



Leach Garden News

a publication of Portland's Public Botanic Garden

Summer 2012

AN UNEXPECTED REVIVAL

Some of the most exciting moments in my work arise from botanical surprises, whether it's an unusual floral structure, or the first time I see a breathtaking color pattern on a leaf. Recently, I was thrilled to witness another great surprise in the plant world.

In August 2010, Rosie and Les Vulcz, tree fern growers from Australia, donated two tree ferns to the Garden. I planted one of them in a large display pot and left



The Miracle Tree Fern

it outside through October of that year. I moved it into the greenhouse to protect it from winter weather, but by December it exhibited signs of stress. The following March, I transferred the pathetic specimen outside, hoping it would recover. By mid-summer, I halted supplemental watering, and by late autumn decided to call it a loss. The tree fern was tossed onto a compost pile.

As volunteers will attest, our compost piles can be excellent salvage sites for unwanted (and a few unintentional)

nursery discards, such as camas, hyacinth, jack-in-the-pulpit, and poppy. But when I walked past the pile in late April, I was shocked to see thick, contorted fern fronds reaching for the sky. I laughed out loud when I discovered the discarded tree fern trunk, after months of cold exposure and without a soil foundation, revived. Humbled by this amazing plant, I promised to never again confine it to a pot and gave it a suitable home in the Garden collection.

This marvelous incident led to two questions: Are there other reports of plant revivals similar to this? And what allowed the tree fern to seemingly come back to life? Another plant in the annals of botanical literature that was famously resuscitated is *Lewisia rediviva* (bitterroot), a North American succulent that was nurtured from

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SPECIAL INSERT!
Summer Classes & Activities

New!
The Bug Chicks' Summer Video Camp
August 13-17

dried herbarium specimens to healthy garden adornments by Bernard McMahon, one of the plant collection stewards for the Lewis and Clark expedition. An answer to the second question was provided by an article in *Trends in Plant Science* entitled “Towards a Systems-Based Understanding of Plant Desiccation Tolerance” (Vol. 14, 2009). It stated that the onset of water loss apparently sets into motion a series of cellular events that can be summarized as follows: Dehydration causes an activation of “desiccation-related” genes, leading to alterations in metabolism and production of “protective” proteins. In other words, some plants have an incredible ability to remain alive despite extreme water loss, and when suitable conditions arise, can flourish once again.

If all goes well, our miracle tree fern will thrive in its new location. And if it does, I will love to share its story over and over.

--- Scott Hoelscher, Head Gardener

NATURE FAIR A HUGE SUCCESS



A record crowd turned out for the annual Children’s Nature Fair on May 19th. Many people discovered the Garden for the first time and were not disappointed. Thank you to all of our partners and volunteers who helped make the day special for kids and adults alike. Check out our Facebook page for more photos.



THE DEVIL’S CLUB

Oplopanax horridus, despite the terrifying botanic (*hoplon*- from the Greek meaning weapon, and *panax* - a reference to spiny stems) and common names, is a wonderful addition to the native woodland garden. A woody perennial that will reach over



10’, its natural habitat is in moist coniferous woods, along well drained seeps. The maple shaped leaves and petioles can reach one foot long. Small, white flowers borne at an umbel emerge from branch tips in late spring to early summer. Umbrels can be quite large as well --- up to 10inches. The resulting fruit is bright red and poisonous. The stems and leaves are heavily armored with golden spines and prickles, some of which can be half an inch long, thus the name.

An important medicinal plant of indigenous groups of the Pacific Northwest, *Oplopanax horridus* roots and inner bark of the branches were used for making medicine to address stomach problems, diabetes, and to treat the flu. There is some concern that the native *Oplopanax* may be under threat of overharvesting in the pursuit of making herbal remedies. Ginseng, a popular herbal remedy and antioxidant used to treat a wide range of ailments, has gained more popularity recently as an additive to sports and energy drinks. It is thought that *Panax ginseng* and *Oplopanax horridus* share similar chemical properties and therefore may have shared applications.

