

GARDEN CLIPPINGS

SOOS CREEK BOTANICAL GARDEN *and* HERITAGE CENTER

SUMMER 2023



Polystichum munitum (swordfern), *Thuja plicata* (Western Red Cedar), in Cedar Grove. Red Huckleberry, *Vaccinium parvifolium*, and Trillium.

History Narrated by Natives *by Katie Swickard*

Imagine walking along the Little Soosette Creek back in the late 1800's with Oie Skagen when he first acquired the donation land claim where Soos Creek Botanical Garden and History Center now resides. It was thick with trees such as Douglas firs, western red cedar, hemlocks, vine maples, and big leaf maples. It was likely interspersed with sword and licorice ferns, bleeding heart, and trillium. It would have been a delight to discover both evergreen and deciduous huckleberries, providing much needed nourishment for the early settlers.

Just as a rich history abounds in the Garden's History Center and the book "History of the Soos Creek Plateau," written by Garden founder, Morris Skagen, so too is the history of our area told in the native plant life that is still abundant in the Garden.

For many years, Oie Skagen and later, his descendants, farmed the land on which the Garden is located. Large portions of the land were cleared of trees to enable farming and raising of livestock. Native plant populations were reduced, but portions of the land retained the original species. As modern-era visitors stroll the Oie Native Woodland, Ravine Garden, Leonard and Olive Skagen Woods and Ole and Sarah Skagen Cedar Grove, they get a sense of what the land was like when the early settlers arrived.

Morris Skagen, a direct descendant of the original land claim owners, has lovingly cared for the acreage (currently 27 acres) since the 1960's. He has carefully curated the native areas and augmented the plant collections.

A grant from the West Seattle Garden Tour was funded in 2013 to enhance the native plant collection in two areas of the Garden.

This included the creek area, known as the Oie Native Woodland, and the dry upper meadow area.

This past winter the Garden received a sizable donation of native plants from the King Conservation District (KCD). Garden Maintenance Manager, Josh Boyd, along with our dedicated volunteer, Bob Swain, were able to install these shrubs, trees, and groundcovers to help fill our beds with even more native plants. Walking along the meandering paths through the native forest, visitors are often treated to a chorus of birds, enjoying the food and shelter the native plants provide.

Our newest plantings are marked with orange flagging tape as we track and watch how the plants perform over the year. Blue and red elderberry, red osier dogwood, and salmonberry were planted along the creek to help fight erosion. Serviceberry, red flowering currant, osoberry, and oceanspray have been dispersed throughout the beds along the paths. Redwood sorrel, kinnikinnick, and bunchberry dogwood have been installed near other shrub's feet. Along the south path lies a carpet of deer ferns to follow visitors down to the creek.

We're very thankful to King Conservation District for the wonderful and generous donation, as are the native wildlife.

As we gaze up at the magnificent height of some of the Douglas fir and cedar trees at SCBG, it's easy to imagine the possibility that Oie Skagen might have walked past them when they were just little seedlings. Did he ever imagine how they would grow and thrive, becoming living sentinels of our shared history?

Ready to add some natives to your landscape? The KCD has an annual plant sale that is a fantastic source for low-cost natives. This year almost 68,000 plants were distributed to over 1,000 customers! Their sale offers a variety of native trees, shrubs and ground covers that work well in home landscapes. Preorders open late in the year, and plants are distributed after the first of the year.

<https://kingcd.org/programs/better-backyards/native-bareroot-plant-sale/>

A Garden Feast For Your Ears As Well As Your Eyes *by Bob Swain*

There is so much to see on a walk around SCBG that changes with each season, month and even week. While you are taking in the sights here, be conscious to also soak in the sounds that you hear from high in the trees, mid forest, lower in the bushes and down at ground level. These are the calling cards of our resident and migratory birds. We all know the “caw” of the crow and the “honk” of the goose. Past those common sounds, there are hundreds of other audible notes coming from all directions that can raise your spirits, peak your imagination and provide clues to the originators. You just need to pause and listen.

