

A Year in **Virtual** Garden Discovery Walks

Check out some of our favorites! ➔

In 2021, the UW Memory and Brain Wellness Center and Seattle Parks and Recreation decided to continue the virtual version of the Garden Discovery Walk program, as a way to connect the memory loss community to nature and horticulture therapy during the pandemic. Peach Jack, horticultural therapist and MBWC intern, took the lead this year. She hosted and created the virtual tours of local gardens and the accompanying nature-inspired project designed for people to follow at home.

“I especially loved being able to tailor these walks to what was in season at the time of taking the photos,” says Jack. “My intention was to link appropriate crafts to the walks using plant materials with simple instructions in order to bring nature into each person’s home.”

This program continues to be possible because of generous, ongoing support from Family Resource Home Care. We are thankful that they understand the value of bringing nature experiences and horticultural therapy to people who may not be able to regularly access the outdoors or group programs.

There is, of course, no easy replacement for being outside in a stimulating, beautiful garden or park. The goal of the virtual tours is to transport people into a nurturing, refreshing environment and to capture the sights and sounds along the way. The virtual tours and craft demonstrations offer unique benefits for people living with memory loss and their families. For example, the virtual program is easier to attend and presents no need for registration or a limit to the number of attendees.

Peach was able to film tours of gardens that we had never visited during the in-person Garden Discovery Walk program. New tours this year included a native forest on the Oregon coast (June), Lake Wilderness Arboretum and Western Azalea collection garden (July), Kruckeberg Botanic Garden (August), the Bellevue Urban Garden (October), as well as a long-distance visit to the Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center in Austin, Texas (May). The variety of visits to these gardens made it possible for the community to explore places they may never have been, as well as revisiting some where they have memories of sensory experiences.

“My hope is that the memory loss community may be inspired to visit some of these locations,” says Jack. “And it is with great joy that I anticipate the resuming of in-person garden and horticultural therapy experiences with the opening of Maude’s Garden at the Memory Hub in March of 2022.” Learn more: www.thememoryhub.org/garden.

View the Virtual Garden Discovery Walk video playlist: <https://tinyurl.com/3xyrzn2v>

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In January, we explored the sights, sounds, and aromas at the Joseph A. Witt Winter Garden of the Washington Park Arboretum. Community member Patricia Valentine joins for this walk. The project reveals new ways to use watercolors to capture the colors and textures of the winter garden.



Peach Jack leads a calm, mindful February walk through the Kubota Garden, a landscape in South Seattle that blends Japanese garden concepts with native Northwest plants. Then it's time to create landscapes with tissue paper!



September brought us to the luscious botanical scenery of Dunn Gardens in Shoreline, WA. We were lucky to have Dunn Gardens Executive Director Carolyn Cox with us to share interesting history about this unique landscape. The project explores uses for the lavender plant in your home.



October’s walk explored the inspiring tBUG: The Bellevue Urban Garden, a volunteer-run farm in the Lake Hills Greenbelt that inspires and educates a diverse community on ways to grow nutritious food. We met tBUG Founder Mayvin Chisebuka from Zambia who is driven to fight hunger through gardening. We also learned from volunteers from Fare Start harvest weekly. The accompanying craft project guides viewers through growing their own lemon tree.