of deciduous shrubs and trees, a result of being logged twice. Barren in winter, it lacked typical evergreen shrubs. To create the circle, delicate Llenroc stone slabs have been surrounded by a ring of native evergreen shrubs. These rich green shrubs provide species diversity, add solidity and frame the delicate stonework. The first dark, young conifers, planted in the quadrant southwest of

the stone circle, will replace the alders as they die and will mature a century or more from now. The southeast quadrant will be planted in about 40 years. Eventually the canopy will layer and open, and the Fen Stone Circle will become a well of sky amid the forest.

The Labyrinth's challenge: its proximity to the most robust and sensitive habitat on the property. Sheltering shrubs of a dozen species allow us to be close to this evocative body of water, Middle Pond, without disrupting the wildlife. The dark salal foliage provides both substance and focus. A bird blind is being considered for viewing birds in summer.

Precisely aligned with the winter solstice sunset, the Dolmen also stands near Middle Pond. The path leads past weeping willows planted by the SCS. Across the isthmus that divides Middle Pond from West Pond, prayer flags flutter in the breeze. The Dolmen sits on a small plateau created by the spoils of the excavation of West Pond in the '70s. Delicate red huckleberry and flowering currant, selected to contrast with the massive stone, are the basis for the Dolmen planting. The inward focus of the Dolmen is balanced by the selection of low shrubs that carry us outward to views of the ponds and forest.

The Cottonwood Stone Circle's massive stones are set in a bowl near its center. This thicket of alder saplings and Himalayan blackberry has been transformed. It is majestic and intimate at the same time. The delicate foliage and haze of bloom and seeds of several species of *Carex* and *Deschampsia* drift like clouds in the bowl. Eight cottonwoods, their trunks smooth and gray in contrast with the dark columnar basalt, will someday provide an echo of the majestic stones whose dark surfaces seem to weep in winter rains. Someday blue herons may nest in these cottonwoods, among their preferred nest sites. Their proximity to the osprey is a good portent, for ospreys defend their territory from bald eagles, predators of

### **THE EARTH SANCTUARY TEAM**

**Chuck Pettis: Founder.**

**Kevin Fetherston: Wetland Ecologist.**

**David Rousseau: Feng Shui Architect.**

**Mike Sweeney: Artist.**

**Dan Borroff: Landscape Designer.**

**Dave Schmidt: Landscaper.**

**Celia Sullivan: Caretaker.**

**Dean Rae Berg, Ph.D.: Silviculturist.**

*continues on page 33*





# A Phoenix Rises— Merrill Hall Reopens!

TEXT AND PHOTOS BY SUE NICOL

After an intense year of construction, the University of Washington (UW) Center for Urban Horticulture (CUH) will celebrate the opening of the new Merrill Hall January 19, 2005. Grand opening festivities will honor the founders of CUH as well as the many supporters who helped rebuild. What a distance we have come since a 2001 arson fire



gutted CUH's offices and labs, the Elisabeth C. Miller Horticultural Library, Hyde Herbarium, and the Washington State University (WSU) Extension and Master Gardener offices and Plant Clinic.

Breathe deeply as you enter Merrill Hall's bright new lobby for the first time. If you notice only fresh air or a whiff of straw, be assured you have entered a healthy building. Merrill is part of

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**ABOVE:** The new Merrill Hall houses offices and laboratories for CUH staff and faculty, including those involved in education, research, outreach and the rare plant care program. The Otis Douglas Hyde Herbarium is also housed in the new facility. In the background are new solar panels visible on the roof of the Elisabeth C. Miller Horticultural Library.

**INSET:** John Wells, of Urban Hardwoods, stands behind two black locust benches he is constructing for the Merrill Hall lobby.



an evolving ethic in “green design,” epitomized by the acronym, LEED™, which stands for Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design. Managed by the United States Green Building Council (usgbc.org), it is the rating standard by which green buildings are measured in the U.S. today.

### ***From Fire to Future***

For the faculty, staff, students, and community who endured the fire in May 2001, it has been a slow, tough recovery. Measured against a backdrop of the September 11, 2001, tragedy and an economic downturn that saw state funding for universities plummet, the rebuilding process could not have come at a worse time.

