

Bellevue Botanical Garden Master Plan Update

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

GARDEN MISSION STATEMENT

The Bellevue Botanical Garden develops, maintains, and displays plant collections in a park-like setting for the purposes of research, horticultural demonstration, and passive recreation. It provides a forum for public education in botany, horticulture and related fields. Community involvement at many levels of Garden operations is a fundamental goal and is essential to the Garden's continuing developing and maintenance.

GARDEN VISION

- Develop, maintain, and promote interpretive programs and facilities for public education in gardening, horticulture, and conservation relevant to the botanical heritage of the Pacific Northwest.
- Design and implement a multi-level fundraising plan to support the Bellevue Botanical Garden Society (BBGS) programs, events, projects, and endowment fund.
- Broaden and support membership and volunteer growth for all ages and interest levels.
- Organize the BBGS administration records to assist in orderly operation of the Garden Society.
- Guided by the Master Plan, assist the City of Bellevue in Garden development and maintenance to ensure that the Garden remains a resource of regional and international renown.
- Increase public awareness of the Garden through public relations and promotion, and support the City of Bellevue in making the Bellevue Botanical Garden an attractive destination for public enjoyment and passive recreation.

GARDEN SOCIETY VISION

To enhance the Garden's benefit to the community through increased educational programming and to assist in the completion of the Master Plan which will develop the Garden as a showroom for the serious gardener and the horticultural community. Our goal is for the Bellevue Botanical Garden to become the Eastside's premier gathering spot for horticultural activities with the help of a capital campaign to acquire adjacent land to expand the Garden, and with the building of a new visitors and educational center.

GARDEN DESCRIPTION

The Bellevue Botanical Garden is a no-fee public garden located in Bellevue Washington (12001 Main Street), occupying the western half of the Wilburton Hills Community Park. It is owned by the City of Bellevue Parks Department. The Garden is endowed with heavily forested areas of both deciduous and coniferous species including some old growth stands. Other Garden features and amenities include: open lawns, several wetlands, a pond, open meadows, visitor center, gift store, historical building, trail system, numerous display gardens, and two water features.

BRIEF GARDEN HISTORY

In 1984, Cal and Harriet Shorts deeded their home and seven acres of garden to the City of Bellevue. In 1986 the Bellevue Botanical Garden Society was formed to promote the use of the Shorts property as a botanical garden.

In 1989, the Bellevue City Council set aside 17 acres for the Botanical Garden including the Shorts property. Another 19 acres south of the Garden was set aside as a botanical reserve.

In 1989, the original Wilburton Hills Master Plan, including the Bellevue Botanical Garden, was completed and adopted.

Planning and construction filled the years of 1990-1992. The Shorts' residence was converted to a Visitor Center. Other projects included the Loop Trail, Perennial Garden, Ground Cover Garden, Fuchsia Garden. The Yao Garden at Kelsey Creek was relocated to the BBG.

The Bellevue Botanical Garden was opened to the public on June 27, 1992.

The first Master Plan Update was completed by Iain Robertson in September 1997.

Other major Garden development projects completed between the years of 1992 and 2006 include: the Alpine Rock Garden, Waterwise Garden, relocation of the historic Sharp's cabin to the BBG, Native Garden, Lost Meadow loop trail, expansion of the parking lot, Tateuchi Viewing Pavilion, and water feature construction which included the renovation of the Ground Cover Garden.

In September 2006, a 17-acre parcel adjacent to the Garden was acquired by the City of Bellevue (see vicinity map). Through fund raising efforts the Bellevue Botanical Garden Society contributed \$200,000 toward the acquisition.

SITE DEVELOPMENT

The Garden has been developed in accordance with the current Bellevue Botanical Garden Master Plan. The overarching values and goals are to create beautiful and useful ways for people to become involved with and appreciate plants; to educate visitors in environmentally-sound horticultural practices; and to inspire the public by creating experiential and aesthetically pleasing places and landscapes. To this end, the Master Plan is subject to periodic review and revision.

VISITATION

The Garden currently serves over 250,000 visitors per year, including the increasingly popular "Garden d' Lights" which drew over 120,000 visitors between Thanksgiving and New Year's Day in 2006.

DEFINITION OF ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES WITHIN THE GARDEN

Bellevue Parks & Community Services Department - The Parks Department owns the property and has overall management responsibility for the development and operation of the Garden. This is accomplished through the efforts of a full-time Garden Manager, two full-time maintenance staff, seasonal maintenance employees, and over 20,000 volunteer hours per year.

The Bellevue Botanical Garden Society (BBGS) - The BBGS is a volunteer organization governed by a board of directors. The BBGS plays the key role as the private sector organization working most directly with the Parks Department with regard to the Garden. The role of the BBGS includes:

- Organize public opinion and response for development,
- Organize fundraising and seek grants for ongoing development,
- Serve in an advisory capacity to the Parks Department,
- Assist in the provision of voluntary help,
- Assist in cataloging and identification of plants within the Garden,
- Operate the Library and Garden Gift Shop, and
- Promote the Garden as a focus of community activity, including horticultural education, demonstration, and research.