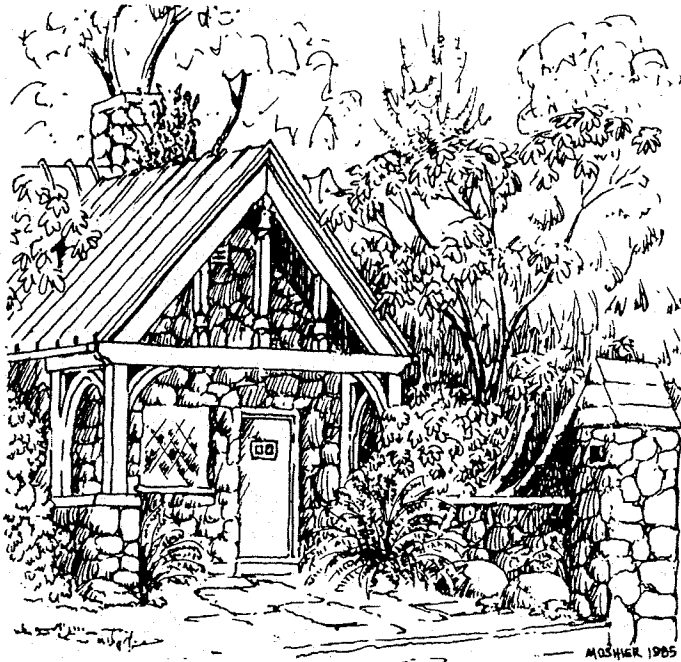


Washington Park Arboretum *and* The Arboretum Foundation



Historical Summary

*Prepared by The Arboretum Foundation
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Overview

- A plan for a Seattle arboretum began at the close of the 19th century; it was the brainchild of Edmond S. Meany, a professor at the University of Washington.
- An arboretum was first established on the University of Washington campus in 1899 and was later relocated in Washington Park.
- A 1924 agreement set aside Washington Park for an arboretum and 1934 legislation formalized the establishment of an arboretum in the Park, to be governed by the Arboretum and Botanical Garden Committee and managed by the University of Washington.
- Washington Park Arboretum now covers 230 acres, with land owned and maintained by the City of Seattle Department of Parks & Recreation and collections managed by the University of Washington's Center for Urban Horticulture, in the College of Forest Resources. It contains collections of international scope and significance and is considered one of the largest temperate woody plant collections in North America.
- The Arboretum Foundation was established in 1935 and is the support and stewardship organization for the Arboretum.

Pre-History

Geological Pre-History

At approximately 12,000 BC, the Vashon glacier began its final retreat, leaving massive, rounded, low hills and deep troughs now filled by Puget Sound, Hood Canal, Lake Washington, Lake Sammamish, etc.

Piles of gravel and finer deposits, rivers, creeks and ravines were left by the glacier's retreat, generally with north/south orientation.

The Washington Park Arboretum site is a typical north/south running ridge and valley bottom, with glacial deposits modified by surface water runoff into the valley bottom and outlet at Union Bay.

Biological Pre-History

Plant and animal life fluctuated with glaciation, and each glacial advance destroyed much of the fossil record of life which preceded it. Life forms slowly re-colonized barren land after the Vashon glacier's retreat. Climax to dense conifer forests developed, punctuated by meadows and bogs.

The Campus Arboretum (Before Washington Park)

- 1891 Professor Edward Meany, Chairman of the University Legislative Committee, was directed to acquire a new University site, which would include an arboretum.
- 1895 The University of Washington opened its doors at its present main campus site.
- 1899 As expressed by the UW Regents, "There should be established a scientific arboretum for the cultivation, care and study of all sorts of trees and plants that will thrive in this climate." The Seattle Parks Department donated over two thousand trees to the campus arboretum.
- 1903 A superintendent of grounds was appointed. Professor Meany developed a seed and plant catalog and exchange.
- 1909 Many plantings were lost when the campus arboretum was cleared for the Alaska Yukon Pacific Exposition.
- 1923 Dean Hugo Winkenwerder searched for an off-campus site for a new arboretum; ongoing building projects made an on-campus arboretum increasingly unlikely.

