



The Neighbors' Gardening Circular

Information for your neighborhood from the people at
Seattle Transportation Urban Forestry

Spring/Summer 2003



With Safer Streets, Everyone is a Winner!

Islands of green with colorful textures and accents punctuate paved streets and parking lots throughout Seattle. Some may burst with spectacular displays and others suffer from neglect with overgrowth and weeds. Although the primary purpose of traffic calming devices is to reduce collisions, planted islands and other streetside gardens can become a beautiful neighborhood landmark appreciated by many.

This year's Streetside Garden Contest theme is "From Gray to Green and Every Color In Between!" Once again, the City of Seattle has partnered with Seattle Tilth and Northwest Garden News to recognize the Emerald City's creative and well tended streetside gardens. Although the focus of this year's competition is on residential streets and their landscaped traffic calming devices, business districts and "welcome to the neighborhood" gardens are also encouraged to participate.

Qualifying traffic calming devices are: traffic circles, Chicanes, Curb Bulbs, Triangles & Medians, and Business District/Gateway plantings. Gardens must meet SDOT landscaping in the street rights-of-way guidelines.

Continued on Page 2

DON Grants No Longer Available

Due to budget constraints, the Department of Neighborhoods will no longer provide money for traffic circle renovations through the Neighborhood Matching Fund. We are still trying to find ways to make up for this loss. If your traffic circle needs major cleanup or renovation, please contact Liz at 684-5008. If there is an opportunity for us to provide soil, a tree, or other plants, we will do what we can to support our dedicated volunteers.

Gardener Survey Follow-up

Our thanks to all of you who returned your gardener surveys from the last newsletter! Your feedback has been very helpful to us and (hopefully) you too. We were pleased to hear that there are some streetside gardens that are so well established that they require virtually no watering or weeding. It sounds like many of you are still facing some challenges keeping your gardens beautiful. We're highlighting a few of the most common questions and problems.

Q: Can you recommend some low maintenance items for my traffic circle garden?

A: We'd love to! Please see our web site at <http://www.seattle.gov/transportation/circletrees.htm> for a list of drought-tolerant, low maintenance plants and general landscaping guidelines. If you'd like a paper copy, call Liz at 684-5008.

Q: Can SDOT pay for clean green pick-up?

A: No, but the City can pick up yard waste from your streetside garden a few times a year. Call the Adopt-a-Street program at 684-7647.

Q: It's difficult to get water to our traffic circle. There is too much traffic to run a hose/sprinkler from our property, and buckets are too tedious.

A: You can run a hose to the circle and let the traffic run over it, but even the more durable rubber hoses are not made for this. Carrying many watering with buckets can be tedious. You might want to try taking a 5-gallon bucket and drilling a 1/8" hole in the bottom or side. Fill the bucket with water from your hose and let the water slowly soak into the ground.

Q: Our traffic circle gets run over on a continual basis. Can we add rocks, fences, or other obstacle to the traffic circle?

A: No. Fencing, rocks, bird baths, and posts are not allowed. It's not that we hate creativity. We're just trying to keep good relations with the Fire Department, which requests that circle be kept clear of obstacles.

Please feel free to continue sending us your questions and comments! -GH



Everyone is a winner (continued from Page 1)

Streetside gardening has its own challenges from needing to be safe while working near passing cars to creating an interesting garden that is low growing and the need to occasionally fill in tire tracks and replace plantings that have been run over. Streetside gardeners tend to be a particularly intrepid, stalwart lot! With a seasoned panel of judges and eight entry categories, there well could be a trophy with your name on it! Now is a good time to round up your friends and neighbors for weeding and planting help. Entries are due June 1st and judges will be out looking at the finalists from June 15-30th. Awards are presented in September.



2002 Judges look at the Car Stoppin' Gorgeous Award Winner at Fremont Avenue North & North 63rd Street. Susan Plahn and Camille McGee are the circle stewards and gardeners.

