

## **Garden Rhapsodies Tour, July 25, 2009 Volunteer Guidelines & Resource List**

### **What to bring:**

- Personal stuff: Sun hats, umbrellas, skin protection, drinks, lunch, etc.
- Master Gardener/Master Recycler/Master Composter name tag (if applicable)
- Gardening/plant handbooks (such as Sunset or other favorites)
- Your ticket/map for touring gardens when not on duty
- This resource list!

### **Contact Phone Numbers:**

Ernie Paul, Thurston County: (360) 754-3355 ext. 7618

Erica Guttman, Native Plant Salvage Project, WSU Thurston County Extension: (360) 709-0704 (home/office); 867-2164 (office)

### **CELL PHONES FOR JULY 25 COMMUNICATIONS:**

Ernie: (360) 561-4385

Erica: (360) 402-8879

Cori: (360) 239-5219

### **What you need to know:**

**Your Job in a Nutshell:** Volunteers are primarily responsible for:

- Providing direct education to the public;
- Ensuring smooth operations of the tour; and
- Assisting host gardeners/visitors with questions.

### **Resources for You as an Educator**

**Familiarizing Yourself with the Garden:** Your first step will be to get to know the garden you are helping in as well as the practices of the host gardener(s). On the day of the tour, all gardens will contain signage highlighting some of the gardening practices and naming specific plants. However, not all plants will be labeled, nor will all the highlights be explained. It is important for you to talk with your host gardeners in advance of the tour to better understand the background of the garden and current practices.

- When you visit, ask questions about favorite techniques and make note of areas and specific plants or planting combinations that you think will attract visitors' attention. Bone up on specific plant names and uses so that you can better answer questions (and increase your knowledge as a gardener!).
- If you are knowledgeable about most of the plants or techniques in the garden, offer to be a "roamer" to more broadly cover the garden. If you are just learning, find a few areas of the garden that you would like to study in advance, then station yourself around these areas to let visitors know what's going on there.
- During your orientation tour and on the day of the tour, listen to how your hosts answer commonly asked questions so that you can begin to fill in and offer them more support.
- Don't be shy about directly engaging visitors: "I hope you're enjoying the garden—just let me know if you have any questions," is a great way to make it clear that you're there to help without imposing on visitors'

enjoyment or feeling too “pushy.” Remember, this is primarily an educational event—let folks know you welcome their questions.

- ❑ When you see visitors looking puzzled or you overhear something you know isn’t true, feel confident stepping up and talking with the visitors about what they’re seeing, e.g., “It looks like you’re wondering about that plant. It’s right here on your plant list, and it really is a great drought-tolerant plant for a sunny area. I really like how these gardeners have combined it with these others for a great effect!”
- ❑ You might want to bring one or two favorite reference books from home to have on hand.
- ❑ Please remember that all featured gardens are managed organically — without chemical pesticides —or using “Common Sense Gardening” techniques that emphasize alternatives-to and less-toxic methods for controlling pests. If you cannot answer pest-control questions with recommendations that support these gardening approaches, please ask the visitors to sign in with their phone numbers and specific questions on the Common Sense Gardening sheet on the check-in table. Ernie Paul and Jane Mountjoy-Venning will respond to their questions.
- ❑ For all questions that you can’t answer, encourage visitors to write them down on the clipboard at the check-in table for a future response.
- ❑ We will provide green aprons so that visitors can identify you as a knowledgeable docent!

**Plant Lists/Interviews:** This handout is tailored to each garden, and will contain the names of selected, featured plants, as well as a personal interview with the gardeners about their gardening practices. **Please read this before your shift begins to gain more insight into the garden.**

We will have adequate copies in every garden, as long as visitors don’t take multiple copies; please encourage couples to share. If you start to run low on handouts, have folks sign up to receive the interview/list electronically or via US mail. If you start to run out, please keep a few display copies for folks who want a reference while they’re there.

**Handouts/Guides:** There are a limited number of handouts available; please keep at least one of everything for display copies and **have visitors sign up for copies of materials that you run out of.** The Common Sense Gardening Guides are free. Both the Master Gardener Foundation and the Native Plant Salvage Foundation will have educational booths and books for sale at the shuttle site during the tour.