Devil’s Club is a great plant for collectors if placed near the back of a woodland garden, where it can also serve as a neighbor barrier!

--- Courtney Vengarick, Curator/Gardener

Discover the magic!
Leach Garden After Hours

a benefit for Leach Botanical Garden - building the next 30 years

June 20 6:30 - 8:30 pm

Midsummer in the Garden, a nod to Shakespeare

Search the garden for many of the plants mentioned in Shakespeare and enjoy some midsummer silliness with the **Original Practice Shakespeare Festival** and Elizabethan music from **Phil & Gayle Neuman**.

July 18 6:30-8:30 pm

Cocktails from the Collection

Pharmacist John Leach grew plants for medicinal purposes but many of those same plants make a great cocktail! Join Mixologist Lydia Reissmueller from **Tender Bar Cocktail Catering**, to try some fun concoctions of both food and drink - alcoholic & non-alcoholic.

August 15 6:30-8:30 pm

Lover's Sunset Walk

Delight in the love story of John and Lilla Leach and see how it reflected in the Garden. You'll be treated to the music of **Susannah Mars** as she shares songs of love and love lost.

October 24 7:00 - 9:00 pm

Sleepy Hollow After Dark

In the glow of the lanterns, discover why Leach Garden's founders called it "Sleepy Hollow!"

All events include a guided stroll in the Garden, music and refreshments.

Space is limited.
Reservations Required.

\$35 members / \$45 non-members
(includes a membership)

www.leachgarden.org
or call 503-823-1671

*Coming this
September*

Watch for your personal invitation to our first-ever

Garden Party

A special fund-raising event to mark the 30th Anniversary of Leach Botanical Garden & introduce the vision for the next 30 years!

AFTER HOURS EVENTS ENTER THEIR THIRD SEASON

The 30th anniversary events committee has outdone themselves for this special season of our After Hours series. Incredible music, entertainment, and food is planned for each unique evening. For these special 30th Anniversary events, non-members will receive a complimentary membership with their purchase of After Hours tickets. This is a perfect time to invite your friends to discover the magic of Leach Botanical Garden!



UPPER GARDEN DESIGN UPDATE

The draft design for the six-acre Upper Garden was presented for public review and comment May 11-13. Those who took the time to submit comment cards approved of the general concepts and offered a variety of suggestions. The concepts and comment card are posted on the Garden's website: <http://www.leachgarden.org/about-leach/upper-garden-design/>. Check them out and let us know what you think. Comments will be accepted through June 8th.

Some of the features of the two options are highlighted below. The primary difference between the two has to do with how parking is handled.



The Preferred Option

- This option shows parking on property that is not a part of the Garden at this time. However, the Leach Garden Friends board and the Design Advisory Committee both feel that acquiring adjacent property to accommodate parking is much preferred to removing a large number of old trees for this purpose.
- Welcome Center includes visitor orientation, restrooms, gift shop, and administrative offices. It is sited to have a presence from 122nd.
- Woodland Pavilion houses flexible use space that can hold groups up to 150 but also be divided into smaller classrooms. It has restrooms and catering kitchen too.
- Expanded plant collection beds & propagation areas are sited to maximize their exposure to sun.
- Maintenance and storage facilities and propagation areas are located to the east, with access from Claybourne.
- There is an intimate-scale water garden as well as a bog area.
- There is a flexible use open space area in the glade to the southwest of the Welcome Center. It can be used for public picnicking or passive recreation outside the Garden's fenced perimeter.

- In Option 2, parking is located on the western portion of the site, woven in under large fir trees.
- The Welcome Center would be moved to the east, making it less visible from 122nd.
- There is no room for the passive recreation area in the southwest glade.

One exciting feature of the proposed design is a conservatory, which would enable us to showcase plants that require warmer, dryer conditions year around. An important next step is to determine what species will be featured in the expanded collection display areas, including the conservatory. This decision-making process will begin soon - building on the work of the Collection Assessment Team that was completed last fall. This is a brief synopsis of their report.