CUH was originally built with private donations. After the fire and while facing budget cuts, the UW was challenged to live up to the concept of being “self insured.” Two weeks after the fire, then-President Richard McCormick, together with State Representatives Ken Jacobsen and Jim McIntyre and State Senator Pat Thibideau, pledged to rebuild. UW leaders were adamant that only the original 17,022 square feet would be rebuilt using state money.

With the hiring of the Miller/Hull Partnership as lead architects, CUH began the arduous process of fitting today’s needs and building codes into yesterday’s square footage. In spite of a low budget, Director Tom Hinckley and the CUH community chose to create a new building that would reflect CUH mission and values. In brief, CUH is located where the built and natural worlds meet. An important theme of the new Merrill Hall is the interconnectedness of those two worlds.

After much discussion, it was decided that the new Merrill would be designed to meet the mission of sustainability touted by CUH and the College of Forest Resources. However, UW administrators were clear. Merrill could follow ‘green’ design principles and apply for LEED™ certification only if the price didn’t go up or if the additional money required came from donors.

### **Briggs Nursery's 2004 Plant of the Year Rhododendron 'Capistrano'**



For the  
Best Quality  
**Rhododendrons**  
in the  
Northwest...

Rely on  
Briggs Nursery.

Ask for them at your  
favorite garden center.





By October 2004, 39 buildings in the Seattle area had applied for LEED™ certification. Fisher Festival Pavilion at Seattle Center, the City's Justice Center, and Carkeek Park's Environmental Learning Center were among the first to receive it. Merrill Hall is likely to be the second UW building project to receive LEED™ certification, the first being the Cherry Parkes and Mattress Factory building project on the UW Tacoma campus. LEED™ buildings can achieve one of four ratings: certified, silver, gold, or platinum, depending upon the number of points earned. Merrill Hall's rating will not be known until spring 2005.

### ***Together We Built It***

The new Merrill Hall is 2,000 square feet larger than the old Merrill, thanks to many donors and also to the University's Provost's office, which provided additional money for The Commons, a glass-enclosed multi-use space that sits on the west side of McVay Courtyard. Additional funds for The Commons included a generous gift from the Seattle Garden Club, donations from a large number of faculty, staff and students from the College of Forest Resources, and over 500 individuals,

groups, businesses and organizations who purchased 694 tiles.

Support for rebuilding came from many places. The first donation was presented in person by Yugi Koide, president of Land Japan Design, Inc., a landscape design firm in Tokyo. His check represented contributions from 29 Japanese designers and horticulturists who had earlier traveled to CUH for educational programs.

Support from The Pendleton and Elisabeth Carey Miller Charitable Foundation and many library donors allowed the Miller Library to expand by 800 square feet. In addition to a larger reading room, the Library now has a new small-group study room and a gathering place to begin library tours.

The Northwest Horticultural Society's Fund for Furnishing the Miller Library provided funds to completely furnish the new space, including a moveable shelf system that will allow the book collection to increase by 50 percent.

Donations from Patsy Collins, the Peach Foundation, the Bullitt Foundation, the Hinckley family, and many UW staff, faculty and students paid for the sustainable features of the new Merrill. This includes a demonstration green roof, wood products grown in sustainable forests, a storm-water collection and recycling system and a variety of environmentally sensitive technologies to reduce energy and resource use. Chen Ragen, LLC donated the bamboo flooring used in part of the new Merrill Hall. Office furniture donated by Davis Wright Tremaine LLP also tells part of the recycling story.

Donations from WSU, Mary Robson, and the Master Gardener Foundation provided a classroom, two offices and plant clinic space in Merrill Hall for WSU's Extension programs. The Office of the Chairman of Simpson Investment Company, represented by Colin Mosley, donated 35, vertical-grain, Douglas fir doors. The College of Forest Resources stepped in to furnish the laboratories, offices and public spaces outside of the Miller Library.

### **HERE'S WHO MADE THE NEW MERRILL HALL HAPPEN:**

**Project Architects: The Miller/Hull Partnership**

**Project Landscape Architects: The Berger Partnership**

**General Contractor: CDK Construction Services, Inc.**

**Mechanical Engineer: KEEN Engineering**

**Electrical Engineer: Travis Fitzmaurice & Associates**

**Civil Engineer: SVR Design**

**Structural Engineer: Quantum Consulting Engineers**

**Sustainability Consultant: O'Brien and Associates**

**Project Manager: Norm Menter, UW Capital Projects**

**Construction Manager: Steve Folk, UW Capital Projects**

**CUH Merrill Project Coordinator: Sue Nicol**





The information desk in the new Elisabeth C. Miller Horticultural Library.