Your garden could be in this year's circle of winners! Let us recognize your good gardening! Send in an entry form soon!



City of Seattle
Department of Transportation
Urban Forestry
700 Fifth Avenue, Suite 3800
Seattle, WA 98104-5043
(206) 684-5008
(206) 615-0899

<http://www.seattle.gov/transportation/trafficcircles.htm>

Staff

Greg Nickels	Mayor, City of Seattle
Grace Crunican	Director, SDOT
Roy Francis	Manager, Urban Forestry
John Marek	Manager, Neighborhood Traffic Control Program
Liz Ellis	Program Manager, Neighborhood Streetside Gardening
Greg Hostetler	Assistant Program Manager, Neighborhood Streetside Gardening
Nolan Rundquist	City Arborist

Newsletter Contributors

Editors	Greg Hostetler & Liz Ellis
Contributing writers	Cindy Young, Wendy DesCamp
Graphics	Right Brain Café web site

Please submit articles, photos, and artwork to Liz Ellis at the above address. Please pass this newsletter on to your friends and neighbors.

Permits are required for planting, pruning, or removing trees in the planting strip (space between sidewalk and street). For details and applications, call 684-7649 or visit <http://www.seattle.gov/transportation/arborist.htm>.

What's wrong with this circle?

There are at least seven things wrong with this traffic circle. Can you find them?



Answers: Tree is planted too close to curb, pampas grass blocking reflector sign and obstructing visibility, butterfly bush obstructing visibility, bird bath, 4x4 post, rocks, litter.



Native Plants for Streetside Gardens



Many of you have been wondering what sorts of native plants do well in traffic circles and other streetside gardens. First of all, it should be said that coming up with such a list is no simple task. Our rigorous height limit of 24 inches ruled out many great plants from the start. And finding drought tolerant species was not as easy as it might seem. Before the hills of Seattle were paved over, there was a lot of moist, shady coniferous forest here. Many of the plants adapted to these conditions don't fare well in full sun with extra rays

Trees:

Quercus garryana (Garry oak)
Thuja plicata (western redcedar)

Shrubs:

Gaultheria shaloni (salal) (can exceed three feet high)
Juniperus communis (ground juniper)*
Mahonia nervosa (low Oregon grape)
Mahonia repens (creeping Oregon grape)
Pachistima myrsinites (Oregon boxwood)
Potentilla fruticosa (shrubby cinquefoil)
Spiraea densiflora (subalpine spiraea)*
Vaccinium deliciosum (Cascade huckleberry)*

Perennials:

Achillea millefolium (yarrow)
Allium cernuum (nodding onion)
Anaphalis margaritacea (pearly everlasting)
Aquilegia formosa (red columbine)
Brodiaea coronaria (harvest brodiaea)*
Brodiaea hyacinthina (fool's onion)*
Camassia quamash (common camas, camas lily)
Campanula rotundifolia (common harebell)*
Castilleja miniata (scarlet paintbrush)
Delphinium menziesii (Menzies' larkspur)*
Dodecatheon hendersonii (broad-leaved shooting star)*
Eriophyllum lanatum (Oregon sunshine)*
Iris tenax (Oregon iris)*
Lupinus arcticus, syn. *Lupinus latifolius* (arctic lupine)* -
easy to grow from seed
Lupinus littoralis (seashore lupine)*
Penstemon cardwellii (Cardwell's penstemon)*
Penstemon rupicola (rock penstemon)*
Penstemon davidsonii (Davidson's penstemon)*
Polemonium pulcherrimum (showy Jacob's ladder)
Polystichum munitum (sword fern)

Become a Native Plant Steward

The Washington Native Plant Society offers classes on native plants that includes urban forestry, restoration, and landscaping for wildlife. For 10 weeks of free instruction, participants commit to 75 hours of community involvement. For more information, call 527-3210 or email npsp@wnps.org. Classes begin April 1.

bouncing off the surrounding concrete. As a consequence, we also looked at plants that are common to Puget Sound prairies and the mountains of western Washington. Many of these grow in open areas and rocky slopes, so they're better adapted to urban conditions.