All birds make some kind of sound. It could be the gregarious Stellar’s or Scrub Jay or the tik – tik – tik of an Anna’s Hummingbird. Throughout the year you can zero in on bird calls and songs. Calls are representative of simple communications back and forth between birds of the same species relating information like food availability, location, territory defense and danger alerts generated by both males and females. In late winter and early spring you’ll notice the birds seem to come out to play earlier in the day, louder and with much more expressive and complex arrangements. Stimulated by longer daylight hours and amplified by the arrival of our migratory species, we can now enjoy the beauty of bird songs. It starts most days just after dawn-called the morning chorus – (thank you American Robin) as males of each species strive to confirm their condition, establish their breeding territory and find their breeding mate. That’s right – in most species only the males sing. Listen to the variables of each song, frequency, speed, tone and volume. Some are simple and repetitive like the “hey-sweetie” of the Chickadee versus the symphony composed by the Song Sparrow.

So whether you are enjoying the quiet solitude of a garden stroll or with friends and family exploring all that this diverse habitat has to offer, pause to enjoy and appreciate the impressive vocalizations of our other garden residents.



Retaining Wall, Eagle Project *by Austin M.*

In the photo, you see Scout Austin M. acting as the project manager of his troop for his amazing Eagle project which was done in April. Austin’s project included nearly 100 feet of sturdy retaining wall to expand the vegetable gardener’s second location near the Barn. Crops needing more space are grown in this sunny location. Dunn Lumber generously contributed many of the materials needed. In addition a French drain was installed to help with water drainage. A center work path was also put in. All produce from the veggie gardens goes to the Auburn Food Bank, approximately 2,000 pounds per year!



Bean Trellis, Eagle project *by Kyle H.*

This photo shows Scout Kyle H. working with his troop to do an extensive project in the veggie garden. With the help of his troop and a few parents advising, Kyle built a large, new bean trellis (a very popular vegetable) and made extensive changes to a raised veggie bed. This involved removing all the soil, digging out a beautiful, but invasive Passion flower which had overtaken the bed, and laying heavy duty garden cloth beneath the bed to keep out critters! Finally, Kyle’s Eagle project finished by installed mesh around the top openings of the veggie garden shed to discourage mice from taking up residence! All in all a very worthy Eagle project!

Local High School Class Helps Salmon Population in Soos Creek

On April 1st, a few students from Auburn Mountainview High School and their Ag teacher, Mrs. Herrmann, came to the Botanical Garden to release the salmon they raised into the Soosette Creek.

The class was granted a permit to raise 100 coho salmon eggs through the Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife Salmon in the Schools Program from the Soos Creek Hatchery. The eggs were picked up from the hatchery in early January.

Mrs. Herrmann’s students took care of the salmon as the eggs developed into small fry. The students learned about the importance of salmon in our local ecosystems, how to test the aquarium water, how to feed the growing fish, and how the salmon develop and grow through their life cycle.

The Soos Creek Botanical Garden is on a tributary of the Big Soos Creek, so the class was able to release the small salmon in the Soosette Creek. Of the 100 eggs received, the class released 89 fish into our local waterway.

This was a great experience for the students to learn firsthand the impact we can have on our local environment. The class will continue to do this project to help improve our local salmon population."

Hand Washing Eagle project

by Araceli R-J.

Araceli R-J is a founding member of the all-girls addition to Troop 401, one of the Chief Seattle Council and Washington State's longest-running Scout Troops, which is celebrating its 100th year. Araceli accomplished in three and a half years what other Scouts take eight years to do or never complete at all. She is the second female Eagle Scout from Troop 8401's inaugural unit.

For Araceli's Eagle project, she found something missing from the Garden: a handwashing station. She built the handwashing station out of a whiskey barrel donated by Foster's Barrel Co. (owner is an Eagle Scout too). Araceli was hands-on with her project, designing every aspect. The base, which is buried and can not be seen, was welded by Araceli. Above ground water piping was connected to the Garden's nearest spigot, with assistance from her troop and adult advisors.



