

BRING'S BIG ANNUAL H&G TOUR IS SUNDAY

What's the first thing you should do when you commit to living a more sane and energy-efficient life? "Inventory your possessions" and figure out what you can live with and what you can't live without. That was the painful advice home designer and artist Michael Pease gave to empty-nesters Alan Dickman and Sue Burden-Dickman, who downsized from a large conventional house to an efficient new 1,300-square-foot living space in June.

The Dickman home at 2812 Spring Blvd. is one of a dozen inspiring places that will be open to the public for one day only during the fourth annual BRING Home and Garden Tour from 10 am to 4 pm Sunday, Sept. 16. Tickets, available at any of the sites, are \$10 each or \$18 for two or \$100 for groups up to 15.

"We told Mike [Pease] we wanted both the view and to live in the garden," says Alan Dickman, who is director of Environmental Studies at the UO Department of Biology. "He went to great lengths to bring us slowly into the house with entryways and multiple decks out in back that sent us down into the landscape."

As green as the Dickmans tried to be, the home is still mostly new construction requiring tons of new materials. "The house is green but still resource intensive," says Dickman, "so we feel like we have a responsibility to make it last a long time." The contractor was James McDonald of Ecobuilding Collaborative.

The theme of the tour this year is "The Art of Sustainable Living" and "the tour is really an essential part of our educational program," says BRING Executive Director Julie Daniel. "BRING is at heart a social change organization. We're about changing people's behavior. Our mission is to help people understand how the stuff we use shapes the planet we share."

Just talking about changing behavior doesn't quite do the job, she says. Instead, she likes to "give real-world examples of what other people are doing, and be able to see first-hand what it looks like on the ground to live sustainably."

These tours are popular, she says, because "we are all inherently nosy; we all want to see what our neighbors are doing." And in the process, she says, we can become inspired to create something interesting and valuable in our own homes and gardens.

Greenhouses, edible gardens, backyard poultry, roof gardens, small houses, a super tiny house and secondary dwelling units (SDUs) are also featured in the tour. One SDU, built by Solar Assist contractor Scott Crawford in collaboration with architect Will Dixon, is at 2510A 14th Ave. and is a "balance of function, form, sustainability, budget and sunlight." The 644-square-foot house has hydronic radiant heat and "stack" ventilation.

Crawford says the building was not cheap to construct, even with "repurposed" materials, but it was "all done above board. I know people who have done it in their backyards without permits for much, much less, but I was able to do it over time and it worked out pretty well."

Also at the Crawford house Sunday, Oakleigh Meadow Cohousing will be presenting a slide show with discussion about their community development at 10 am, noon and 2 pm.

BRING tour organizer Shirley Perez West says about 500 people showed up last year for the tour and she hopes to see even more this year. "This year it's all about living large in small spaces," she says, and adds, "many of the 12 sites will host builders, designers and community experts on sustainable living." Experts will be available on composting, solar energy, propagating mushrooms, aging in place and more.

A limited number tickets of for those with low income are available through the city of Eugene at the Atrium Building across from the downtown LTD station. See bringrecycling.org for online tickets and a complete schedule. — Ted Taylor



THIS GREENHOUSE AND SURROUNDING GARDENS AT 2475 JACKSON ST. ARE ON THE TOUR SEPT. 16.

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