

JUNE'S GARDEN

VILLAGE OF FLOWERS
History of Cannon Beach Parks (continued)

As each of the new parks and parking lots were developed, the city hired independent landscape contractors to design and install plant material. After the one city park maintenance worker Murry left in 1988, the city contracted part-time maintenance service, Tim Keller, Fraileys, Coast Re-Hab, and flexed help.

During the same period members of the Design Review Board were adopting a series of changes to the city's design review ordinances. Some of these changes applied to more specified required landscape designs and a supervised continuous maintenance program for new developments.

A list of suggested plant material for new developments had been prepared many years past by a University of Oregon graduate. The list needed to be expanded and to be more specific as to location and conditions of where these plants might best be placed. Being a member of this board at that time and having had 'hands-on' experience in my own garden as to what plants would survive our coastal weather, I expanded the list. With Rainmar Bartl's help we mapped locations in the Cannon Beach area as to where some of the plants listed could be seen. Bartl also suggested that the city provide a helpful plant book, Right Plant, Right Place, for developers to review. This list is still available for sale at City Hall.

A problem arose for the city when the new landscape standards were developed. It was evident that the city's properties were not meeting the same standards.

This prevailing problem came before the Parks and Community Service Board. The Board recommended to the City Council that a study needed to be made for a plan as to the best solution for a long-term maintenance/management program.

Under the direction of this board, I was hired by the City in July 1989 to serve as a landscape consultant to compose a plan for long-term maintenance/management, since I was a member of both these boards and aware of the existing concerns.

Dan Elek, city personnel, prepared a dated history of city properties and a complete summary of times and cost of maintenance. The summary was divided into specific areas, 8.39 acres in all. Additional properties not included but also requiring maintenance were 30 beach accesses, East Gower Street that was to be upgraded and landscaped, and the need for improving the drainage of the infield in Main Park.

During the two years I served as Landscape Consultant, from July 1989 - July 1991, I first started training Diane Schuttee to become more familiar with horticulture. The few tools the city owned, such as shovels, etc., were used by all Public Works personnel. New hand tools were needed, which we bought. Schuttee was concerned that the Public Works personnel would use them and lose them. Being the only female employee in the Public Works Department, she painted all the new tool handles pink. The new tools were never used by others or lost.

Schuttee and I found the need for the most attention was the Tolovana Club property that had been acquired by the city in 1987, and the landscaped areas around City Hall and mid-town parking. One Sunday, volunteers John Williams, City Manager; Don Howell, Public Works Director; Judy Osburn and Barbara Schwab, Parks and Community Service Board members; and Schuttee and myself all were down on our hands and knees weeding the parking lot by the Council Chambers. We became very familiar with a plant that has thrived since dinosaurs walked this world, Horsetail. Historically, Horsetail (*Equisetum* species) was used for food, cooking the young shoots like asparagus, and for scrub-brushes when fully mature, during the Roman Empire. The success of our volunteer efforts in trying to eradicate this plant was nil. They all grew back almost in a week's time.

In August 1990 John Williams and I conducted a tour of all city properties for Mayor Everett Browning and Council members to review the state of these properties and to stress the need for full-time maintenance.

At the next Council meeting I gave a report that included hours per square foot of landscape requirements, and a landscape maintenance proposal John Williams, Dan Elek and I had prepared.

Mayor Browning and the Council voted at their next meeting for bids to be submitted for full-time landscape maintenance. An invitation for bids was published in the Daily Astorian and letters were sent to landscape companies, ten in all. John Williams, Dan Elek and I also prepared a city bid to be submitted to Council.

On January 15, 1991, newly-elected Mayor Herbert Schwab and Council members voted for the city's bid over the independent contractors as the city bid showed labor costs were less per hour, city staff more familiar with time involved in maintenance which also meant less supervisory time needed. The next step was for the city to advertise for a position to hire a full-time landscape specialist.

In February 1991, Joe Baldin was hired to fill that position, chosen from several applicants. Two months after Baldin was hired I was able to

report to City Council and Parks & Community Service Board as to the many improvements Baldin had made. In these last eight years he has completed a full master garden course and gained further knowledge to become an arboriculturist specialist.

Baldin with part-time help Shay Williams and others have planted flowering trees, shrubs, perennials and hundreds of spring bulbs. The planned landscaping has brought beauty to all city properties, a full-time maintenance program, and since 1991 an additional acre has been added to the city's upkeep.

For the last several years it became a tradition for a special person, Vi Thompson, and I to celebrate that what we called 'true spring' had arrived, regardless of the date, as we viewed the beauty of her Wisteria vine in full bloom. The beauty of this vine is not only the pendent clusters of lavender blooms, but it sends out a sweet vanilla-like scent. The thick stems that twine through the trellis and porch railings reach to the second floor deck which lends an architectural-like interest to the historical home of Vi's called Wave Crest. Another vine that blooms earlier, Clematis montana, covers her garage roof. Observing this vine from the second floor deck, it casts a delicate creamy color over the roof and cascades down the side of the building. Both vines were planted long ago.

Vi's husband Don was known for his organic vegetable garden and his formula for composting. He would start a compost pile March 21 (vernal equinox), dig it into the soil June 21 (summer solstice), start another September 22 (autumnal equinox), dig it into the soil December 22 (winter solstice). He and Vi would also gather seaweed and kelp off the beach, washing off the salt water and cutting it in small pieces to add to the compost. Don collected leftover vegetable matter from Osburn's Grocery to add it also to the pile. The soil in his garden, because of the added compost, became rich with nutrients. He planted many different kinds of vegetables and both he and Vi loved preparing them, sharing delicious food with many of their guests. Don died some years ago and because of Vi's passion for trees she turned his garden into a small forest, planting many spruce saplings.

Sadly, Vi died in March before the Wisteria bloomed, but the ideals and style of life they both lived will continue on in many of our memories for us to try and preserve the pristine environment that surrounds our tiny part of the world.

I'm adding more symbols to Vi's and my celebration of spring; the sound of a frog under my front steps, and watching the flight of a pair of hummingbirds feeding off the clusters of white blossoms of my Pieris shrub.





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