**Displays & Workshops:** Some gardens will also feature staffed educational displays. More educational displays and organizational community partners will be answering visitors’ questions at the shuttle site.

**Sharing responsibilities with fellow volunteers:** For every shift there will be at least three volunteers. You and your volunteer partners can take turns with responsibilities depending on your interests and physical abilities. As much as possible, we want more volunteers in the garden and fewer congregating around the check-in table.

However, there may be times when two of you will need to be staffing the table, with one person in the garden, and other times when one person can staff the table so that more people are circulating in the garden and directly engaging visitors and answering questions. Check in with your volunteer partners to ensure that whoever is staffing the check-in table isn’t being overwhelmed.

At the Cougar Ridge gardens, there is just one check-in table. Please coordinate with the other volunteers to ensure coverage at that table.

**Bus traffic:** The primary times when more help is needed at the check-in area will be when the bus pulls up—keep an ear out for the bus and decide in advance how you want to take turns making sure that two volunteers are at the check-in during the bus off-loading process. When the tour bus arrives, there is generally an enormous wave of traffic, so at least two volunteers should be ready to help at the front of the garden immediately after the bus arrives. After the crowd moves in, be prepared to help in the garden, leaving just one person to staff the check-in area.

## Check-in Table Duties

**Checking in/Recording visitors:** Please record the number of visitors as you check them in by making hash marks on the tally sheet on your clipboard. Place hash marks in the appropriate time slots.

**Tickets:** All visitors (except children) need a ticket to enter the gardens. **The Map/Brochure is the same as a ticket;** you don't need to "stamp" tickets, and we don't encourage a big focus on "checking" tickets—especially for those getting off the buses. Try to count folks and get visitors into the gardens quickly and smoothly.

Visitors without tickets may purchase them from you or at the shuttle site for \$15; checks must be made out to Master Gardener Foundation. Please keep tickets and cash in the designated envelopes.

Tickets can also be purchased at the Olympia Farmers Market Master Gardener booth and in advance at most local nurseries and branches of Olympia Federal Savings.

**Evaluation Sheets:** As you chat with folks at the check-in table, ask visitors if they have evaluation sheets. If you are staffing late in the day, please encourage visitors to take a few minutes to complete the evaluation and return to you before they leaves. You will have extra evaluations in your box to provide to visitors as needed. If you start to run low on evaluations, please call Ernie (561-4385) or Erica (402-8879) for more. Once again this year, volunteers have organized a raffle to encourage more participation in returning evaluations. The prizes are \$25 gift certificates to Black Lake Organic and Gore's nurseries.

**Volunteer Evaluations:** Please complete your evaluation and drop it in the box or mail it later.

## Other Logistical Information

**Parking & Shuttle:** Parking at all gardens is limited, so we ask volunteers to take measures to limit the impact of parking on the hosts' neighborhoods. Please use the suggestions below, and please park farther away, if possible, to allow visitors to access closer parking spaces.

All gardens will be serviced by six shuttle buses that will depart from the US Forest Service about every 10-15 minutes. If your time allows, please use the shuttle if you're staffing an afternoon shift (buses will run from 10 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.). We encourage morning-shift volunteers to try to carpool from the shuttle site with fellow volunteer partner(s); you can then immediately join the tour via shuttle once your shift is done and be returned to your car at the shuttle when it's convenient for you.

The shuttle site is also accessible by IT bus service or bicycle. There is a bike rack in a secure location in front of the building.

**Waterman Garden** volunteers: There will be parking next door Sequoia & Ariel's home, 7631 Brown Rd, just past Tali's driveway on the left, marked by a "Curry Palace" sign. You will take a quick walk through the woods to Tali's garden.

**Mills Garden:** There will be parking next door; please check with Nancy to see where it's best to park.

**Garst Garden:** You can park on North Hill and take the shuttle van up to the top of the hill, or walk the ¼-mile uphill for an invigorating start to your shift!