### ***Leaving a Smaller Footprint***

The ultimate goal in rebuilding was to understand the “footprint” the old building left on its site, and thereby reduce the “footprint” of the new building. A footprint is merely a term that helps us understand the impact construction makes in terms of the energy and natural resources needed to build and maintain a structure. Buildings that waste energy by not insulating or recycling, or that use more water than needed, all leave a bigger footprint than those that reuse and salvage building materials, recycle intelligently, and insulate.

### ***Five Chapters in the Green Building Story***

**THE SUSTAINABLE SITE:** The new Merrill sits on the south and west sides of McVay Courtyard, very close to its original site. The impact of construction was kept close to the building out of a respect for the natural area that surrounds CUH. This is part of the green building ethic. But a sustainable site goes way beyond the edge of the building. The new Merrill earns green building credits by being near public transportation and offering bicycle storage and changing rooms for people who bike to work. Two parking spaces are reserved for people who carpool to work.

The use of dark and non-reflective surfaces for pavement and roofs play an important role in increasing temperatures in cities. Many cities see temperatures average 5 to 10 degrees

higher than the surrounding natural area. This is called the heat island effect, which green buildings receive credits for reducing. Putting plants on a roof, or making a roof reflect heat rather than absorb it, reduces urban heat island effects. Merrill’s 400-square-foot demonstration green roof is at courtyard level, allowing visitors to study the best soils and plants for green roofs in the Seattle area. Merrill’s main roof has a special coating that reduces heat buildup, saving cooling costs and earning green building credits.

**WATER-EFFICIENT RESTROOMS AND RECYCLED STORM WATER:** This is where bathroom humor comes in handy. Frankly, America lags behind the rest of the world in saving water in restrooms. Most American men have never encountered a waterless urinal. Most of us have never seen “half and whole-flush” flushers on toilets. Merrill occupants will use 20 percent less water in the new building merely by using water-efficient fixtures in restrooms.

Merrill also earns green building credits by having an irrigation system linked to a campus weather station. This ensures that sprinklers don’t run unnecessarily right after a rain. Storm water runoff from Merrill is stored in a 2,200-gallon underground cistern for reuse in the green roof’s irrigation system. Excess storm water is metered slowly from a “runnel,” a narrow water channel, on the south side of the building through the Union Bay Natural Area and eventually into Lake Washington. The runnel is concrete but will be planted, as if it were a long, narrow container, with species adaptable to the wet/dry cycle of rainfall in the Pacific Northwest.

**SMART WAYS TO CONSERVE ENERGY:** Much of the nation’s energy is wasted because many buildings don’t have well-designed heating and air conditioning systems. Merrill uses a combination of new energy technology and old-fashioned open windows to reduce energy consumption by 20 percent. Though the labs, library and herbarium are air-conditioned, the rest of the building is naturally ventilated.



Designers carefully located windows and fans in order to draw cool air from the lower floor and in through open windows up the central staircase to vent through a roof fan.

Care was taken to “commission” the building before occupancy. The purpose of commissioning is to make sure that building systems operate exactly as they were designed. When done right, it can increase energy efficiency by 5 to 10 percent, a huge cost savings over time. Research shows that employee productivity can also be increased by building systems that operate well.

Another green building credit came to Merrill with the help of Seattle City Light through its Green Power program. City Light customers have the option of paying extra to support renewable energy projects. Through this fund, City Light donated a 9.2 KW solar panel installation for the Miller Library roof. It will generate enough electricity to run all the lighting needed on the upper floor of the building.

**SUSTAINABLE WOOD AND SMART USE OF RECYCLED PRODUCTS:** This chapter in the Merrill Hall story is about recycling, reuse, and renewable resources. CDK Construction diverted over 95 percent of construction debris away from landfills by enacting a strict recycling program on the project site. Over 25 percent of building materials contain recycled content. These include window glass, ceramic tile, strawboard in cabinets and bookshelves, and concrete. Over half of the building materials are manufactured and harvested locally, and the wood used to frame the building meets strict Forest Stewardship Council certification requirements for sustainable forests.