Rosarian Walk Grand Opening

Visitors were welcomed to the Grand Opening of the Rosarian Walk by Maurice Skagen, SCBG founder, as he performed the ribbon cutting ceremonies. This new garden area was designed to commemorate the lives of three Rosarians—Anne Belovich, David Elliott, and Roger Phillips. Having been planted less than a year and a half ago, the Old Garden Roses, those typically originating previous to 1860, were already putting on quite a show.

A floral exuberance surrounded everyone as Garden docents gave interesting rose observations on the history of roses (Dianna M.), rose hips (Jane G.), climbing roses (Katie S.), thorns/prickles (Connie T.), fragrance (Trish B.) and symbolism in roses (Robbi B.). A delicious rose-pink lemonade and cookies were appreciated by guests. NW Heritage Rose Society had a table display and were available to answer rose questions, as were several very

knowledgeable rosarians including Rose Lee who had donated a large number of the plants.

Visitors also enjoyed a pop up plant sale, headed up by Propagation Lead, Jo S.



Happy Retirement to the "Heart of the Garden," Carmen Ingebritsen

by Barbara Nagel

"Hello, this is Carmen!" How many thousands of times has that cheery voice answered the Garden office phone. How many thousands of cookies and sweet rolls has she purchased for the volunteer room? How many of us have relied on her common sense for good advice? How many years has she been the "gal Friday" in the Garden, and looked for answers to our countless questions: "Where is this? Where is that? When will Jim and Maurice be back"? What will we ever do without her?

A happy, long retirement awaits Carmen and husband, Jim, in sunny Arizona. Carmen says she will be bored to tears without the buzz of the Garden office, at least for a while! Meanwhile, we may find her volunteering next to us for bit, and helping her successor to learn the ropes. Best wishes, Carmen! Godspeed!



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.

July 19 – Beauty and Duty: 100 Years of Women in Our Armed Forces

Join historian Alice Miller as she displays authentic and some rare women's military uniforms and shares personal stories of the women who wore them. Learn how women advancing in the military ranks have helped women in civilian life as well. Learn why and how the uniforms were made and how they relate to fashions of the time periods. We will begin with a uniform from 1898!

August 16 – Summer Sizzlers: The Clematis of July, August and Beyond

Master Gardener, Laura Watson, will share her love of Clematis, especially the late summer bloomers: profuse Clematis, Trumpets, Urns, the late Large-Flowered and Non-Climbing Clematis varieties. Using great photos, Laura will share care and pruning tips about Clematis: the "Queen of Climbers!" So, as Laura says, "Grow the Heck up! Embellish your Garden with Clematis Vines!"



September 20 – Backyard Chickens: 101

Mary Stueber is co-owner and head chicken-keeper at "13 Hens Farm" in Maple Valley. Her current flock includes over 70 chickens, 15 ducks, and 2 turkeys. Mary will discuss chicken and duck keeping topics. Mary and her family sell organic vegetables, flowers and eggs at the Maple Valley Farmers Market, May to September. Come and hear some of her happy stories about raising poultry.



2023 Save the Dates

These events will be held in the Pavilion by the Pond at Soos Creek Botanical Garden.

Friday, July 7, 2023

7:00pm to 9:00pm

Jazz in the Garden with Seattle Jazz Network

(10 piece Jazz Band and singer)

\$20 Tickets now on sale at EventBrite.com and at the gate one hour before the performance.

This is a "21 and Over" event.

Wine and chocolate available for purchase.

Overflow parking at the school across the street.

Car-pooling is suggested.

August 5 & 6, 2023

Shakespeare and Chamber Orchestra

Emerald Theatre presents 2 performances of Shakespeare's comedy, "Twelfth Night."

Saturday performance at **6:30pm to 8:30pm**

Sunday performance at **2:00pm to 4:00pm**

General admission \$15,

Seniors, Military and Youth (under 17) \$10,

Children under 5 free.

Tickets on sale at: emeraldtheatre.org and at the gate one hour before show time. Overflow parking available at the school across the street.

Sunday, August 27, 2023

2:00pm to 3:30pm

Auburn Chamber Orchestra

Adults \$18, Youth \$10, Children under 12 free.

Tickets for this family event are on sale at Auburn Symphony Orchestra.com and at the gate one hour before the performance begins. Overflow parking available at the school across the street.