THE GARDEN COLLECTION

The Board appointed Leach Botanical Garden Collection Assessment Team (See the Spring 2011 newsletter) completed its review of the Garden's historic and current collection in the Fall of 2011, in anticipation of Phase 1 of the Master Plan design process.

The Team was charmed by the period structures, Johnson Creek and the somewhat whimsical nature of the collections that interested the Leaches. The structures and the Creek add a cachet to the Garden that most other botanical gardens can only wish for and spend millions of dollars creating.

The collection policy of 2000 was reviewed and updated by redefining two major components of the collection, the native collection and the Historic collection to the following:

The native plant collection of the Leach Botanical Garden is defined as those plants that occur naturally

within the borders of the state of Oregon before European settlement. The focus will be on plants that are compatible with the climate and growing conditions of the Garden.

Preserving the essence of the Leach Historic Collection is to contain the species discovered and attributed to the Leaches: *Iris innominata*, *Kalmiopsis leachiana*, *Sedum moranii*, *Sophora leachiana*, *Triteleia hendersonii* v. *leachiae* and to include plants native to SE USA, Camellia, Medicinals, Ferns, Winter interest, all of which were of interest the Leaches.

Integral to maintaining a living collection is how the collections are recorded. This is important to the mission of botanical gardens to aid in acquiring and disseminating of plant information. To that end we are in the process of reviewing collection management tools that will enhance our records and be available to other botanic institutions.

The Garden is grateful to the volunteer Team of Bonnie Brunkow-Olson, Dan Moeller, Fred Nilson, Jim Sjulín, Linda Morrow, Linda McMahan, John Christy, and Angie Moore for their time and valuable insight in this phase of the assessment.

If you would like to read the full report, please contact me at cvengarick@leachgarden.org.

--- Courtney Vengarick, Curator/Gardener



Pot people guard the newly planted Children's Garden.

MORE MEADOW IMPROVEMENTS

This year, with the new restroom in place, we wanted to make the meadow even more useful. With a contribution from Parr Lumber, design work courtesy of architect David Slusarenko, volunteer carpentry and a work crew of PSU students, we created an 800 square foot wooden deck to make the tent more useful. Parks staff helped smooth out the meadow. We spread ground wood chips to create pathways. We hydroseeded to provide more grass cover. Another crew of volunteers and students from Alice Ott Middle School carved out and planted a wonderful children's garden space.

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You can spy *Geum triflorum*, "Prairie Smoke" blooming in the Garden in June & July.

STAFF

David Porter
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Scott Hoelscher
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Janice Jenkins
Education Coordinator

Molly Jones
Development/Event
Coordinator

Kathleen Kennedy
Caretaker

Courtney Vengarick
Gardener/Curator

MESSAGE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



The unfolding year continues to bring good things to our door, despite the seemingly permanent weekly dose of rain. We have been heartened to have the Portland Development Commission restore the next two years of funding for the Garden to their budget and forecast. A visit to the Garden by PDC Commission Chair Scott Andrews and commissioner John Mohlis at the invitation of City Commissioner Fish led to a reappraisal of the importance of supporting new developments at Leach. At the same time, organizations and individuals across the community spoke up in favor of funding Leach's projects as well. In fact, awareness of the Garden and our plans for development here grew by leaps and bounds.

The positive outcome was certainly enhanced by the fact that Mayer Reed Landscape Architects and our Design Advisory Committee were meeting regularly and schematic design for the Upper Garden were coming into focus in a way that made the potential impact for serving the public much clearer. The design concepts were displayed at the Manor House on National Public Garden Day for public comment. The discussion was also conducted online through the design section of our website; background materials, concepts, and drawings of the evolving vision continue to be available there.

