

# GARDEN CLIPPINGS

SOOS CREEK BOTANICAL GARDEN *and* HERITAGE CENTER

SPRING 2024

## Spring Plant Sale

Our nursery is bursting with plants suitable for your Pacific Northwest garden. We'll have some of your often-requested plants from our Garden as well as a colorful selection of blooming perennials.

SCBG Master Gardeners will have vegetable plant starts for sale. Note: They donated over 3,000lbs of fresh produce to our local Auburn Food Bank last year!

The Master Gardeners will be on site to answer your plant and pest questions.

The Auburn Rainier Audubon Society will be here to talk all things birds.

Rose Lee, an expert in all things roses, will have a variety of plants available for sale, including her wonderful sweet peas!

Remember Mothers Day is coming up, so pick up a plant or two to celebrate your loved one!

Come enjoy the beautiful spring color in the garden, explore the trails, and chat with fellow plant enthusiasts! Listen to our cheerful songbirds and check out the Pavilion by the Pond for your next event.

Remember that you, too, can become a volunteer at Soos Creek Botanical Garden. It will become your happy place!

We are a nonprofit 501 (c)3 organization. Admission is free. Donations gladly accepted and are 100% tax deductible.

## Spring Is In The Air (And The Trees)

*The Premier Birding Season Has Begun*  
by Bob Swain

The trees, bushes and shrubs that dutifully transition from winter to spring at Soos Creek Botanical Garden have witnessed our avian community's cycle of life for many a year. The same environmental inputs that cause leaves to emerge and flower buds to form, signal behavioral changes that bring wild birds from the shadows of winter to the light of spring. The ground warms, the temperatures moderate and the days get longer.

Enjoy this time of increased activity from our overwintering species as they establish territories, make breeding partner arrangements and engage in nest creation. Listen as early sunny mornings include choral arrangements from your neighborhood American Robins, House Finches and Song Sparrows. Redwing Blackbirds join in from marshy areas and are supplemented by our Northern Flicker, who punctuates his display with banging on your gutters and roof flashings. By the way, for the most part, only

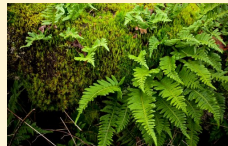
## Spring Plant Sale

Friday & Saturday,  
April 26 & 27, 2024

10am to 4pm



*Phlomis fruticosa*  
Jerusalem Sage



*Polypodium glycyrrhiza*  
Licorice Fern



*Dicentra spectabilis*  
'Gold Heart'  
Bleeding Heart

- Add spring color to your garden with PNW natives, color accents, and veggie starts from SCBG Master Gardeners.
- Get your sweet pea starts and more from Rose Lee.
- Explore spring color as you stroll through the Garden.
- Have your questions answered by Master Gardeners and the Rainier Audubon Society.

***Sales proceeds support our admission-free Garden.***

Soos Creek Botanical Garden is a 501(c)(3) non-profit garden.

SOOS CREEK BOTANICAL   
GARDEN *and* HERITAGE CENTER

male songbirds sing. The ladies just listen and ultimately critique who may be the most worthy partner.

While our local residents are taking on preparations for their Big Dance, our tropical resident seasonal migratory visitors are building their strength for an exhausting journey north to leverage the bounty of our northern latitudes. Lots of bugs to eat and longer days to do their business of reproduction bring them to us. Grosbeaks, Fly Catchers, Warblers, Tanagers, Swallows and Thrush all grace us with their presence between April and September.

So what do you do to take in all these magical moments? With so much happening in so many different places, you may think that you have to hustle and bustle to catch it all. Certainly that is one option. I was reminded of another option on a recent bird walk in

*(Premier Birding Season continued on page 2)*



*(Premier Birding Season continued from page 1)*

Clark Lake Park in Kent. I happened upon a gentleman walking his dog, a couple I had seen over the years walking my “Old Yeller,” who has since gone to doggy heaven. We recognized each other, exchanged pleasantries, and he commented to me that “he has really noticed an increase in the wild bird population in the park over the last few years.” I replied “that may be true but what is more likely is that he has gotten older and his dog has gotten slower. Less output, more input.”