The University of Washington recycling program meets green building standards, and CUH participates actively to recycle paper, cardboard, glass, plastic, aluminum, and batteries. Merrill will have recycling stations throughout the building for staff as well as the public.

**A HEALTHY BUILDING TO WORK IN:** Americans spend most of their time indoors.

**VISIT**

**SPRING**

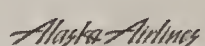
*It's like winter. Only warmer and with **MORE FLOWERS.***

FIND SPRING AT THIS YEAR'S

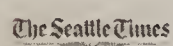
**NORTHWEST FLOWER & GARDEN SHOW**

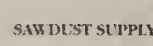
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Recent studies have shown that improving indoor air quality can increase worker productivity by 16 percent. Merrill Hall received green building credits for using building materials that do not use volatile organic compounds commonly found in paints, adhesives, sealants and carpets. CDK Construction contributed to this by writing and following a strict plan for maintaining good indoor air quality during construction. Merrill Hall was healthy for the people who built it, just as it is for the people who occupy it.

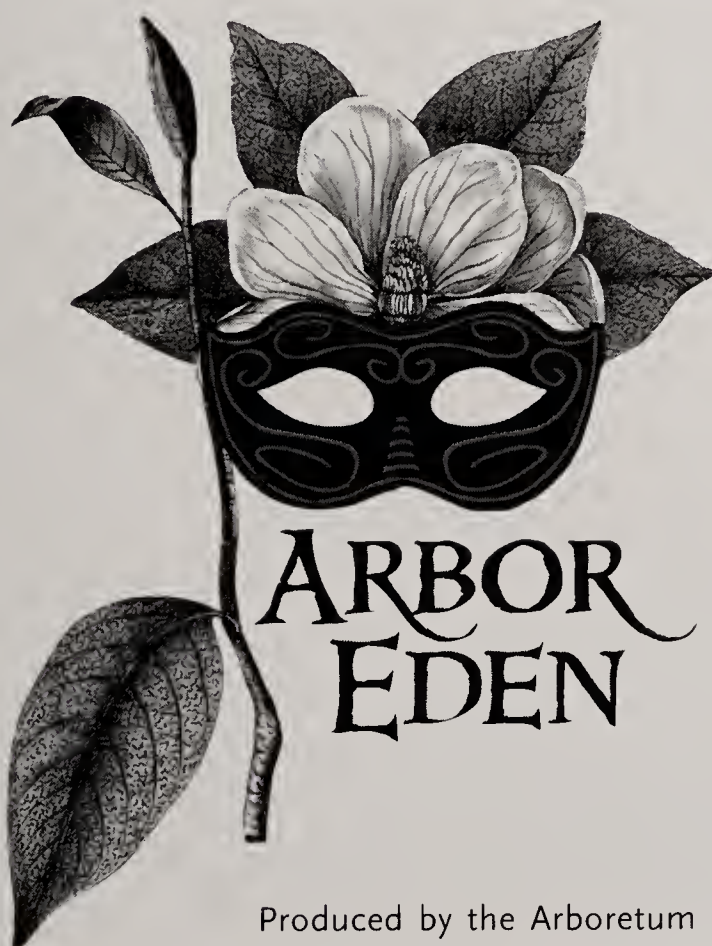
The Green Building movement will someday be so commonplace that no one will need a LEED™ program to promote its practices. The City of Seattle has mandated that all new city buildings will be built in this manner. UW President Mark Emmert has only recently signed a new sustainable building policy for the University's three campuses. What better way to begin to educate a new generation of architects, landscape architects, and construction managers?

Much credit for Merrill Hall's rebuilding goes to former CUH Director Tom Hinckley, who never wavered in his determination to create a building that would reflect the values and mission of CUH. The credit will be shared with the many committed supporters, staff, faculty, volunteers, and students who came together these last three years to help Merrill Hall's rise from the ashes. Please celebrate with us at the Grand Opening! ☺

As Outreach Coordinator for CUH and Washington Park Arboretum, **SUE NICOL** manages continuing education programs for the gardening public and for professionals in the horticulture industry. She is Coordinator of the Merrill project. She may be reached at 206-543-3889.

