

Lake of the Sky Garden Tour July 26, 2014

Some queries and comments we heard on the member's docent pre-tour:

The Secret Garden

You could visit this garden 10 times a year every year and still find something new, unique, beautiful and interesting. The frosted blue Eryngium (sea holly) is so colorful you might think it was painted. The golden variegated European meadowsweet and the full-sized American Filipendula (meadowsweet) are crazy showy at one intersection of paths. There is a pink Deutzia shrub in bloom, curious little Mukdenia rossii foliage near the pond, and the ever popular hardy perennial Digitalis lutea (yellow foxglove) to name just a tiny fraction.

Tranquil Garden

Campanula 'Sarastro' a hardy clumping, hybrid bellflower (likely *C. punctata* x *C. trachelium*) with large deep blue-purple flowers, Rodgersia (aesculifolia?), Fingerleaf Rodgersia is a large-leaved Saxifrage. The ones in front are blooming and the flowers are reported to be fragrant though I've never checked. The Hollyhocks appear to be *Alcea ficifolia*, Antwerp or fig-leaf hollyhock, hardier and longer-lived than *Alcea rosea*. The Woolly thyme groundcover was certainly notable.

Rideout Community Center Demonstration Garden

The "floating row cover", spun-bonded polyester frost fabric, of various brands & weights used over most beds. The .5 oz weight n-sulate fabric is ideal as air and water pass easily through but heat is retained at night. It provides excellent protection from hail. We use it in early spring for hardening-off seedlings of all kinds and many gardeners, like some of those in the demo. garden, keep it on ALL summer long with excellent results. It does cut approximately 50% of light but with our high intense sun, more people have trouble keeping plastic-covered greenhouses cool. There were a couple of faltering beds with apparent "nitrogen drag" from woody soil mixtures.

Miracle Garden

Wonderful use of a small space. Great variety and color and a sweet woodland feel. Kept many natives and incorporated them into the build landscape. The neighbor's A-frame metal roof must shed an avalanche of snow onto this garden but the native red-twig dogwood and the western water birch thrive. The scouler's willows are being hedged well to thicken them for screening.

Labor of Love

Whimsical statues of Snow White and 5 dwarves, great signs and interesting art throughout. The very colorful planters use houseplant-like Hypoestes (pink polkadot) and Plectranthus 'Mona Lavender' in them to beautiful effect. They also have ingenious rodent repellent odor cakes. There is a stately Aruncus, goat's beard, on the way down the stairs. The hardy Geranium x oxonianum 'Wargrave Pink' is a west-shore fixture and works well anywhere. (Notice the *Fragaria vesca* (European Alpine strawberries) and Kousa dogwood in bloom as you walk to the next house.)

West Shore Jewel

Incredible natural feeling and noise abating water feature that winds past 3 spectacular *Acer japonicum*, fullmoon maples, with increasing degrees of leaf division. The crososimia were attracting hummingbirds and the sedums filled in cracks between the rocks. The lawn has a gentle switchback on its way to the lake where a family of mergansers were lounging on a nearby rock. There are 6'+ Thimbleberries on the back side.

Native Inspiration

Lots of native plants kept and used. The natural chinquapin is hedged and looks great. The native alder are pruned and look far healthier than most wild specimens. Wild western water birch (grown from seed collected by Villager from high elevations south of Mammoth) look amazing. The "rough" of fescues and natural-looking grasses between the horseshoe pits is wonderful.