That is my advice for this spring into summer as you take advantage of opportunities to connect with nature at Soos Creek Botanical Garden or elsewhere. Slow down, take notice of everything and turn the dial on your brain from “transmit” to “receive.” That is when you will finally see and hear the wild bird community as they display behaviors that are integral to their survival and reproduction.

I’m guilty of going too fast in pursuit of a birding goal at times as well. I received a great reset just recently. There is a small brown/black/white bird named Brown Creeper whose habit is to land low on tree trunks and forage their way in a spiral up the trunk, then fly down to the next tree trunk to repeat the process. Fairly common in our northwest woodlands and a species that regularly shows up on Merlin sound ID during bird walks, though I’m frequently frustrated by how few I actually see in the field. Nice late afternoon weather had me in a chair amongst the trees in my backyard and just taking in what early February had to offer. My brain was totally on “receive.” A Brown Creeper landed on a tree trunk close to me and proceeded to work every tree in the area for the next 30 minutes, landing within 10 feet of

## For Peats Sake! – By Connie Teece

Recently I heard a surprising statistic – *Peatlands cover just 3% of the Earth’s land, but they store 30% of the Earth’s soil carbon.* That made me very curious about peat bogs – admittedly something I had not given thought to previously. I started some online research and a resident master gardener referred me to the book, *Fen, Bog and Swamp: A Short History of Peatland Destruction and Its Role in the Climate Crisis* by Anne Proulx. This article is a summary of what I learned.

Peatland includes bogs, fens and swamps. The difference between these terms is primarily water source and depth. With the ability to store massive amounts of carbon, peat bogs are the single, largest carbon sink on the planet. They contain more carbon than all the earth’s forests combined! (And forests cover about 26% of the total land area.)

Peat moss is harvested from **bogs and fens** around the world, primarily in Canada and Russia. The peat we use in gardening around here is from northern Canada. It acts like a sponge to hold water and release it as soil dries out. But it is harvested by removing deep layers that have taken centuries to accumulate. It was formed as sphagnum moss decays so slowly in the cool wetlands, that the carbon remains in the plant material. It accumulates at the glacially slow rate of about .04 of an inch per year!

When peat is extracted, the carbon stored inside the bog is released as carbon dioxide. CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere is what traps heat from the sun causing the greenhouse effect, which helps raise the Earth’s temperature and contribute to climate change. Not only does the carbon release impact the climate but once harvested, the area can no longer store carbon as it once did. The Canadian Sphagnum Peat Moss Association is an organization that attempts sustainable management of Canadian peatlands. They try to restore bogs after harvest even though it will take hundreds of years to regrow. Local horticultural expert, Linda Chalker-Scott, compares it to cutting down old-growth forests. “Sure, you can plant new trees, but it’s going to take a long time.” Similarly, they may try to restore the bogs, but they will never be the same.

To preserve this unsustainable resource, the UK is banning peat use by amateur gardeners by the end of 2024 and professional growers by the end of 2026.

At this time of year gardeners have a huge variety of products available for seed starting, potting mixtures, and soil amendment mixtures. You can choose products that do not contain peat. Instead, look for products that are peat-free with alternatives, like coir plus perlite or vermiculite. These products are now available online and in stores. If you can’t find a peat-free potting mix you like, at least look for the CSPMA logo on bagged mixes. For peat’s sake, you can make this eco-friendly decision!

After reading about peat bogs, you may want to visit one. And, yes, there ARE peat bogs in Washington State. Nearby, in the Shadow Lake Nature Preserve, is the Shadow Lake Bog. It is an 8,000 – 10,000-year-old, peat-moss bog that is a remnant of the Puget Lobe Glacier, which once covered the majority of western Washington. There are other bogs in the state, but Shadow Lake Bog is the only sphagnum-hemlock peat bog under protection in Washington state. Shadow Lake Nature Preserve is located at 21656 184th Ave SE in Renton, WA. Trails are open by online reservation only, so check their website.

