

DIG THIS By Peg Tillery (for 5-14-03) , ©2005

Are you itching to tour some gardens and get lots of ideas? Kitsap's two events this summer, Gifts of the Garden in South Kitsap and Bainbridge in Bloom, help raise much needed funds for two very worthy causes.

Gifts of the Garden runs Saturday and Sunday June 21 and 22 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Purchase tickets now for fifteen dollars by calling 350-535-6152. Kitsap County Consolidated Housing Authority sponsors the event to benefit the Kerry Ogden Memorial Scholarship Fund. KCCHA remembers Kerry for her "tireless devotion to low-income children. She surmounted language and cultural barriers to help 'her kids' feel part of the community and to achieve academically."

This year's tour features woodland hideaways and waterfront splendor. Shuttle buses run every 15 to 20 minutes delivering tour participants to garden destinations. Cedar Springs "Pavilion by the Lake" located at 7354 Bethel Burley Road SE is the starting point. It's best to purchase tickets in advance but you can purchase them at Cedar Springs.

Bring extra money. Food and other gardening accompaniments are always an extra perk. You'll find food and refreshments available both days until 4 p.m. provided by Le Garmarache, along with art, information and other temptations. Cedar Springs, an 18-year labor of love for Dan and Leanne Landon, is available for weddings, picnics, family reunions and special occasions.

To reach Cedar Springs from Bremerton exit at Sedgwick and travel left to Bethel Road. Go right on Bethel and continue about one mile crossing over the Highway 16 overpass. Grace Bible Church is on the right. Continue until the fourth driveway on the right and you'll find the sign and entrance to Cedar Springs. From Tacoma take Highway 16 and exit at Mullenix Road. Turn left and travel under the freeway. Turn right on Bethel Burley Road and continue one mile. Turn left into the marked driveway.

Helen and Dale Stoner's garden features an Asian theme. Visitors will commune with Koi, be soothed by water features, and enjoy plantings and ornamentation with Japanese and Chinese influences. Additionally this garden offers a gift shop with antiques, scrimshaw, handmade papers, jewelry and gifts.

In four years Toby and Tom Mason have turned a flat, weed infested lot into a series of gardens with several themes. Visitors will stroll the half-acre of plantings discovering rhododendrons, grasses, lavender and roses. The meditation area features different colors representing each of the eight major energy systems (or chakras) of the body. Sedum form a lotus pattern viewed from the yoga studio above the garden. Photos can be viewed showing the metamorphosis created by Toby and Tom.

The garden of Colleen and Eric Miko reflects landscape designer Colleen's creed that "one should work with the natural contours and conditions of a site." Visitors will stroll a

woodland path enhanced naturally by Solomon seal, foxgloves, hellebores and fairy bells, at the same time glimpsing a pond through cedar and hemlock. An arbor leads to a tantalizing vegetable garden growing asparagus, herbs, artichokes and rhubarb. Colleen is President of the Olympic Chapter of WSNLA (Washington State Nursery and Landscapers Association) and will have WSNLA members on hand to provide information for gardeners.

Ed and Sandra Asakainen's garden was inspired by Ed's memories of Great Aunt Magna's garden in New England. The garden is sited in the middle of an open meadow where hopscotch tiles lead to a wrought iron gate. The garden includes habitat for birds, an orchard and a greenhouse constructed of bricks, reclaimed windows and remnants of a wooden fence once surrounding the property.

Towering cedar and native plants guide the way into the spectacular waterfront setting of the Patrick Garden. The site features a white-fenced kitchen garden and views of Rich Passage with passing ferries. At the water level visitors will arrive at a renovated summer cabin pausing to rest around the fire pit enjoying panoramic views to Manchester and Blake Island.

Also featured at this once a year not-to-be-missed event is the Sidney Art Gallery in downtown Port Orchard. Gifts for those special gardeners include potting benches, stained glass, original paintings and jewelry. Linda Spearman is the featured artist. The owners of the Gallery will store your purchases for the day while you continue on to the gardens.

Our other tour, Bainbridge in Bloom is July 11 through 13. Order early bird tickets now online by keying in www.gardentour.info or call the Bainbridge Arts and Humanities Council at 206-842-7901 for tickets and tour information.