

DIG THIS By Peg Tillery (for 9-11-02) , ©2005

During the days that followed September 11 last year my fellow writers were sharing their feelings very eloquently. I, alas, was wordless for the first time in my life. No words can express the tragic loss of lives and the senseless wars and horrific attacks on one another that have been a part of our world's history since the beginning of time. I wish I could pen some sage prose to change forever this horrible part of our human condition, but I cannot. Instead, in memory of all those who were lost on September 11, 2001, I hope you'll spend as much time as possible with those you love. Better yet, tell them often how much you love them. Pause in your busy schedules to nurture your spirits and the spirits of those close to you.

In today's column I'll attempt to share the serenity and peace I found a few weeks ago on a visit to the Bloedel Reserve on Bainbridge Island. Take time to find some of your own tranquility this week too. And pray for peace for the whole world.

The Bloedel Reserve is located on Bainbridge Island. The Reserve is open to the public Wednesday through Sunday from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Reservations are required. Call 206-842-7631 between 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. daily. Annual memberships are \$35. Members enjoy an unlimited number of visits with up to three guests; periodic newsletters; notification of lectures, concerts, and other special events; and a ten percent discount on the purchase of "The Bloedel Reserve: Gardens in the Forest" and video tape. Non-members can visit by reserving a time and paying the admission fee of six dollars. Eat first, no picnicking is allowed.

When you arrive one of the many gracious volunteers will let you through the gate and direct you to parking. Next you'll go into the gatehouse to receive a self-guiding booklet. The volunteer will also draw out your journey for you on a map and mention the plants of special interest that season. The map and descriptions alone are worth the six dollars. The description of the Reserve begins with "Man's first recorded home was a garden, no sooner known than lost. We've been trying to return every since." Even though we will never know what the Garden of Eden was like, I think the Bloedel Reserve must come very close to it.

Visitors are scheduled so each group has maximum opportunity for an uncrowded, peace filled walk through the garden along the paths. The Reserve is divided into sections such as: the bird refuge; the woods; the glen; Japanese Garden; Moss Garden and Reflection Garden.

Don't forget to enter through the doors of the Bloedel Manor House. Volunteers inside will give you a tour of the home. The incredible library has an amazing array of books on horticulture collected by the Bloedel family. Visitors are encouraged to browse through the books by appointment any day the Reserve is open. You'll see the special desk owned by the Bloedels. The desk is double sided so the couple could sit across from each other

to talk about the design of their garden. Volunteer Jan Long creates the stunning floral arrangements throughout the house.

You might want to purchase two very informative booklets for two dollars each. "Birds of the Bloedel Reserve" by Karla Hammer Piecuch (illustrated by Chris Mills) includes 36 pages with sketches and details on the birds inhabiting the Reserve. "Trees of the Bloedel Reserve" by Arthur Lee Jacobson (illustrated by Michael Lee) has sketches of fifty of the trees in the Reserve with a map showing their location. I found them very useful while I strolled the grounds with my friend Regina Thompson. We kept pausing to determine the name of each wonderful tree we were admiring.

I could write hundreds of words to describe the Reserve, but you'll just have to go explore this spirit-nurturing place for yourself. Take someone you care about with you. I'll end the column with this statement from the Bloedel Reserve, "The Reserve is a place to experience the bond between people and nature. It is a place for people but not in clamorous crowds. It is a place in which to enjoy and learn from the emotional and aesthetic experience of nature the values of harmony, respect for life and tranquility. It is a place to enjoy and learn the values of eclectic design, aesthetics and ecology as the catalysts for the harmonious interaction of people and nature." I hope you'll visit the Reserve and refresh your soul.

*Contact Peg with questions or comments in care of this newspaper or via email at [gardenmentor@yahoo.com](mailto:gardenmentor@yahoo.com).*