

GIFTS FROM JAPAN

During the depression, 200 Japanese cherry trees and 200 Eastern dogwoods were planted along Azalea Way, some as gifts from Japan. Fifteen hundred rhododendrons were given or purchased for Rhododendron Glen. Today about 900 new plants are added each year, making a total of about 5,500 plants.

THE WALK

Begin your walk across the street from Floral Hall on Azalea Way, a winding grassy path that was once an old carriage drive. In the spring, pale pink and white flowering cherries line the promenade, backed by orange, yellow and pink deciduous azaleas. Later, in the season, red, pink, and white camellias continue the color scheme. If you arrive after the cherry blossoms have fallen, creamy native dogwoods and pink and chartreuse Korean dogwoods also bloom along this path.

Halfway down Azalea Way you come to a small pond and sign marked "Woodland Garden." Lush native shrubs and trees of the Pacific Northwest woodland are planted around the pond.

If the many forms of Washington's state flower, the rhododendron, interest you, continue along Azalea Way to Loderi Valley, a path leading east and uphill. The Loderi rhododendron is dramatic and showy, often fragrant. Its huge pink and

white varieties and hybrids resemble large orchids. Follow Loderi Valley to the top, then return to Azalea Way, continuing until you reach Rhododendron Glen, with more brilliant colored, rare, and tender species from all over the world that bloom as early as January or as late as August.

The popular Japanese Tea Garden at the Arboretum's south end was built in 1960 and features gifts of plants, stones, lanterns, and an exact replica of a Japanese teahouse given by various Japanese cities. The garden, designed by architect Juki Iida, is made up of a combination of pools, waterfalls, rockeries, and bridges over streams and plantings. After burning in 1973, the magnificent teahouse was rebuilt.

Turn left and up onto Arboretum Drive East. Collections of pines, brooms, mountain ash, magnolias, and more can be found along the upper road leading back to the administration buildings and Graham Center parking lot. Along the way find paths leading to ponds and special plant collections, with such rare plants as a metasequoia; the Franklin tree that is no longer found wild in the US south; a prehistoric redwood; bristlecone pines that can live for 4000 years; cypress from California, eucalyptus from Tasmania; sycamore; sweet gum from Turkey, and the silk tree from Asia.

©2007 Joan Burton
joan@joanburton.org
www.joanburton.org

Arboretum Urban Walk

**An In-city Family Adventure with
Joan Burton
as your guide**



START YOUR WALK HERE →



WASHINGTON PARK ARBORETUM BEAUTY

Acres and acres of flowering shrubs and trees call out to walkers of the Arboretum, a park originally intended to be a group of trees and shrubs grown for scientific or educational purposes. But Seattle's Arboretum in Washington Park is more than that. On festive spring days, such as Mother's Day, the place is packed with picnickers, walkers, artists, and photographers. Because of the diversity of plants grown, it is a chronological parade of exquisite beauty. It is also a series of collections of rare and endangered species, many grown from seed, from around the world, and a 200-acre public park. A special place indeed.

To a child, the Arboretum is a huge park without swings or a play area. Its paths wind around groves of trees, past ponds with fish and water lilies. Kids can occasionally dip in their toes, but wading is discouraged to avoid slipping on the unstable pond bottoms.

GETTING THERE

From I-5 on the north, take the Montlake Exit, #168B, cross Montlake Boulevard and wind east on East Hamlin Street, which leads to Lake Washington Boulevard. Follow it and make a left turn, then a right to the Graham Visitor Center and parking. From the east side, take the #520 bridge to the first Seattle exit. Turn left, then left again into the Arboretum. From downtown Seattle take Metro bus #43 to the north entrance or #11 to the south entrance. The Arboretum is open from 8 AM to sunset with no admission fee. No food is available so carry a lunch or eat at a restaurant on East Madison, south of the park.

FUN FOR ALL AGES

Large grassy spaces such as Azalea Way make great places for running, or when tired, for resting and picnicking. Kids might not care about the huge collection of plants, but they love to see and smell the rhododendrons, cherry blossoms, and other flowers. Tell them to smell, not pick the flowers! A special treat for older kids and parents alike is the Japanese Garden at the Arboretum's south end, which requires paid admission. Kids will admire the Tea House, sculptured pines and maples, and beautifully planted pools and ponds, but should not venture off the paths or into the water. Food packs are available to feed the large, multi-color koi that swim up to families gathered on the footbridges.



HISTORICAL NOTES

Professor Edmund Meany began the Arboretum in 1894 on the University campus. He collected seeds of native plants and exchanged them with collectors all over the world, planted them in his home garden, and then, with student help and buckets of water, transplanted them to the campus.

The Puget Mill Company in 1900 gave the Arboretum's original tract to the City of Seattle, which named it Washington Park. When the Alaska Yukon Pacific Exposition in 1909 again brought the Olmsted Brothers to Seattle, they were commissioned to design a boulevard through Washington Park. An existing bicycle path was chosen to create the boulevard that now travels the length of the Arboretum.

In 1924 University President Henry Suzzallo proposed joint use of the land as a city nursery and an arboretum classroom, and in September 1934 work was begun on the proposed arboretum in Washington Park, using funds from the Washington Emergency Relief Act. The Olmsted Brothers' firm was again given the contract. Substantial additions have brought the total land for the arboretum to about 200 acres, to implement the landscape plan provided for it. In 1935, the University and the Seattle Park Commissioners agreed to share maintenance of the arboretum, with the city also supplying water, lighting, and police protection.

© 2007 Joan Burton
joan@joanburton.org
www.joanburton.org