Washington Park Area Prior to 1934

- 1880's Judge John McGilvra built a road, now known as Madison Street, from downtown Seattle to his property, fording a stream and ravine in the area now known as Madison Valley. He later formed a cable car company and built a trestle across the ravine; at the turn of the century, the cable car ride was a popular Sunday outing. It also opened up the Puget Mill Property in the area that would become Washington Park.
- 1900 Sixty-two acres were given to the City by Puget Mill Company in exchange for \$35,000 worth of water main work on adjacent property. Other areas around this acreage were purchased by the city.
- 1909 The Alaska Yukon Pacific Exposition was held in Seattle, at the University of Washington campus. A parkway plan for the city was designed by the Olmsted Brothers' Massachusetts firm; Washington Park Boulevard was the entry to the Exposition.

1906-

- 1924 Washington Park was used for sports and recreation, including harness racing and horseback riding on Azalea Way, which had been a logging road. A riding academy was at the park between 1919 and 1935.
- 1911 The Wilcox footbridge/aqueduct was constructed, near the terminus of East Lynn Street.
- 1915 The Madison Valley cable car trestle was replaced by landfill.
- 1917 Foster Island was purchased for \$15,000 and added to the park. The opening of the Montlake Canal that same year dropped the level of Lake Washington, adding more land to the park.
- 1924 The City owned 175 acres at Washington Park.
- 1924 The Seattle Board of Park Commissioners, working with University of Washington President Henry Suzzallo, reserved the whole of Washington Park for a botanical garden and arboretum. It was believed that the Puget Sound's mild climate and Washington Park's varied topography would allow for development of one of the nation's finest botanical gardens.

Mid-late

- 1920's Development of plans for an arboretum at Washington *Park* was slow, in part because there was no development authority or fund dedicated specifically to the cause. Community leaders, including Dean Winkenwerder, continued to advocate for an arboretum at Washington Park.
- 1930 The Arboretum and Botanical Society of the State of Washington was formed. It was intended to serve as a governance and development authority and stewardship organization for Washington Park. It proposed an extensive membership and fundraising program that floundered, perhaps because of the economic conditions of Depression era.
- 1933 After purchasing more shorelands, the city owned 267 acres at Washington Park.
- 1933 The first community support meeting, held at the Broadmoor Clubhouse, was chaired by Mrs. Loren Grinstead.

Washington Park Arboretum, 1934 to 1970

- 1934 The State of Washington supported the development of the Arboretum with \$88,232 in Washington Emergency Relief Administration funds. The project focused on grounds clearing and site preparation and provided work for Seattle area residents unemployed during the Great Depression.
- 1934 In December, an "Agreement Relating to Arboretum and Botanical Garden in Washington Park" was signed by the Seattle Board of Park Commissioners and the Board of Regents of the University of Washington. It was modeled after the Arnold Arboretum agreement between Harvard University and the City of Boston. The agreement established the Arboretum and Botanical Garden Committee, the Arboretum's governing body.
- 1934-
- 1935 The Olmsted Brothers firm, with underwriting of \$3,000 from the Seattle Garden Club, was hired to develop a master plan for the Arboretum. J.F. Dawson was the principal landscape architect for the project. The initial design was highly influenced by Dawson's work at the Arnold Arboretum in Massachusetts, following a botanical sequence model. The Arboretum was to have a broadly defined collections policy, to include all "trees, shrubs, and other plants from any part of the world which may prove hardy in Seattle." Some elements of the Olmsted/Dawson plan were not implemented.
- 1934 Dean Hugo Winkenwerder became the first Arboretum director, from 1934 to 1938.
- 1935 The Arboretum Advisory Council, was established to ensure progress in fundraising and development. Members were Mr. Donald Graham, Mrs. Scott Bullitt, Mr. Lawrence Bogle, Mrs. Joel Ferris, Mrs. W.H. Griggs, Mr. Herbert Ihrig, Mrs. Ben Kiser, Mrs. C.V. Larrabee, Mr. E.L. Reber, Mr. O.B. Thorgrimson, and Mr. Aubrey White.
- 1935 The Advisory Council established The Arboretum Foundation as a fundraising organization and fund repository for the Arboretum. The Advisory Council was disbanded.
- 1936-
- 1941 The federal Works Progress Administration carried out the basic construction of the Arboretum site with a work force of 800 men, at a cost of \$1,500,000. Senator Lewis Schwellenbach obtained approval of WPA funds for the Arboretum. The City contracted to provide security, water systems,

and lighting. The University created the plant collections, and the plant and seed exchanges.

