



# EXPLORING PORTLAND'S PUBLIC GARDENS WITH BOB TAYLOR

written by Cynthia Sylvia





Every year, we plan a week to volunteer at a nonprofit organization to give back to communities, enrich the lives of others, and stay connected with the world around us. Last September, we volunteered at the Community Garden in Portland, Oregon. My first impression of Community Garden founder, Bob Taylor, was that he is enthusiastic, loves gardening, and loves the people he's working with.

Since then, my respect for Bob has grown tremendously. His commitment to his cause is inspiring. Not only could I talk to Bob endlessly about landscape design, but also about community, leadership, and the enrichment of serving others. I'm proud to have Bob as a guest writer in this addition of *Hansel & Petal*. He's doing great things, and I'm proud to share his work with you.

Bob is no stranger when it comes to getting his hands dirty. He has been working with Portland metropolitan area organizations to create public garden spaces for nearly 20 years. "We're providing opportunities to bring our community together through volunteer work while providing nutritious food sources for low-income families."

He is on a mission to change the landscape of our inner cities by helping design and build community gardens in Portland, Oregon. "There are unique challenges in inner-city spaces, but I welcome them," Bob explains. "These gardens do more than supply fresh fruits and vegetables to nearby residences," he says. "They instill a sense of community, and when people have a community, magical things happen." Indeed, the community gardens have been doing something magical: they are providing more than 1,000 pounds of food monthly to low-income residents! "That far exceeded our expectations,"

says Bob. "We started with one location and our goal was to yield 100 pounds of food every month."

Bob graciously offered to take me on a tour of some of Portland's most popular garden spaces during my trip. Portland is a unique city with a bustling city life, a wide variety of outdoor adventures, and close access to natural spaces. Washington Park, an eclectic public garden space with numerous hiking trails, Japanese gardens, museums, and even a zoo, could take days to explore all on its own. This is just one of many locations throughout the Portland metropolitan area where you can find spectacular public gardens.

Traditional plants, statues, water features, bridges, and pathways are the perfect backdrop to the majestic views. Washington Park's outdoor showcase offers visitors an urban view of the vast varieties of plants and trees thriving in their native climate. It only makes sense that Washington Park also is home to the four-and-a-half-acre International Rose Test Garden, the oldest operating rose test garden in the United States.

The Hoyt Arboretum, a 189-acre museum of trees located next to Washington Park, shares some of the 152 miles of hiking trails located in the Portland area. Also located in the acreage are

Left: East of downtown is the nearly 160 acre Washington Park, where visitors can see hundreds of varieties of roses, hike dozens of trails, and explore Japanese gardens.



Top Left: The Pacific Northwest's rainy climate makes for a lush, colorful landscape.

Top Right: Volunteer labor helps charitable co-ops deliver only the freshest, most nutritious food at the Community Garden in Portland, Oregon.

Below: The Portland International Rose Test Garden is home to more than 10,000 rose bushes with approximately 650 varieties.








five historical memorials, including the Pittock Mansion, a children's museum, and the World Forestry Center—all accessible from the network of hiking trails.

The Portland Japanese Garden is a 12-acre Japanese garden that embraces tranquility and serenity. The space includes eight gardens, a tea house, café, and gift shop. Traditional plants, statues, water features, bridges, and pathways are the perfect backdrop to the majestic city views.

Examining what is so special about the Portland metropolitan area and its landscape, people, and culture is at the heart of this issue of *Hansel & Petal*. We talk with well-known landscape designers, local growers, and people who call the City of Roses their home. We hope that this issue helps you find the inspiration for your next design idea and guides you to bring it to life. ■





Calla lilies, rich in history and meaning, are a perfect choice for bouquets, centerpieces, and flower arrangements. The beautiful blooms come in a wide variety of vibrant colors and can hold their own or compliment other flowers with elegance.

Though not even in the lily family, calla lilies have celebratory roots leading all the way back to ancient times. Legend has it that the Greek goddess Hera created the Milky Way and calla lilies, and Venus was jealous of their beauty. Swedish botanist Carolus Linnaeus mislabeled the flower as lilies. The genus was later corrected, but the name stuck and is still commonly used today.

