

DELICIOUS DIRT

Northwest author says feed the soil, not just the plants. By Rachel Foster

THE ANN LOVEJOY HANDBOOK OF NORTHWEST GARDENING, photographs by Janet Loughrey, Sasquatch Books, 2003, paperback \$27.95.

Bainbridge Island gardener Ann Lovejoy is author of about 20 books. She is also the founder and director of the Sequoia Center for the Healing Arts, which offers classes in meditation, music and movement. Now she is co-owner of the nursery Bainbridge Gardens, too, where she developed a garden Health Department featuring natural solutions for garden problems.

Lovejoy leads education and travel programs for gardeners. In Costa Rica, she started a gardeners' program for Eco Teach, a nonprofit that supports environmental protection projects. Add in pro bono public gardening projects and her weekly columns on food and gardening for a Seattle paper, and Lovejoy's energy and accomplishments appear almost super-human. This is clearly a person with a mission.

That mission is to promote natural and sustainable garden design and care. Great gardens without guilt, you might say, and without unnecessary labor. Luckily for Northwest gardeners, she has carved out the time to write a comprehensive handbook to help us put her passion to work for us. Whether your concern is ivy removal, smart plant selection or natural rose care, this book will help.

An opening chapter on garden design contains many tips on keeping maintenance to a minimum while building a garden you can really enjoy. One suggestion I heartily endorse is that every Northwest garden needs a rain shelter with seats and a nice view. (I haven't

quite figured out how to implement this idea at home, but I am working on it!) And here's another: Leave a gravel-filled strip, 18 inches wide, between the house wall and your bushes to ease house-care, keep out carpenter ants and improve plant performance.

In an introduction to the principles of natural gardening, the author explains what's wrong with chemicals (not only for the world but for your garden) and brings up the virtues of the old organic mantra, feed the soil, not just the plants. Chapter Three, the longest in the book by many pages, explains in thoughtful detail just how you can do this, by building the kind of soil that confers drought and disease resistance and allows plants to take care of themselves. Natural weed and pest control have chapters of their own, and one on Northwestern lawns is alone worth the price of the book.

Native plants have a prominent place in Lovejoy's writing, but she is not a purist. Lovejoy does want mainstream gardeners to rethink their ornamental gardens, but her key phrase, when it comes to plant selection, is "natives and allies." Locally native plants and non-invasive species from around North America and the globe are equally acceptable in Lovejoy's garden world, as long as they are well-adapted to the local environment and our own particular garden habitats.

Gardens like the ones we see in Janet Loughrey's excellent photographs will always be hard work, and are not for everyone. But this book could help anyone make the garden they dream about while avoiding chemicals and dispiriting, repetitive work.

Rachel Foster of Eugene is a garden writer and consultant. She can be reached at rfoster@efn.org



Ann Lovejoy

OUT & ABOUT NEWS, TIDBITS AND FACTOIDS

• At 1pm Monday, May 3, Mount Pisgah Arboretum will kick off its "Raise The Rafters" campaign (Public Phase). Events include presentations of architectural models, sketches and explanations of The White Oak Pavilion, which will replace the aging Quonset hut. Nestled naturally into the Great Meadow full of White Oaks, the pavilion should provide shelter for a wide variety of activities for generations to come.

• If you're a beginning surfer looking for information and resources for the sport, check out **Ossie's Surf Shop** (www.ossiessurfshop.com) in Newport. Owner Dan Hasselschwert says, "Basically, we have the philosophy that the ocean belongs to everyone." Ossie's caters to beginners and families, and offers lessons and workshops. Hasselschwert is even teaching surfing for college credit through Oregon State University. School's in and surf's up!

• Ever wonder what happens to ski parks come summer time? Check out www.skibowl.com/winter/attractions.html. **Mt. Hood** turns its ski slopes into a summer wonderland of Alpine slides, scenic sky chair rides, Indy Karts, bungee towers, an Adrenaline Zip Line, mini and disc golf, and tons more. Check this out for serious summer fun!

• Wednesday, May 5 at 7:30 pm in 177 Lawrence Hall, rock climbing's "Urban Ape" **Timmy O'Neill** will combine stand-up comedy and storytelling to present his latest feature film *Suspended Animation*. O'Neill's overall message: Get outside, discover the freedom, happiness and sense of accomplishment outdoor activity can bring, no matter your skill level. Event sponsored by *Outside Magazine* and UO Outdoor Program.

• Lane County is home to world class kayakers: In last year's Freestyle Kayaking World Championships on the river Mur in Graz, Austria, **Springfield-born Jay Kincaid** won first place for men and **Eugene-based Brooke Winger** won first place for women.

• Stores, shops and even the gas station on Hwy. 58 near Dexter are boasting **disc golf** supplies - easy stops on your way to the Dexter Disc Golf Course near the lake.



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