- 1939 John Hanley became Arboretum Director, and held the position until 1947.
- 1941 The Lookout, designed to provide a viewpoint overlooking Azalea Way, was built. The stone cottage on Lake Washington Boulevard, at the south end of the Arboretum, was constructed as a portion of the visitors' park entrance. It was the first Seattle home of Brian and Margaret Mulligan. Additional developments of the era included the Rock Garden, the small stone bridge at the Pinetum and much of the trail system.
- 1943 The state legislature approved further support for the Arboretum in the state budget, administered through the University.
- 1946 Brian O. Mulligan, of the Royal Botanic Gardens in England, was hired as curator. The initial contact with him was made by Donald Graham. Mulligan became Arboretum Director in 1947, serving until his retirement in 1972.
- 1961 Construction of a highway and bridge across Lake Washington (State Route 520) meant the loss of 60 acres of Arboretum land. (Previously, there was a loss of land to the Museum of History and Industry.) In compensation, the state later created a \$500,000 capital improvements trust fund, to be managed by the Arboretum and Botanical Garden Committee.
- 1961 Money for further development of the Rock Garden was given by The Seattle Garden Club.
- 1961 The Volunteer Guides program was created in 1961, managed by the Unit Council, an Arboretum Foundation committee.
- 1965 The effort to build the proposed R.H. Thompson Expressway -- and the debate surrounding the proposal -- accelerated. The highway would have cut off the northwest quadrant of the Arboretum and significantly impacted the Montlake neighborhood. The project was finally abandoned in 1970 after a lengthy public debate and a City Council resolution that affirmed the value of the Arboretum to Seattle. The unfinished project left expressway 'ramps to nowhere' in the Arboretum's north end.
- 1966 A Japanese Maple collection of 79 trees was given by a private donor living in Indianapolis. This was the largest single Arboretum acquisition ever donated.

1966 The Waterfront Trail was designed by Eric W. Hoyte, University of Washington landscape architect, and built at a cost of \$108,000, with funds drawn from the Arboretum trust fund created in 1961. The trail connected the north end of Foster Island to the Museum of History and Industry, and was in part constructed over an area of landfill.

Washington Park Arboretum, 1970 to 1999

1971 The state budget was slashed, largely in response to a dramatic downturn in the aerospace industry. University support of the Arboretum was reduced accordingly (budget and staffing levels shown below):

1961	14 staff	\$208,000
1965	15 staff	\$262,000
1967	16 staff	\$293,000
1969	16 staff	\$355,000
1971	7 staff	\$148,000

1971 The City of Seattle agreed to establish an Arboretum crew.

1972 Brian Mulligan retired as director of the Arboretum. His contribution to the Arboretum is without parallel. Joseph A. Witt, curator of plant collections, took over the management duties upon Mulligan's retirement, though a full-time Arboretum director was not appointed until 1993.

1972 The University faced fiscal pressures, including legislative criticism of University support of a "public park."

1972 The University proposed leasing 120 acres of Arboretum land for a botanical garden, with limited public access, with the remaining Washington Park acreage as a public park. A two-year period of intense criticism and debate followed. The Arboretum and Botanical Garden Committee was virtually inactive during this time.

1974 The City passed a resolution reaffirming support of the 1934 agreement. A citizens' initiative prompted a city ordinance on public parks, including a provision prohibiting admission fees and non-park uses.

1977 The Jones & Jones firm was hired to update the Arboretum's comprehensive plan. The new plan proposed a visitors center, street and parking revisions, trail enhancements, and more. The Jones & Jones plan was not fully implemented.

