



# The Neighbors' Gardening Circular

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

Fall 2003



## 2003 Seattle Streetside Gardening Contest Winners!

This year we celebrated another season of streetside gardening accomplishments and you volunteers who change our streets from Gray to Green and Every Color in between! Thanks to all the participants for making this contest a success for its second year in a row! Winners got an engraved acrylic award as well as notice to put outside on their devices, and many attendees went home with great door prizes!



Two new categories were added this year: Streetwise Suitability and People's Choice. Streetwise Suitability is a category for gardens that really match their surroundings, whether it's a planting scheme that carries throughout the whole neighborhood, or particularly compliments the architecture of nearby buildings. People's Choice was made possible this year by modernizing our website so that people could cast a vote for their favorite garden.



2003 Seattle Streetside Gardening Winners

**Judges:** Jan Rodda of Rodda & Sons Landscaping, Joyce Moty of Bradner Gardens P-Patch, Maggie O'Halloran former Seattle Tilth board member, Paul Crane Landscape Architect, and Valerie Easton Garden Columnist, Seattle Times.

**Sponsors:** Friends of P-Patch, El Gallito Restaurant, Plant Amnesty, Seattle Tilth, Walt's Organic Fertilizer Sky Nursery, NW Garden News, Julius Rosso Nursery, Fremont Gardens, and Cedar Grove Composting.

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### A Note from our New Landscape Services Support Person, Melissa Brown

Some of you may have noticed that a new face has appeared over the past few months. Greg Hostetler has moved on to graduate school in New York, and I have teamed up with Liz to take things here to the next level! For those of you who haven't had a chance to chat with me yet, I thought this would be an excellent place to tell you a little about me.

I am currently working on the last quarter of my Bachelor's Degree in Urban Forestry, at the Center for Urban Horticulture in the University of Washington. I am particularly interested in how people and plants interact, and how that correlates to the Big Picture and things like *Continued on Page 4: New Staff*

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#### ★ Traffic Circle Pass ★

Retired from being a traffic circle steward or know others who are interested in helping out? Please pass along this newsletter. Any information you can provide to new traffic circle stewards is invaluable guidance in continued support for your community.





**Winners: Continued from Page 1**

**From Ruin to Rescue: 22<sup>nd</sup> Ave NW & NW 58<sup>th</sup>**

This circle, located at a well traveled intersection, was overgrown with weeds and full of litter with only a few flowers visible. Sylvia Li not only tamed the tangle, but transformed this site so that now it blooms beautifully throughout the spring and summer. Her simple but tasteful garden includes Acanthus (Greek fern), Dwarf Shasta Daisies, Chrysanthemums, Dusty Miller, Tulips, and Daffodils.

**Just for Fun: 28<sup>th</sup> Ave NE & NE 62<sup>nd</sup>**

Last year's winner in the 'Children's Garden' has won our hearts again! With its bright Tulips, Daisies, Dutch Iris, Creeping Thyme, Red Hot Poker, and a Japanese Maple, this circle has lots of seasonal appeal. This streetside garden has been a project of Sue Truman and her neighbors for 7 years. It's a busy place that gets decorated every season and functions as a town center for block gatherings. Little kids stop by with their parents to see what's new and to add to the decorations. Big kids earn community service time helping to keep it looking good.

To see a pictorial tour of the winning traffic calming devices, as well as several newspaper articles about the contest, visit our website at <http://www.seattle.gov/transportation/trafficircles.htm>

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Please submit articles, photos, and artwork to the editors 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>.



**Winners: Continued from Page 2**

**Multi-Season Spectacular: Third Ave N & Blaine**

This Traffic Circle provides plenty of color throughout the year with a diversity of densely



planted perennials. Its multi-seasonal fall/winter color is provided by a Scarlet oak, heather, sedum, and nandina. Bulbs, wallflower, and pansies herald the coming of Spring. Flowering Sedum, phyllis, snap dragons, day lilies, and strawberry groundcover provide summer color. Maintained by Celia

Matson and neighbor Carol Dougherty.

**Business District Gateway: South Side of Admiral Way, between 41<sup>st</sup> Ave SW & California Ave SW**

Shop keepers often begin their day by sweeping up trash. A tanker truck service is providing water for the new plants for the first 2 years, and neighbors pitch in with spring and fall clean-ups. Although these Admiral District plantings are still young, they already enhance the Admiral Business District, and with continued stewardship will create an elegant and welcoming tree-lined gateway. All thanks to the Admiral Planning Coalition!

**Best Habitat in the Round: 42<sup>nd</sup> Ave SW & SW Dawson and 42<sup>nd</sup> Ave SW & SW Hudson**

The circle at 42<sup>nd</sup> Ave SW & SW Dawson is not only breathtaking to the passerby, but also to the local birds and butterflies! The wide variety of plant species provide plenty of food and cover, including Spirea, *Scabiosa columbaria*, Coreopsis 'Sterhler', Helianthemum 'St Mary', Oenothera, Columbine, Lavender, and Penstemon. Ted Kitos and neighbors work to make this circle spectacular.