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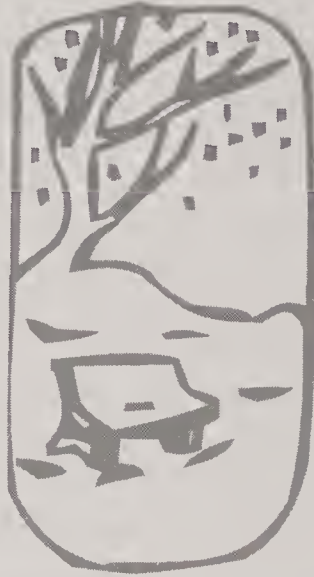
# Seats of Honor

BY HOLLY M. REDELL

Back in the days when kids actually played outside in unstructured ways, my pals and I spent endless hours playing “school” on the benches that spanned the gracious drive in front of our homes. The drive itself was part of the Olmsted “Emerald Necklace” in New York and our stretch, Eastern Parkway, ran right next to the Brooklyn Botanic Garden, the vista from our benches. We felt personally connected to these benches—old-fashioned, city-street constructions, with wide slats and back rests. Just as some of the beautiful trees on those childhood blocks possessed, some of the benches had memorial plaques commemorating young soldiers who had died in World Wars I and II.

Similarly, Washington Park Arboretum has commemorative benches. The Arboretum Foundation’s decision to offer patrons the possibility of donating memorial benches seems to date to the early 1950s.

Over the decades, a number of bench styles and designs have graced Arboretum grounds, with several varieties still found. In recent years, the Arboretum Foundation’s commemorative bench program has made available and installed a number of traditional park-style benches, with iron frame and wood slat seating (a style chosen in the mid-1990s by a committee reflecting interested groups,



including the Friends of Seattle’s Olmsted Parks). Older bench varieties include pebble-top aggregate, classic Greek design, cedar log and a small number of one-of-a-kind benches built into constructed stone settings. In all, there are 51 benches throughout the Arboretum, of which 18 recall a loved one.

One of the most beautiful memorial benches is actually a space that, although created, seems to have grown organically out of the landscape. Placed in memory of Anna Thomsen Milburn, who lived from 1880 to 1947, the bench in this area is curved and seems to float on a stone wall that forms a graceful, circular plaza. Seated on this bench, gazing out over the lush landscape, one can almost hear the now phantom water in a nearby fountain. This lovely area is near the middle of the Arboretum, on the lower trail, just above Azalea Way and facing west.

Not too far away, on the east side of Arboretum Drive East, at a small parking area, a bit north of the Milburn bench, is a stonework drinking fountain and concrete bench. The bench is a little surprise, placed on the wall behind the water fountain. It has a plaque with an inscription that captures a life in a brief phrase: “Maude Sawyer—A Friendly Gardener.”

Family connections seem to have compelled a number of such gifts. Several years ago, Arboretum Foundation staff





**TOP:** This traditional Greek-style bench, overlooking a pond in the Woodland Garden, is surrounded by salal and shaded by a maple. **LEFT:** An iron and wood-slat bench, south of the Lookout, was purchased by Joy Spurr to honor Arboretum Unit 32. **BELOW:** This log bench, placed above the Rhododendron Hybrid Garden, is a memorial to Marty Trosper from Unit 33.







This bench, honoring Anna Thomsen Milburn, 1880-1947, seems to float in front of the handsome stone wall surrounding an open plaza.

were contacted by two women whose grandmother had been an active member of the Arboretum, probably in the 1930s. They had heard that there was a bench in their grandmother's memory, placed after her death in the early '40s. A search by staff found the bench along Arboretum Drive East at the end of a grassy slope where it is surrounded by an abundance of camellias.

Last year was actually a banner year for benches in the Arboretum, with the purchase of six new ones! One of those was placed by the Peach Foundation in memory of Priscilla "Patsy" Collins and was constructed near a dove tree reputedly planted by her mother. Joy Spurr, longtime Arboretum volunteer, photographer, unit member and donor, purchased two commemorative benches last year to honor and recognize Arboretum Units 32 and 81. A third bench is a tribute to the memory of Joy's husband Roger. According to Joy, visitors need a place to rest and contemplate the Arboretum. It is

her hope that, through her gifts, thousands of visitors will have the opportunity to "pause to enjoy the beauty of plants" for many years to come.