- 1979 Dr. Harold B. Tukey, Jr., of Cornell University, was selected as Director to create the University of Washington's Center for Urban Horticulture (CUH) which would become the University of Washington's management office for the Arboretum. He would direct CUH until 1991.
- 1983 Joseph Witt died after a brief illness. The Arboretum still benefits from the knowledge he imparted to volunteers and the plants he introduced to the Arboretum while curator.
- 1984 The Donald G. Graham Visitors Center, a gift to the City of Seattle from The Arboretum Foundation, was constructed. Mr. Graham's leadership and dedication to horticulture were instrumental in the growth of the Arboretum and the Arboretum Foundation.
- 1987 The Joseph A. Witt Winter Garden was developed under the leadership of landscape architecture assistant professor Iain Robertson. It established a new concept for "garden rooms," which contain collections on display.
- 1988 Renovation of Azalea Way was begun, supported by proceeds from the Arboretum Foundation's Preview Party for the Northwest Flower and Garden Show. Improvements included drainage, irrigation and renovation of the collections.
- 1989 Arboretum collections records were transferred to a computer by curatorial staff and volunteers, requiring hundreds of labor hours. A major portion of the Arboretum was gridded on 100 square foot grids, and the collections were then mapped and entered into a mapping program. This work made possible the production of *The Woody Plants of the Washington Park Arboretum* in 1994.
- 1990 The Brian O. Mulligan Sorbus Collection was renovated and the public was invited to the dedication. Funding for this project was provided by the Arboretum Foundation.
- 1990 A full-time field arborist was hired to help with the care of the aging native trees and collections. This position was funded by the Arboretum Foundation.
- 1992 Dr. Clement Hamilton, Associate Professor of Horticultural Taxonomy, was appointed Acting Director, and subsequently Director, of the Center for Urban Horticulture.

- 1993 Dr. John A Wott, Professor of Urban Horticulture at the University of Washington, was named Director of Arboreta, to be housed in the Washington Park Arboretum. He had directed the public education program at the Center for Urban Horticulture since 1981 and was the first full-time director of the Arboretum since the retirement of Brian Mulligan.
- 1993 The New Zealand high country garden, sponsored by the Christchurch, New Zealand, Sister City Committee and John Bollard, was dedicated.
- 1994 The Arboretum pond renovation project began after a successful annual appeal to Foundation members. Work began in the Woodland Garden area with the two ponds completed in the fall of 1994. Two other ponds were completed in 1995.
- 1994 Renovation efforts began in the Japanese Maple collection funded by an Institute of Museum Services grant.
- 1994 Renewed cooperative efforts between the Arboretum's management partners result in movement toward a much-needed master plan for the Arboretum. The Arboretum Foundation pledged to underwrite the costs of plan development and the landscape design firm The Portico Group is retained by the ABGC to draft the plan. The scoping phase for the plan began in the fall, incorporating comments from the community and Arboretum interest groups.
- 1994 The first full-time educator was hired by the Arboretum to manage an Arboretum-based program for school-age children.
- 1995 The state legislature designated WPA as "an official arboretum of Washington State."
- 1997 A new master plan, or "Greenprint for the Future" is released.
- 1997-
- 1998 The master plan underwent extensive public review through a series of nearly 100 public meetings and workshops under the guidance of the Arboretum and Botanical Garden Committee. The Seattle Department of Parks & Recreation and the Board of Park Commissioners held a separate series of public events to gather public comment.
- 1998 Poor drainage necessitated further renovation of the Brian O. Mulligan Sorbus Collection. The Arboretum Foundation raised \$35,000 for the project, which was completed the following year.

- 1999 A revised master plan, known as The Arboretum Plan, was released in March, incorporating many of changes suggested in the public review process. The revised plan was submitted for a formal environmental impact statement, managed by the Seattle Department of Parks & Recreation.