The traffic circle garden just one block north at 42<sup>nd</sup> SW & SW Hudson is just as lovely. LeeAnn & Roger McMillen often collaborate with their neighbors at Dawson to support each other. The garden is neatly tended and well mulched. Flowering Cherry trees, Lavender, Barberry, pansies, geraniums, and blue oat grass compliment

the plants of its neighbor.

**Honorable Mention: 46<sup>th</sup> Ave S & S Lucille**

This was a very close competition and the judges also wanted to recognize the efforts of Judith Haemmerle with an Honorable Mention for her use of native plants.

**Car Stoppin' Gorgeous: Fremont Ave N & N 63<sup>rd</sup>**

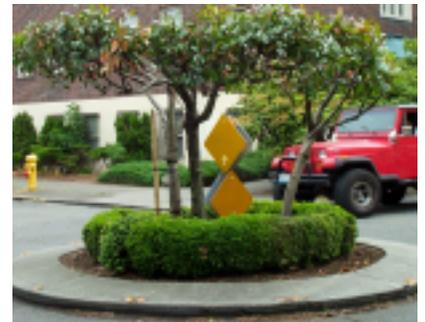
Defending its title as the 'Car Stoppin' Gorgeous' winner is the circle maintained by Camille McGee and her neighbors. The judges were very impressed by this garden last year, and this year is no exception. The wide variety of plants includes *Ajuga Reptans*, Blue Oat Grass, *Ceanothus* 'Weld Lilac', Cosmos, *Delphinium*, *Euphorbia* 'Spurge', *Hesperus matronalis* (white), Golden Oregano, Lavender, *Verbena bonariensis*. The gorgeous grouping of plants with wonderful blends of colors and variety of heights creates a good sense of drama... and our judges have never seen Shasta Daisies look so good!

**Honorable Mention: Meridian Ave N & N 36<sup>th</sup>**

Mary Leland's gorgeous display of petunias and canna lilies was so beautiful and fragrant that the judges felt that this runner-up deserved some well-earned kudos.

**Streetwise Suitability: Boylston Ave E & E Thomas**

Located in a densely developed neighborhood, this Capitol Hill traffic circle has seen some action! Lise Leistner has been its steward since 1984. Although taken out of context, this garden may seem to lack variety, amongst its formal brick buildings and very urban environment, this low-maintenance formal plant combination looks right at home! Congratulations Lise and thank you for almost twenty years of Circle Stewardship!



**People's Choice: 17<sup>th</sup> Ave NE & NE 113<sup>th</sup>**

This year we made it possible for everyone to get a look at the contestants and vote for their favorite online. It was a very popular site and we got over 1,195 visits and 400 votes! Hank Bobala passed out flyers to anyone driving by his circle, and he definitely earned every vote! ♪

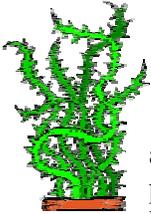




# Streetside Stewards Tackle Invasive Plants with Management Plans and People Power

Liz Ellis

Throughout the city, trees draped with clematis vines and ivy look more like a jungle than a healthy northwest urban forest. These aggressive vines, along with other invasive weeds and ornamentals, are often spread from yard to forest by birds that distribute the seeds or by illegally dumped vegetation.



Ivy and the German clematis can girdle trees and smother many of the native plants that provide habitat to beneficial animals and birds. Fortunately, volunteers are organizing to adopt some of these “undeveloped” street rights of ways and are following carefully written plans that guide their restoration efforts.

As awareness about invasive plant control has increased, many people have noticed ivy covered “natural areas” and considered removal. But what’s the difference between a successful project and one that often ends in frustration after hours of hacking and whacking back these invasive plants?

Knowing that there is a problem is a good starting point. Getting other people involved is very important, and

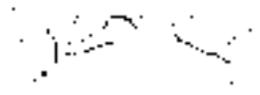
developing a scope of work that sets realistic goals is essential. Writing out a work plan will help you to prioritize areas and see your project from start to finish. The more people, from neighbors to City staff, who can have a voice in shaping your plan, the better it will be. Take advantage of the experience others can offer.

One individual can get a lot accomplished, but a small group has the benefit of moral support, developing well thought out projects, and having extra hands for moving heavy objects. Restoration work in the street rights of way usually requires a permit. When I review a restoration proposal I want to be able to know exactly where the

project is, who is involved, what the scope of work and the timeframe is. I’m also looking to see that there is evidence of sufficient technical, human, and financial resources to complete the project.

I’ve had the pleasure of working with several groups in the past year that have tackled some challenging areas. Here are just two examples of projects that were well organized and committed to on-going stewardship.

The Ward Street Alliance successfully transformed an overgrown, weedy, very steep High-Low, which is a residential street median on a slope. Over the course of five months and with matching funds from the Seattle Department of Neighborhoods (DON), neighbors worked with a landscape contractor and certified arborist to remove Scotch Broom, ivy, and Blackberry. The site is now replanted with drought tolerant landscaping that looks really good and offers greater habitat benefit for birds.