Not only have individuals donated benches; Arboretum units have also contributed in this way. Donating a commemorative bench is easily accomplished by calling Arboretum Foundation Director of Development Ashley Clark at 206-325-4510; the cost is \$5,000. All bench sites are designated by a landscape architect, in consultation with Arboretum staff. A limited number of sites remain.

What more fitting way to remember someone—to make sure that, as memories fade away, a place will long exist where the very fact of one's pausing will become a momentary tribute. ♪

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**HOLLY REDELL** is Development Director for Seattle's Pacific Science Center and is on the Bulletin's editorial board.



## HORTUS NON GRATIS

continued from page 15

and five-gallon plants of arborvitae at Fred Meyer and planted the three of them in a close trio. It looked great, but used as background for the brilliant red berries of deciduous *Ilex verticillata*, those common thujas became winter magic. They pack equal punch matched with burgundy or blue foliage.

And finally, *Vinca minor*. I love the leaves, the blue, or perhaps white or even pinkish, blossoms. It forms a happily tangled mat under shrubs. If it looks untidy, use hedge shears to whack it to the ground in February, give it a liberal broadcasting of 12-12-12, and it will come back thicker and greener and more floriferous than ever. It minds its own business and responds to even the slightest attention with dog-like, tail-wagging enthusiasm.

### ***The Salt of the Earth***

I've come to believe that the greater, the more knowledgeable, the gardener, the less snobbish she is. God bless Pamela Harper, who wrote "Time-Tested Plants" (Timber Press). It's one of the best garden books I've ever read and nothing, I mean nothing, in it isn't available at just about any nursery. Northwest gardeners I admire, such as Dan Hinkley, Val Easton and Jim Fox, could see the beauty in a dandelion growing in a clay pot. And Glenn Withey and Charles Price are two of the most fair-minded, even-handed and just plain good-to-the-core plantsmen I have ever met. I've never heard them bad-mouth anything with leaves or needles.

Long ago the legendary Betty Miller had me out to her garden for one of our periodic garden strolls. Betty came by her reputation for irascibility honestly. But she was also a good soul and she evaluated plants, all plants, with

**"It minds its own business and responds to even the slightest attention with dog-like, tail-wagging enthusiasm."**

the same egalitarian spirit she used to judge people. On this particular trip she pointed out a large English laurel (*Prunus lauro-cerasus*). She had pruned it as a multi-stemmed tree, exposing its jet-black trunks, leaving its waxy leaves and flowers to stretch for sunlight above. "Isn't it beautiful," she mused. And later, on the same visit, she pointed to the far northwest corner of her garden to a gorgeous tree in the first flush of

autumn color, the crown of which had the texture and form of a giant Royal fern (*Osmunda regalis*) in full flower. "Look at that!" Betty exclaimed with glee. "You'll never guess what that is." I was puzzled, and that delighted her all the more. "It's *Ailanthus altissima*! The stinky old tree of heaven!"

The list of under-appreciated, and perhaps overused, plants goes on. But if it's not a list of "who's who of horticulture," it's a list of the garden's "salt of the Earth." And what's wrong with us, as humans, when we, so often, fail to appreciate, even cherish, that which is all around, undemanding and hard-working? Let's change that.

I figure when I enter the Kingdom of Heaven (if I'm allowed in), my welcoming committee will include Esther Schamp. She'll be there, still powdered and rouged, all atwitter to see me. And I expect her to say, "Ah, Stevie, I'm so proud of you. You listened to my advice and you applied it now, didn't you!"

That'll make me feel real good. But here's the kicker. I'll be willing to bet my wings and halo that the Pearly Gates will be flanked by a pair of towering green arborvitae. ♪

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Thanks to Esther Schamp, **STEVE LORTON** is still Northwest Bureau Chief of Sunset magazine and a member of the editorial board of the Bulletin.





# Annuals Are Back!

BY BRIAN THOMPSON

Gardening trends come and go. Popular subjects for gardening books reflect those trends and are equally cyclical. So it is no surprise that the revival in recent years of annuals and tender perennials for short-term use in high impact gardening is reflected in a flurry of recent publications.

Many sophisticated gardeners who perhaps have long eschewed annuals as beneath their attention will find in these books a wealth of choices, many only recently available, including some that will find their way into the hearts and loam of even the most discriminating. And for everyone, including the most modest of gardeners, these pages include the merriest of flowers known from childhood, perhaps in forms and colors never imagined.