The Japanese Garden

- 1957 The Japanese Garden Committee was formed largely as a result of the support and encouragement of Mrs. Neal Haig, who chaired the Arboretum Foundation's special projects committee.
- 1959 The teahouse, a gift of the city of Tokyo, was constructed in Japan by craftsmen using traditional methods. It arrived in Seattle in 1,500 pieces, packed in fourteen crates, and was first assembled in the Hec Edmundson Pavilion for a trade show.
- 1960 The Garden opened on June 6, 1960. The designer and landscape architect was Juki Iida of Japan. Unit 86 was later formed to preserve the garden and its authenticity. It also supplied a volunteer guide program. The garden was visited that August by Crown Prince Akihito and Princess Michiko, later to become Emperor and Empress of Japan.
- 1961 Nearly 50,000 visitors attended the Garden in its first year.
- 1972 The teahouse was destroyed by an arson fire.
- 1981 Funds raised by Unit 86, the Arboretum Foundation, and the Urasenke Foundation allowed construction of a new teahouse.
- 1981 A budget cut at the University of Washington led to the transfer of the Garden's management and operation to the Seattle Department of Parks and Recreation.
- 1990 The Garden's 30th anniversary celebration was supported cooperatively by the Japanese Garden Society, the Seattle Department of Parks & Recreation and the Arboretum Foundation.
- 2000 The Garden's 40th anniversary year-long celebration was presented by the Japanese Garden Advisory Council, the Seattle Department of Parks & Recreation, Unit 86, the Japanese Garden Society, the Arboretum Foundation and the Urasenke Foundation.

The Arboretum Foundation

- 1935 The Arboretum Foundation was formed as a non-profit organization with open membership. Its first chairman was Mr. W.J. Douglas. There were one thousand members recruited the first year.
- 1936 The first Arboretum *Bulletin* was published by the Foundation, for the University of Washington.
- 1936 The first Arboretum Foundation Units were developed by Mrs. Donald G. Graham, to provide a means to raise funds for the Arboretum and to offer plant study opportunities for members. They were modeled after the Children's Orthopedic Hospital Guilds. By 1940 there were 17 Units.
- 1947 The first Arboretum plant sale was held in a tent in Rhododendron Glen.
- 1959 The Patricia Calvert Greenhouse was built.
- 1961 The Arboretum guide program was started by Arboretum Foundation volunteers.
- 1965 The Foundation opposed construction the proposed R.H. Thompson Expressway across the Arboretum's north/northwest area.
- 1966 The Foundation's Unit Council published *Cuttings Through the Year*, a propagation guide widely used by gardeners and horticulture teachers for decades to come. It was reprinted four times in the subsequent three decades.
- 1966 Philosophical disagreements within the membership created a schism and a separate Arboretum support group was formed. This group grew to become the Northwest Horticultural Society.
- 1973 The Foundation published *The Long Road Traveled*, by Henry Schmitz, a history of forestry at the University of Washington.
- 1970s The Unit Council assumed a very active role in fundraising projects and programs for the benefit of the Arboretum Foundation and the Arboretum.
- Early
1980s The Foundation embarked on a fundraising effort required to build a visitors center for the Arboretum.

- 1985 The 50th anniversary of the Arboretum Foundation was celebrated. The Donald G. Graham Visitors Center opened its doors. The Center was built with monies raised by the Foundation, which then donated the Center to the City of Seattle. The co-chairs of the fundraising committee were Mrs. Suzanne Peterson and Mr. Richard Doss.
- 1992 The Board of Directors approved adoption of a long range plan for the Foundation. The plan was the recommendation of a committee which met for two years.
- 1991 The Foundation hired its first executive director, following a search committee's recommendation in August.
- 1992 Foundation efforts to support the development of a Master Plan for the Arboretum begin (see Master Plan section of Arboretum History). The Foundation pledges to underwrite the Plan's development costs.
- 1995 The Foundation published the first Washington Park Arboretum Guidebook, a special edition of the *Bulletin*.
- 1996 The Unit Council disbanded.
- 1996 Arboretum Units, under the stewardship of the Arboretum Foundation, remained an active and key part of the Arboretum's volunteer corps. Over 50 Units were active in mid 90's.
- 1997-
- 1998 The Foundation coordinated an extensive series of public meetings designed to gather input on, and build support for, the Arboretum's master plan.
- 1998 The volunteer-managed Plant Donations program is formalized, establishing weekly work parties and sales of donated plants.
- 1998-
- 1999 Foundation staffing capacity was significantly expanded, to sufficiently respond to needs in administration, fundraising, and volunteer management.
- 2000 The Foundation published the second edition of the Washington Park Arboretum Guidebook, a special edition of the *Bulletin*, and established its own website.