With the help of Cindy Young at the King County Native Plant Salvage Program, we've come up with the following native plant list for streetside gardens.

Potentilla gracilis (graceful cinquefoil)*
Potentilla villosa (villous cinquefoil)*
Sisyrinchium douglasii (Blue-eyed grass)*
Viola adunca (early blue violet)

Groundcovers:

Arctostaphylos uva-ursi (kinnikinnick)
Fragaria chiloensis (coastal strawberry)
Fragaria virginiana, (wild strawberry)*
Fragaria vesca (woodland strawberry)*
Linnaea borealis (twinflower)
Phlox diffusa (spreading phlox)*
Satureja douglasii (yerba buena)*
Sedum spathifolium (broad-leaved stonecrop)
Sedum oreganum (Oregon stonecrop)*
Sedum lanceolatum (lance-leaved stonecrop)*

* These plants may be more difficult to find at nurseries.

Photos and descriptions many of these plants can be seen in the Washington Native Plant Society photo gallery: <http://www.wnps.org/photogallery1.html> or the WSU Cooperative Extension native plant page: <http://cahedb.wsu.edu/nativePlant/scripts/webShowClassification.asp>.

Plants should only be collected at organized salvage events (see box below).

Sources for native plants:

Local Nurseries

Visit the Washington Native Plant Society at <http://www.wnps.org/gardening.html> or King County at <http://dnr.metrokc.gov/wlr/pi/npnursry.htm> for a list of local nurseries that sell native plants. If you want to be a purist, make sure that you ask for plants by their botanical (Latin) names.

FREE Naturescaping Workshop & Native Plant Salvage
The next workshop is in the fall. For more information, please contact Greg Rabourn at 206-296-1923 or greg.rabourn@metrokc.gov.

Washington Native Plant Society **Native Plant Sale**
Saturday, May 10, 10 am - 4 pm
Bellevue Botanical Garden, 12001 Main Street, Bellevue

Want To Learn More About Gardening & Tree Care? Take A Class!

Call to see what classes or workshops are being offered by these fine organizations & schools.

- Center for Urban Horticulture 206- 543-8616
- Edmonds Com College 425-640-1739
- PlantAmnesty 206-783-9813
- Seattle Tilth 206- 633-0451
- South Seattle Com College 206- 764-5336
- Washington Pk Arboretum 206- 543-8800

Rain Barrel Sale for Home Use

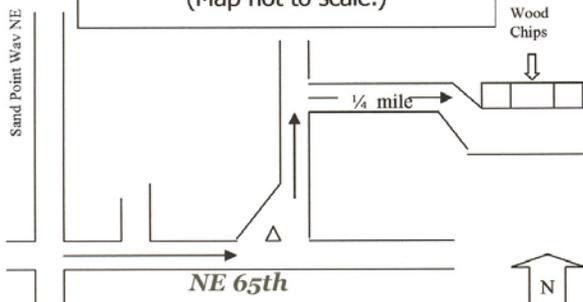


Saturday, April 12
9am – 3pm
Sand Point Magnuson Park
(Enter at Sand Point Way NE & NE 65 St.)

\$32.00 each, cash or check.
Rain barrels come fully assembled and easy to install.

For more information, call the Natural Lawn & Garden Hotline at (206) 633-0224.

Free Wood Chips at Magnuson
Bring a truck and fill it up!
(Map not to scale.)



Bon Voyage!



This is Greg Hostetler's last newsletter. Greg leaves NTCP to pursue graduate studies. Greg has been a super asset to our program and we hope the experience he has gained will assist him in his academic pursuits.
Best wishes from the NTCP & Urban Forestry staff!



City of Seattle

Department of Transportation TR663
Key Tower
700 Fifth Avenue, Suite 3900
Seattle, WA 98104-5043