## Double Your Pleasure

This breadth of revival can be measured by the high quality of writers it has attracted. Especially telling are the efforts of two who have each published two recent books on the topic.

Wayne Winterrowd's 1992 book, "Annuals for Connoisseurs: Classics and Novelties from Abelsonschus to Zinnia," did much to awaken my dormant interest in annuals. An engaging writer at any time, here the selection of obvious personal favorites is described with convert fervor yet with the level of fine detail that only an engaged gardener could know.

How could I resist rushing out for a packet of *Zinnia angustifolia* (now *Z. haageana*) seed after reading "...at the end of the day, just at twilight, the flowers take

on fire and seem to smolder like embers;" or has my jaded attitude towards marigolds been shaken up by "fey and wild looking" *Tagetes tenuifolia*?

Fast-forward to 2004 and Winterrowd's newest book, "Annuals and Tender Plants for North American Gardens," and you will find the same energy applied to a comprehensive encyclo-

pedia. While not all entries can now be favorites, he still brings out the best in his subjects with rich histories, detailed nuance of cultivation and a clear understanding of the widely varying demands of our continent's regional climates.

If I were to have only one book on annuals, this would be it, but a few caveats are needed. It is not pitched at a beginner's level, the photographs are few, and the price of thoroughness is a tome a bit heavy for comfortable lap reading. But still I had trouble putting it down, as much for the pleasure of reading as for the information.

Allan Armitage is the herbaceous sidekick of woody plant guru Michael Dirr at the University of Georgia and has previously published both books and CD-ROMs on perennials. His 1989 "Herbaceous Perennial Plants" was a very precise encyclopedia of mainstream perennials with an academic eye to detail, but, frankly, a little dull.

Fortunately he found his voice in his 2001 "Armitage's Manual of Annuals, Biennials, and Half-Hardy Perennials." While the format is very similar to the earlier book, with such





unusual extras as species keys and bibliographies, the writing is much less guarded in both his praise and loathing of his subjects, making the reading both more interesting and more informative.

But the gloves really come off in 2004 with “Armitage’s Garden Annuals: A Color Encyclopedia.” While still following an A to Z order, the charts, keys and line drawings are all gone and are replaced by a free-flowing narrative on how, for example, “having gone through the Salvia Stage of Life and survived, I can be both an advocate for and opponent against certain forms of this great genus.”

Having set the stage, Armitage backs it up with no less than 35 of his own excellent photos of annual sages. These will command first attention for most readers, and, indeed, it is the author’s intention that the “text supports the images shown.” Together, he hopes that his two books will complement each other so that “you’ll learn everything you ever wanted to know about annuals but were afraid to ask.”

**The British View**

Like many others, I eagerly waited many years for the team of Roger Phillips and Martyn Rix to turn their attention to “Annuals and Biennials,” a 1999 publication, after their long and unique botanical explorations of other garden plant groups. As in all their works, Phillips’ photographs draw you in by juxtaposition of the selected plants in their native setting, as comparative specimens and as garden subjects from around the world.

Rix’s text is strictly business but succinctly gives both a field botanist’s detail of description and habitat, while meeting a horticulturist’s need for germination and cultural requirements. So while we learn that *Nemophila menziesii* or baby blue-eyes is a “native of California from Tehama and Butte Cos southwards to San Diego Co.,” we also learn it is “one of the prettiest and easiest of all the dwarf Californian annuals” and “good



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for planting in autumn to over winter and flower in spring.”

Graham Rice is another British author who now lives at least part of his year in the United States and wrote his “Discovering Annuals” in 1999 primarily with American audiences in mind. This is probably the most approachable of all the discussed books for the beginning gardener or one who is not very familiar with annuals. While presenting an impressive list, it is not intended to be comprehensive and so doesn’t overwhelm.

Another excellent writer, Rice is particularly effective with his design concepts: “the most important single element in successful gardening is learning to see,” and at stepping the reader through the myriad choices in varieties and seed strains. He is also a master of innovative floral description; I’m sure few others would see in *Convolvulus* ‘Royal Ensign’ that “the throat is like the chuckling sun on the Teletubbies—but a great deal less irritating.”

### ***Tropical Favorites***

Part of the revival in one-season plants has included an interest in tropical or semi-tropical perennial or woody plants that are either wintered over in a greenhouse or allowed to expire outside after a brief, but glorious, career. While there is some attention paid to this class of plant in the above books, two publications from 2000 focus specifically on the tropical look.