With much of their work being done in the winter and early spring, neighbors devised an irrigation system that kept new plants thriving through this past summer. Follow-up watering and on-going maintenance are often the most neglected earmarks of

a fizzled project, and yet are the most important part of the project after careful planning. The Madrona Drive Ravine Restoration project had several peculiar site attributes, from an SDOT



wooden bridge to SPU drainage piping and a site that bordered many residential properties on 1.2 acres. The Friends of the Ravine worked with Barker Landscape

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### ***Invasive Plants: Continued from Page 4***

Architects and Earthcorps to develop a detailed site plan and scope of work. Their work was also funded through a DON matching grant.

The site was mapped detailing the location of beneficial and invasive plants and plant zones. The plan included a planting list and time frame for work along with describing strategies for invasive plant control. This site had a patch of Japanese Knotweed, which is very tenacious and tough to control. After months of being smothered under cardboard and several inches of woodchips, the thickest portion of the Japanese Knotweed patch has not reappeared, though a few "stragglers" have come up that seem to have worked around an edge of the cardboard and through the mulch. The Friends are hoping that by



### **Take a Liken' to a Lichen**

As Fall takes full swing and the trees drop their leaves, the often overlooked Lichen is once again exposed. Lichens are often mistaken as a fungal disease attacking the tree, and this isn't surprising if you know that a lichen is a symbiosis of up to three different organisms – Fungi, Algae, and Cyanobacteria (a bacteria-like organism formerly called blue-green algae). Many animals use lichens as a food source or a nesting material, and it is able to fix atmospheric nitrogen, so it also fertilizes your circle! So don't pull that fuzzy stuff off just yet, lichens aren't only harmless to your tree, they also provide valuable environmental services! 🍄



"Lichens are fungi that have discovered agriculture"  
– Lichenologist Trevor Goward.



keeping them cut back they will reduce the vigor of the plants.

Not all projects may need outside funding, but for those that could benefit from some financial assistance, in addition to the DON grants, SPU has a grant program (up to \$1,000) for watershed improvement or graffiti busting projects. Go to their web site:

<http://www.ci.seattle.wa.us/util/grantcentralstation> or call Anthony Matlock at 386-9746.

Another good web resource is the IVY OUT web site [www.ivyout.org](http://www.ivyout.org)

If you have a streetside project in mind, or might like to volunteer with an existing group, give us a call.

Liz Ellis, SDOT Urban Forestry 684-5008. 🍄

### ***New Staff: Continued from Page 1***

habitat conservation and urban sprawl. By helping people to connect with nature on a personal level here in the city, my hope is to educate and inspire people to conserve our environment elsewhere.

In addition to finding new volunteers for lonely Traffic Circles, putting together newsletters, and supporting your efforts in every way that I can, in my spare time I am an amateur birder, small-time gardener (i.e. shady apartment balcony), and I also spend a fair amount of time on the bus... mostly headed to Federal Way to visit my family.

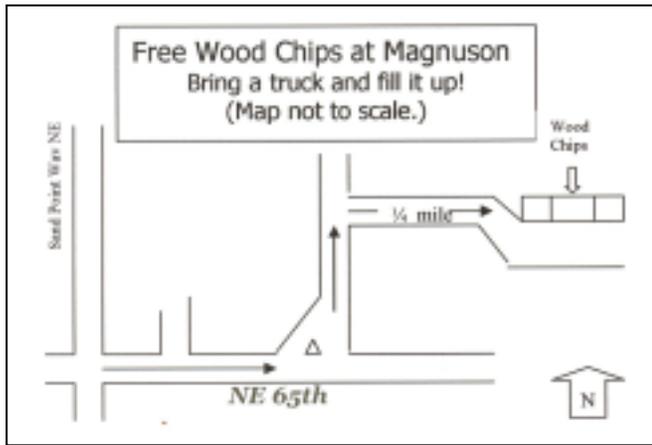
Already, it has been a pleasure to work for all of you, and I look forward to plenty of collaboration in the future! Please feel free to contact me with any questions, comments, requests, or updates!

(206) 684-0809 [MelissaLee.Brown@Seattle.gov](mailto:MelissaLee.Brown@Seattle.gov) 🍄

### **Fall & Winter Checklist**

- Plant spring bulbs
- Plant/divide perennials
- Catch those winter weeds
- Cut back perennials and grasses
- Mulch





***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

**Questions?**

If you would like to meet with someone about the vegetation in your traffic circle or have any questions at all, contact Liz Ellis or Melissa Brown -- see page 2 for contact information.

New traffic circle requests should be directed to our office at (206) 684-0817.

- ★ Not the current steward of you traffic calming device?
  - ★ Retired?
  - ★ Recently moved in or are planning to move soon?
- Do you know someone who would also be able to be a contact or receive this newsletter?
- Please let us know!*** Call us at (206) 684-0809

If you would like to receive this newsletter by **email**, or if you are changing your email address, please contact Melissa Brown at [MelissaLee.Brown@Seattle.gov](mailto:MelissaLee.Brown@Seattle.gov) .