**Harris Garden:** Park on Camden Park; no parking allowed on Camden Place; please check this when you go to visit this garden in advance!

**Cougar Ridge Gardens:** Easy parking on adjacent streets, farther from featured gardens to allow visitors the closer spaces.

**Shuttle Site/Forest Service Parking:** We're asking volunteers to park on the back side (south side, closer to Ken Lake). This will mean going around the back of the building and parking in a line facing east (towards Black Lake Blvd./Lumberman's). Generally, the rule is to park further away from the primo parking spaces, leaving those for visitors!

**Disabled Visitors:** There will be disabled-visitor parking spots reserved close to each garden. Please assist as necessary and requested. Disabled visitors who are not touring the gardens but are accompanying able-bodied companions are not required to have a ticket. Please help them find a comfortable place to rest while their companion(s) visits the garden.

**Children:** Children can participate for free, but they must be supervised by adults. Gently remind parents that children need to stay close to their parents.

**Restrooms:** Hosts' bathrooms are not available to visitors. The map clearly states this and visitors have been asked to plan ahead. Bathroom facilities are noted on the ticket. **However, there are other options for volunteers:** Hosts have been asked to provide bathrooms for the use of volunteers, musicians, and artists only.

**Emergencies:** If any visitor is injured or any other emergency arises, notify your host at once and take any necessary measures, such as calling 911.

**Musicians & Artists:** Live classical music will be provided throughout the day at various times. Musicians from the Olympia Symphony and junior symphonies are donating their time. Many artists will also be delighting visitors with their talents and artistic skills.

**Posters for Sale:** Posters will be offered for sale at \$1 each at the shuttle site.

## Questions about tour sponsors . . .

**Common Sense Gardening Program:** This program is co-funded by the Thurston County Public Health & Social Services Department's Environmental Health Program and Thurston County Water & Waste Management. Visitors can call Ernie Paul at 754-4111, ext. 7618, or Chris Maun at 754-3355 ext. 6377.

**Thurston County Master Gardener Foundation:** Master Gardener volunteers are trained to answer questions about plants, plant diseases, fertilizers and pest controls. They can be reached Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at 867-2163; the office also welcomes walk-in visitors during these times at the WSU Extension Office, 4131 Mud Bay Rd. West, Olympia. From 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Fridays, Master Gardeners welcome visitors at Closed Loop Park at the Waste & Recovery Center (just before the payment booth on the right) or you may call 923-9183 during these hours.

**Olympia Symphony Guild:** Inquiries about the Guild can be directed to the Symphony's office at 753-0074.

**Native Plant Salvage Foundation:** The Native Plant Salvage Foundation supports WSU's Native Plant Salvage Project. NPSP recovers plants from areas slated for development and then uses the plants for restoration projects and demonstration landscapes as a means of protecting water quality and restoring habitats. NPSP and the Foundation offer workshops throughout the year on a variety of topics, and new

volunteers are welcomed. To be placed on the mailing list for the annual newsletter, ask visitors to use the Common Sense Gardening sign-up sheet and ***specifically note their interest in NPSP***. Interested visitors should call Erica Guttman at 867-2164.

**City of Olympia Water Resources Program:** Olympia's program offers services related to storm, surface, ground, and drinking water management. The City sponsors this Tour to encourage gardeners to adopt practices that will both protect and conserve precious drinking water. Call Linda Ayala at 753-8570 with questions.

**Problems with Your Shift:** If you are suddenly unable to meet your obligation, please call Erica as soon as possible (709-0704 in advance, or on the morning of the tour at 402-8879) so she may try to find a replacement and notify your host gardeners and shift mates of the change.

**Other Questions/Problems During Your Shift:** If something comes up during your shift that requires immediate attention you can't offer, you can get in touch by cell phone with Erica (402-8879), Ernie (561-4385), or Cori (239-5219). **In addition, Cori will be at the shuttle site for a big part of the day or roaming the gardens late in the day, and Ernie and Erica will be rotating through the gardens throughout the day.**

**Thanks again** for volunteering your time and talents! We look forward to a wonderful Tour on the 25<sup>th</sup>!