Will Giles gardens in Norfolk, England, a climate similar to the coastal Pacific Northwest. In “The New Exotic Garden” he not only uses his artistic training to select stunning plant portraits but also provides very practical tips and helpful drawings to keep your canna-and-banana garden going from year to year.

In the harsher climate of New York state, Susan Roth and Dennis Schrader both have recreated the tropics and share their wealth of experience in “Hot Plants for Cool Climates.” Less a photo essay and more of a hands-on

manual, the reader will find here the practical details that can make the difference between success and failure with exotics.

### ***Spring Is Coming***

Yes, its cold, gloomy and January, but the seed catalogs are arriving, or have long been here (my first arrived in mid-October), and as soon as the weather warms—and maybe long before—nurseries will once again offer the stars of instant gratification. With so many good garden writers embracing annuals, there’s no excuse not to join in the fun! ~

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**BRIAN THOMPSON** is a librarian at the Elisabeth C. Miller Horticultural Library.

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# EARTH SANCTUARY

*continued from page 19*

heron chicks. In summer this area is surrounded by green. At leaf drop, the forest opens and the sweep of the fen is revealed. Heavy mist is frequently a gift of the temperature extremes of its singular microclimate.

## ***The Path***

The journey is no less than the destination. Since Buddhist tradition honors walking meditation, design of paths is important for both practical and spiritual purposes. The shaping of the earth and the planting design at Earth Sanctuary are not showy, but both reveal more with careful examination. Each site seems dramatically different, and will change each year as plants mature.

To improve the journey, the twisting, dark path to the Fen Stone Circle was rerouted. Its graceful sweeping curves are flanked by tall cedar logs that will, in time, provide homes for cavity-nesting birds. The path to the Dolmen, interrupted at its last few feet by the stairs, a practical solution to the grade change, provides an opportunity to experience several facets of this site. Facing first a small arm of West Pond covered with a coat of duckweed—vivid green in summer, red in fall, then a lichen-covered standing stone set at the summer solstice sunset, the stone steps make us pause and view the Dolmen's environs from different angles. To reach the Cottonwood Stone Circle, the trail ascends to wet forest with beautiful views of Middle Pond. These and other trails traverse diverse habitats—wetland slopes, dry forest, shrub thickets, blow-downs, and ancient trees—and pass near wetlands and ponds, all within less than a mile.

Meditation, a core Buddhist practice, focuses and clears the mind, calms the heart, and brings balance. These same principles, focus, clarity and balance, have guided the design of each site. The sacred artworks provide focus. Plant mixes that mimic native

environments—whether the addition of evergreen shrubs at Fen Stone Circle or deciduous shrubs at the Dolmen—are calming and bring balance to each site.

Ongoing reverence for all aspects of the restoration process is vital. The allure of Earth Sanctuary is not the individual objects or experiences, but the interaction between them—the forest, the water, the animals and plants—and the sculptural quality of the forest and water, solid and void.

## ***Natural States***

In Western religions, humans are regarded as being separate from nature. Eastern religions believe there is no distinction. The opportunity of this project is to incorporate philosophical outlooks that address the relationship between humanity and nature in new ways—the opportunity to creatively incorporate wildness into our lives and our selves into wildness with grace and awareness.

Late fall, winter, and early spring, seasons of restoration, are favorite times of year at Earth Sanctuary. The mystical essence of this time of year encourages reflection. Earth Sanctuary is sheltering at a time when we usually retreat behind doors. Low sun and misty days accentuate the beauty of the site.

As restoration projects mature, particularly the forest restoration, summer too will be blessed with sunbeams through the trees and cool, sweet air. With time, the land will be restored. As Chuck Pettis remarks, "This is my way to promote peace, ecological harmony, and well being—to provide a place for meditation, spiritual growth, and rejuvenation." ∞

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**DAN BORROFF** is a landscape designer practicing in Seattle. He may be reached at 206-329-0931. For information regarding visiting Earth Sanctuary, visit the Web site [www.earthsanctuary.org](http://www.earthsanctuary.org) or call 425-637-8777. For further information, contact Chuck Pettis at [cpettis@earthsanctuary.org](mailto:cpettis@earthsanctuary.org)





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