The colored spathe of the calla lily looks like a petal but is actually a leaf. The flower is the yellow spike in the center of the leaf. Cut calla

*Legend has it that the Greek goddess  
Hera created the Milky Way and calla  
lilies, and Venus was jealous of their*

lilies have a hardy stem and can last for up to 10 days.

We would be remiss not to mention that calla lilies are poisonous and should not be left in areas that can be reached by pets or small children. ■

Right: 'Pink Melody' calla lily produces rose-pink flowers (spathes) blended with tones of yellow and green at the base.







# CREATING URBAN GARDENS



Living in the city has many advantages. Easy access to work, endless dining options, and public transportation are among the top reasons people choose bustling city life over the sprawling suburbs. One drawback is the lack of yard space for gardening. With good planning and a little innovation, city dwellers can create thriving indoor garden spaces.

A variety of plants from decorative to edible are perfect candidates for indoor planting. Certain factors contribute to a plant's ideal ecosystem, such as indoor humidity, required dormant periods, and the amount of available sunlight.

Assessing lighting, water needs, and wintering plants are key to creating beautiful indoor gardens.

Utilize wall space by creating vertical wall gardens, shelving systems, and mountable wall

containers, which create depth and height, especially in small spaces. Complete wall systems can create lush gardens from floor to ceiling (or anywhere in between). Ladder bookshelves have tiered shelf depths



Left: Open glass terrariums are perfect for growing succulents or cacti in indoor spaces.

Right: Simplicity in small spaces can help to define a room without making it feel cluttered or closed in.



allowing better light flow, and come in a variety of heights, which can create unique wall gardens.

Terrariums are an excellent choice for small spaces. Closed glass containers hold more moisture and create a self-contained environment, which is good for plants that like humidity. If you are planting succulents or cacti, use an open container. Glass terrariums work well on tabletops and shelves, near where people

gather, so they can be viewed up close and often.

Keep it simple. Overcrowding in a tight space can be too much of a good thing. A single tall and bold plant, tree, or shrub can define an entire space. It can be placed in a corner to balance a room or in the center of two spaces to separate them. This is especially effective in small spaces or where furniture is minimal, as plants could overwhelm the décor.



## *Flower Spotlight:*

# The Magnificent Dahlias

---

In this issue, we spotlight dahlias, with their gorgeous midsummer blooms. In 1963, Mexican president Adolfo López Mateos published an official decree declaring that the dahlia, one of Mexico's numerous "gifts to the world," would be the nation's national flower. Mateos's decree stated that "Mexican flowers, due to their peculiar characteristics, have deserved distinction both in the country and abroad, and among them particularly the dahlia flower."

Dahlias are annual plants that bloom in late summer through early fall. Dahlias can be planted from seed but tend not to do as well as their tuberous counterparts. Ranging from 8 inches to 5 feet tall, dahlias are available in 12 different types of blooms which can be 2 to 12 inches wide and range in colors from white to dark purple. Smaller versions are referred to as the "pompom" dahlia, and larger versions are known as "dinner plate" dahlias, due to their rather large blossoms.

Though some dahlia varieties can have multiple flowers, single flowering plants tend to have better blooms and are more sought after. It is common for growers to prune new flower growth and encourage only one blossom per plant. Dahlias develop best in high-moisture, heavy soil, and enjoy a fair amount of daily sunshine. ■







Top Left: 'Garden Wonder' dahlias can produce crimson-red blooms up to 10-inches in Diameter. The large blooms attract hummingbirds and butterflies and are great options for garden borders.

Top Right: A young visitor to the 10-acre Dahlia Gardens in The City of Orange Valley admires one of the 200 varieties of dahlias maintained at the center.

Left: Dahlia blooms range from 2 to 12 inches in dozens of colors. The 'October Sky' dahlia provides an abundance of 5-inch ombre blooms through summer and fall.