

The Carkeek Gardens are now Master Gardener Demonstration Gardens!

Visit the new Master Gardener Carkeek Demonstration Gardens on September 19 at the "Festival of Fruit" celebration

...by Drexie Malone

The Carkeek Demonstration Gardens were created approximately 20 years ago with the purpose of showing the public how to garden with native plants, without the use of pesticides and with minimal water use. The dozen gardens that make up the Carkeek Gardens surround the administration and environmental buildings at Carkeek Forest and Park in northwest Seattle.

Minna Piper was a passionate gardener on her family property in the late 19th century. Her picture is featured in the Carkeek Park Garden brochure, created in 2006, as a steward of the land. Her land became Carkeek Park, now owned by the City of Seattle, and her gardening legacy prompted the "Natural Gardening and Backyard Wildlife Habitat Demonstration Gardens." The Gardens feature many themes, from the Shady Woodland Garden to the Butterfly Hill Garden.

Since the publication of the original brochure, the Gardens have suffered the neglect of a completely volunteer-based maintenance program (or lack of a program). The Hop vine grew rampant, the Black Twinberry flourished beyond its boundaries and the invasive Field bindweed was prominent.

One volunteer gardener, a horticulturist from the Edmonds Community College program, contracted with the Seattle Parks Department to revive the Gardens and bring them back to their glory. Deborah Phare has been working since 2011 to steward the Gardens through reclaiming, reconstituting and long-range planning. And I found myself helping, at least on Tuesday mornings. Most of the original work included weeding, trimming, and deciding which overgrowth could be contained by us and which would be left for professional pruning. The Edmonds Community College pruning class, part of the Horticultural program, comes every winter to help tame the Hazel branches which



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shade out the Dogwood tree, to trim the Rose Hedge that compromises the entrance garden, and to prune the Douglas Hawthorn and Oregon Crabapple trees.



Several garden secrets were discovered while restoring the gardens at Carkeek Park

In the process of maintaining these gardens, several garden secrets were discovered. One charming small Norway, or Bird's Nest, Spruce, was found in the "Island Garden," buried under a heavy layer of Thimbleberry and Field bindweed. In the middle of the "Ethnobotany Garden" we found a shady resting place with stumps for sitting and conversing, hidden under Twinberry and Nootka Rose. Another hidden shady glen, in the "Island Garden," was found behind branches and weeds, with a pebbled path leading to several large, low rocks on which to sit.

The plans to restore the Gardens include adding plants to replace lost plants and to add color to a healthy, interesting and teaching environment. Soil is amended and mulched, and garden borders are protected from off-leash dogs. It has been a joy and a learning process to assist in

recovering and supporting some of the prettiest, best-planned and most purposeful gardens in the city.

As part of the Master Gardener protocol, an educational program for the public must be created at the Carkeek Gardens. The first presentation will occur in conjunction with the annual **Piper's Creek Orchard "Festival of Fruit" celebration** held every fall, this year on **Saturday, September 19**. The Master Gardener portion will include a Clinic table, a Children's Tour/Activity and a Garden Tour. Carkeek Garden brochures will be available on this day.

Carkeek Park is a large 200-plus acre area, and the address for the park takes one to the beach and picnic area, not to the Gardens. To arrive at the Gardens, you would find yourself at the intersection of 3rd Ave. NW and NW 110th Ave. Proceeding west, 110th Ave. becomes Carkeek Park Drive. After approximately six right and left-hand turns down the drive, arrive at a stop sign. Turning left, go for less than 50 feet, turning right into the parking lot for the Malmgren Environmental Learning Center. The Gardens surround this building and the Administration building.

The Carkeek Demonstration Gardens are now accepting Master Gardener volunteer help for credit hours. The volunteer garden staff works every Tuesday morning from

9am to noon. We work other days, too, but on a less dependable schedule. Other times can be negotiated. Anyone may visit and walk through the gardens at any time. To work with us, you may call for the best day for you: 206-550-5406. The current gardeners are Drexie Malone, Jane Johnson, 206-365-8607 (Master Gardeners) and Deb Phare, Garden Director.



The Demonstration Gardens are located at Carkeek Park, a 200-plus acre area with a beach, picnic area, an environmental learning center, historic orchard and the Master Gardener Demonstration Gardens

A shout-out to the Master Gardeners who have been involved with the gardens to date: on the Planning Committee – Drexie Malone, Sue Eriksen, Jane Johnson, Audrey Young, Mary Vincent, Kathy Pendas, Peggy Smith, Mike Sharpe, Margot Ray and Faith Wimberley .

*And stop by to celebrate the new Master Gardener Demonstration Gardens at Carkeek Park in Northwest Seattle at the **September 19 Festival of Fruit** event. While there, you will meet Anne Seidel, Audrey Young, Paige Irwin and Mike Sharpe at the Clinic Table; and on the Children's and Garden Tours, meet Jane Johnson, Kelly Forsyth and Amy Queen. Peggy Smith will be organizing set-up and and Drexie Malone the Garden Tours.*