**Soos Creek Juried Fine Art Show**  
**Aug 17, 2024**

**Best Booth Prize \$100**

**Call for Artisan Booths!**

For more information, email:  
**PRESIDENTAANW@GMAIL.COM**

# Soos Creek Botanical Garden: *A haven that enriches our lives, educates, and nurtures our connection with the natural world.*

## **Botanical Bliss:**

Explore 10 acres of walking trails amidst lush greenery. These tranquil paths not only promote physical well-being but also provide a mental escape. Breathe in the fresh air, unwind, and let stress melt away.

For the surrounding communities, the garden holds **immense significance**.

## **Biodiversity Showcase:**

Consider it a **living museum**, where diverse plant species take center stage as well as a Historical Museum to visit.

## **Outdoor Classroom:**

As an **educational oasis**, the garden teaches visitors about botany, ecology, and sustainable gardening practices.

## **Recreation Retreat:**

Seek solace in the garden's serene embrace. Here, people connect with nature, find inspiration, and **recharge their spirits**.

## **Environmental Impact:**

By championing green spaces, Soos Creek Botanical Garden contributes to **cleaner air, improved soil health, and enhanced urban ecosystems**.

## **Growing Groceries:**

Beyond the botanical site, the **WSU King County Master Gardeners Growing Groceries demonstration garden** sprouts hope. It provides fresh produce and vegetables, combating food insecurity via the **Auburn Food Bank**.

In 2023, this nurturing space propagated, cared for, and harvested over **3,000 lbs. of organic fruits and vegetables**, all donated to those in need.

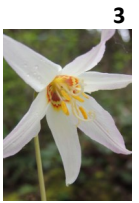
**Marie Kurka-Brown,**  
**MBA WSU Master Gardener**  
**Soos Creek Botanical Garden volunteer**

## Non-Invasive Plants for your Garden

We have all made that one mistake where we have received or bought that beautiful plant for our garden only to find out that it is taking over everything! Following is a list of non-invasive plants to help all of us make better choices.

- **Bulbing Fennel** - This annual plant is most like common fennel, with the same feather foliage and is ideal for culinary users.
- **Cosmos** – Another annual whose foliage is ferny like common fennel, but it's daisy-like flowers differ.
- **Low Oregon Grape** – This beautiful evergreen low growing shrub is native to Washington.

- **White Fawn Lily** – Another native plant, fawn lily produces beautiful white flowers and mottled leaves.
- **Cardinal Flower** – An upright herbaceous perennial for a moist, sunny to partly shady area.
- **Pincushion Flower** – An ever-blooming perennial for a well-drained area.



**White Fawn Lily**



**Pincushion Flower**

For more information on noxious weed please contact [www.nwcb.wa.gov](http://www.nwcb.wa.gov) Noxious Weed Control Board.

**Marie Kurka-Brown**



## GiveBIG May 7 & 8

Soos Creek Botanical Garden & Heritage Center will participate in GiveBIG again this year. Our goal for the annual giving campaign in May is to invest in safety measures for Garden visitors. Our Garden is overflowing with botanical interest, so our visitors are not always watching where they step. Towering trees and vines climbing everywhere direct people's eyes upward so slips, trips and falls can happen over uneven ground.

As a botanical garden where trees are among the featured attractions, our Garden guests use the brick pathways that wind among the trees. Some of these brick paths have been in place for many years and over that time the trees next to them have continued to grow, both above and below ground.

The result is that in about a dozen locations the root systems have pushed up sections of brick in the walkways to the point where they are now tripping hazards. Since many of our garden guests are seniors, some of whom require some form of walking assistance, these path irregularities are an area of safety concern.

In addition, our main driveway has an asphalt section which has experienced some lifting because of large tree roots. This walkway is used by guests as they move between the parking area and the garden paths as well as being near the portable toilets positioned on site.

Visitor safety at the Garden is an absolute priority, so GiveBIG funds will be utilized to make the necessary repairs to return walkways and driveway for smooth sailing! The repair project will include removal of the lifted brick path sections, grinding down the roots underneath and then resetting bricks to provide a level surface. There may also be some bricks that are damaged and require replacement. Second to the brick path repair is the asphalt driveway repair which would consist of cutting out a section of asphalt where the lifting is happening, grinding down the roots underneath to level the surface and then filling the void with gravel which would provide for some degree of future root expansion.

