

The Value of the Arboretum to Seattle

PHILIP W. BAILEY*

FOR REASONS yet unknown to sociologists, today's generation of men increasingly tends to congregate in great numbers in metropolitan cities. Here they live and work, crowded together both at home and office. Houses are built as close to one another as possible, multi-storied offices confine thousands in walls of stone and mortar. Men drive to work on hard ribbons of concrete, with cars bumper to bumper, and work endlessly with machines, both large and small.

This urge of man to live in close proximity to other thousands, hundreds of thousands and millions, grows ever stronger as the world of trade and commerce displaces the agricultural age. Cities become more congested each year, with remaining open spaces fast disappearing before the combined onslaught of the housing developer, the apartment builders and the highway planners.

Yet this new urban world is foreign to the basic nature of man. Most of our forbears were men of the fields, farmers and frontiersmen, planters and huntsmen. All of us have an inbred feeling for contact with the soil and the plants it produces. As the constraints of modern living conditions become irksome, or at times nearly unbearable, we need to refresh our minds and bodies by returning to the quiet solitude that the open spaces afford.

This then is the main value of the Arboretum to Seattle. Here within a few blocks of the city center and centrally located for nearly all our citizens, is a magnificent area of field and woods, of quiet glades and solitary paths that we can reach within a few minutes time. When the clatter and closeness of the city becomes too strong, when the mind rebels against the hardness of concrete and steel, a ready antidote is available—a medicine that heals and soothes the jangled nerve quickly and more effectively than those

dispensed by the pharmacist. The Arboretum is always waiting and available and its ever-changing beauty makes it both a haven and an inspiration during all the seasons.

It is, of course, not necessary to feel confined to enjoy the Arboretum. On a dazzling spring morning when the flowering trees are in full bloom, just driving through it is a rewarding experience. The winding road, flanked by a wide variety of trees, is a pleasant change from treeless streets, and many Seattleites who have never bothered to stop and explore the Arboretum on foot have felt its great value to the city when viewing it from their automobiles.

The Arboretum has many other qualities that add to the pleasure and enjoyment of Seattleites. It is a wonderful place to roam with the children, who perhaps enjoy the open spaces even more than adults. Although the small fry may not appreciate the variety of the plantings, they will absorb, perhaps in spite of themselves, a feeling for the beauty of flower and tree.

For both adult and child, the ever-changing face of the Arboretum is one of its most delightful aspects. Planting has been carefully arranged to give color throughout the year. Camellias, rhododendrons, azaleas, magnolias, crabapples, Japanese maples, mountain ashes and an infinite variety of other trees produce a varied kaleidoscope month after month. Flowers and trees have been combined to add pleasing contrasts—hollies and daffodils for example live together to brighten both the Christmas and Easter seasons.

Another facet of the Arboretum that is often overlooked is its program of introducing new and different plants into the Northwest. From all over the world come new varieties of plants, shrubs and trees. From Japan, England, Italy, India, Australia and New Zealand the Arboretum receives a constant flow of seeds, scions and cuttings, which

*Member of the Arboretum Foundation Board of Directors and Editor and Publisher of *The Argus*, Seattle.

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are carefully nurtured under expert supervision. Those proving promising for our Northwest climate are made available to nurserymen throughout the state. Thus all of us have the opportunity to grow new and different species from strange and exotic places, simply because the Arboretum has gathered, developed and sorted out the plants for us.

Another aspect of the Arboretum's value is often overlooked by amateur gardeners. Many of us, as the years fly by, find that the growing of plants is more rewarding than some other activities that have occupied our leisure hours. But many of us are burdened with a colossal ignorance of plant names, correct propagating procedures, soil cultivation and other necessary knowledge. The Arboretum can help us quickly overcome this deficiency in several ways. Most of the trees and shrubs in the Arboretum are clearly labeled with metal tags so we can identify and choose the ones we would prefer for our own garden. The Arboretum Foundation publishes an informative quarterly *Bulletin* primarily concerned with plants for the Northwest, a series of information bulletins, and has regular propagation classes, while the Arboretum office is always willing to answer particular queries by telephone or letter. These services are used by both amateur and expert as important aids in developing their gardens to the fullest potential.

But the main value of the Arboretum lies in its broad acres of rolling land, a place of peace and quiet in an ever-growing city. As the years go by, and Seattle's population increases to three-quarters of a million, then a million, and so on upwards, the value of the Arboretum to the city will be increased many times over. This ever-increasing press of population is the reason each generation must so jealously guard every square foot of the Arboretum against those forces wanting to nibble away a bit here, a bit there. Each time a new proposal is made to take away

another segment, the argument is that it is only a small piece and there is more than enough left. But once gone, it can never be replaced. Bridges and roads should and must be planned so that the Arboretum remains intact. Far better to tear down old houses and buildings for such projects than to continually chew away at this magnificent heritage.

As much as we value the Arboretum today, future generations will value and use it far more. They will rightfully condemn us if we are so shortsighted that we neglect to vigorously defend its integrity today.

Use of the Arboretum Ponds by the Department of Zoology, University of Washington

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tinguished biologist visiting the University this summer was very envious of the opportunity for the study of several unique organisms. In the hope of culturing perhaps one or two of the rarer protozoa in his laboratory, he took some dried mud back with him to Germany.

The character of the ponds changes considerably from year to year with an inevitable gradual accumulation of plants and sediment. Gardening in the vicinity and occasional dredging contribute to the renewal of nutrient cycles and an increase in both kinds and numbers of living things. Even the chance introduction of new and different animals, including fish and snails from home aquaria, is not necessarily undesirable. Although the goldfish have become heavily parasitized, the Japanese paper-shell snails have remained parasite-free, illustrating the principle that introduced species frequently leave their natural parasites behind and at least for a time remain immune to those in their new environment.

It is hoped that the Arboretum ponds, as very useful adjuncts to teaching and research at the University of Washington, will continue to be maintained in a productive condition indefinitely into the future.



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