I was not able to participate in the annual Plant Sale in 2011, but more than made up for it this year. The sale is held at Floyd Light Middle School and involved nearly twenty nursery vendors in addition to making plants from our own propagation team available. Those who are longtime participants observed that the quality and presentation of Leach's plants were the best ever, the result of excellent efforts from our propagation volunteers led by Courtney Vengarick. When all the tallying was done, the sale had exceeded our projections and the sales value of our own plants had increased by 127%. In addition we gathered substantial amounts of data about our customers and engaged many in thinking about connecting with the Garden itself.

The busy calendar just continued to accelerate. Our education staff and volunteers have been working to create a vibrant menu of classes and activities for the summer. Many things on the schedule are planned for the Near Meadow where last year we erected our big tent for the first time. The only problematic element was the frequent return of April showers, even after April was long past. Despite the soggy, all the elements came together in time for Children's Nature Fair on May 19. Over six hundred visitors of all ages came to the Garden to make crafts, learn about and handle bugs, listen to music, and tour the Garden. The weather held and the event put smiles on faces throughout the Garden. Katie Goodwin and Janice Jenkins worked hard to give the event a special Leach Garden flavor and the result could not have been better.

The increasing tempo of activity here at the Garden and our ambitious plans for the future require that we find additional sources of financial support to grow existing programs and launch new ones. To help us with that effort, the board has approved retaining the services of a grantwriter. Jenny Taylor, a retired Forest Service employee and student in the non-profit management program at University of Portland, is working with us on contract through September to craft grant proposals and organize a calendar of potential funding sources. We are glad to have her help and experience. We have reached the point where we have great stories to tell and exciting opportunities to share and Jenny's work is welcome.

Looking ahead, I am confident that our summer menu will keep us at least as busy and will bring new audiences to the Garden to experience it in new ways. That bustle and excitement is part of what drives me and everyone else here at Leach to put our best efforts toward making the new designs as reality. We know that we will be creating places and traditions that people will cherish in decades to come.

--- David

LEACH GARDEN FRIENDS GRATEFULLY ACKNOWLEDGES THE FOLLOWING
GIFTS AND WELCOMES OUR NEW MEMBERS SINCE MARCH 2012.

CONTRIBUTIONS & NEW MEMBERS

Sue Allen
Dorothy Baker
Marvin Bame
Carol Baumann
Mr and Mrs James E Berry
Helen Boyer
Monica Card*
Ken and Henny Chambers
Fern P. Cohen
Kenneth Cole
Jan and Dave Dobak
Dale Doerr
Oliver Domreis
Randall and Laurie Dunn
Christine Ebrahimi
Nancy and Mike Fahey
Ernie Francisco
Lisa and John Gambee
Cathy Geiger
Myrtle Gradin
Gay Greger and Jim Sjulín
Laurie Griff
Allison Hall
Happy Hieronimus
Tom and Sandra Hill
Benton and Caroline Holz-
warth
Janice S. Ishii*
Tracy and Marva Janik*
Marjorie Jones
Cynthia Kaeser

Marian Letourneau
Dave and Mary Lou Koehler
Peter & Christine Lent
Ann and William Maslen
John and Ginny McCormac
Linda McMahan
Multnomah District OSFGC
Oregon State Federation of Garden
Clubs Inc.
Sherry Palmer*
Brenda Smith
Jean Thomson
Mark and Lisa Turpel
U.S. Bancorp Foundation Employee
Matching Gift Program
Villa Garden Club
Rhoda Whittlesey

In Memoriam

June Bauer
Randi Leuthold
Frances Morris
Ruth E. Lund
Stan Sackett
Nate & Bette Streitmatter

Tributes

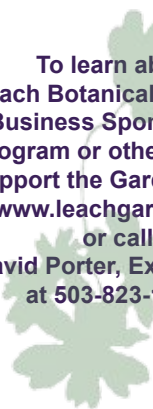
Joey Pope
in honor of Jenna Sjulín

*also new member



Happy Plant Sale customers.

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