GiveBIG 2024 is May 7 & 8 with early giving starting April 23rd. Communication will be sent around that time. Your donation toward safety measures will be appreciated!

## Pavilion by the Pond Programs



**Pavilion Programs are on the third Wednesday of the month, 12:30pm to 2pm. No charge, but donations gladly accepted.**

**The Pavilion provides covered outdoor seating.**

### **April 17 – Endless Variety with Patrick and Margaret Spence, Cascadia Iris Gardens, Lake Stevens.**

Iris can create year 'round bloom, and enhance any spot in your garden. Peonies provide a wide variety of flower size, shape, color and fragrance. Join us to hear Patrick share his passion for Iris and Peonies and see these flowers in his beautiful PowerPoint. Take time to visit the Rosarian Walk to see specialty Iris donated in the Spring of 2023 by Patrick.

### **May 15 – The Avian Einsteins with Connie Sidels, Master Birder, Author, UW Continuing Ed Faculty.**

Crows are among the smartest of all birds. They can recognize human faces, pass knowledge along to new generations, work together to protect each other, set up sentries to watch for danger, even use tools. Indeed, all members of the crow family (called corvids) are intelligent, including ravens, jays, and magpies. If you'd like to learn more about these geniuses of the avian world, join master birder and author Constance Sidels as she takes you into the secret world of crows.

### **June 19 – A Rose Tea in the Garden with the Garden Docents.**

Gather 8 friends to have a table in the Pavilion to celebrate ROSES! Each table provides its own Tea menu items (tea sandwiches, salads, etc.) and tableware (disposable is easiest). The Garden will provide beverages. A Garden docent will share "Fun Facts about Roses."

Door prize for each table. Tablecloths provided. Contact: [info@sooscreekbotalanicalgarden.org](mailto:info@sooscreekbotalanicalgarden.org) to reserve a table beginning April 1st. June is Rose Month in the Garden!

1 or 2 tables will be set aside for smaller groups to sit together. \$10. Per person (Free for active volunteers.) Play Plant Bingo for prizes! This is a Garden fundraiser for future programs.

## 2024 Save the Dates

### HERITAGE NW ROSE SOCIETY DISPLAY

June 1st, Saturday, 10am to 3pm  
Join Rosarians showcasing some of their loveliest and most fragrant heritage roses.

### JAZZ IN THE GARDEN

with Seattle Jazz Network (10 piece jazz band.)

July 12th, Friday, 6:30pm to 8:30pm  
Tickets through Eventbrite, \$20 or at the gate.  
Wine & Chocolate for purchase. Bring your own lawn chairs or use ours. Gates open at 5:30pm.

### SHAKESPEARE IN THE GARDEN

August 3rd, Saturday, 6:30pm to 8:00pm  
August 4th, Sunday, 2 to 3:30pm  
Enjoy this Family Friendly Shakespearean Comedy. Bring your lawn chairs or use ours. Tickets \$10/\$15., at the gate.  
Children 5 and under free. Gates open 1 hour prior to shows. No alcohol.

### SOOS CREEK FINE ARTS & CRAFTS FESTIVAL

August 17th, Saturday, 10am to 4pm  
Hosted by Arts Alliance Northwest (AANW). Food Truck available and live music. No alcohol. Meet the artists and craftspeople. Bring the family.

### AUBURN STRING CHAMBER ORCHESTRA

August 25th, Sunday, 2 to 3:30pm  
Tickets available through the Symphony office and at the gate. \$15/\$20. Children 10 and under free. Family friendly event.  
Bring a picnic lunch and your lawn chairs, or use ours. No alcohol. Gates open at 1pm to stroll the Garden.

## Schedule your Event or Ceremony at the Garden



We are now taking reservations for 2024 celebrations.



- Weddings —
- Meetings / Classes —
- Fundraisers —
- Memorials —
- Family Reunions —

Email us at: [info@sooscreekbotalanicalgarden.org](mailto:info@sooscreekbotalanicalgarden.org)