

GARDEN CLIPPINGS

SOOS CREEK BOTANICAL GARDEN *and* HERITAGE CENTER

FALL 2023



Connie Teece



Sierra Bleakley

Meet our New Employees

The Garden recently welcomed two new employees, one in the office and one in garden maintenance.

Connie Teece will be filling the role of Garden Secretary following Carmen's retirement. She has volunteered at SCBG intermittently since 2017, originally drawn to the Garden for inspiration and the opportunity to learn garden technique for care and upkeep at her home. She especially enjoys the ever-changing aspect of the Garden and interacting with volunteers. Earlier this year, Connie retired from a career as corporate trainer and instructional designer. She is a certified professional in Talent Development (CPTD). She has also been a long-time volunteer with South County Cats, where she served as a board member, fundraising event chair and grant writer.

Connie loves trees, especially big, old ones! Her favorite area of the Garden is the Cedar Grove. In addition to gardening, Connie enjoys reading, travel and estate sales.

In July Sierra Bleakley started working at SCBG in garden maintenance. Sierra says that her favorite area of the Garden is the native plant area where it connects down to the creek as well as the high meadow garden on the other side. She loves seeing the beautiful flowering plants as well as the trailing roses in the tree branches. She also enjoys the Elizabeth Fenzel Garden with the fuchsias and all the fauna that like to inhabit that area, as well as the Rosarian Walk garden with very rare and unique roses.

Sierra is currently a student at Green River College in the Natural Resource program looking to achieve her bachelors degree. She loves to go hiking, painting, and learning more about our natural environment.

Be sure and welcome both Connie and Sierra when you see them hard at work at the Garden.

Katie Swickard

“Look – A Feather”

As you enjoy the seasonal splendor that abounds in your yard, our public spaces and certainly in Soos Creek Botanical Garden, you will likely come upon a little piece of magic that fell softly from the sky or scattered from bushes. It may be drab or full of color. Fluffy or tightly woven. Pick that feather up and you are holding the result of millions of years of engineering - fine tuned to perform specific functions in the lifespan and survival of a particular bird species. In this short article there is no way to provide a complete understanding of feathers and plumages but here are a few facts to pique your imagination and encourage you to look at birds and their feathers with greater admiration.

Feather colors span the spectrum from camouflage (hide nesting) to advertise (male breeding fitness). Colors are the result of a combination of pigment, light reflection, refraction, absorption and re-emittance. Feather construction, alignment and material are manipulated to use the physics of light to produce color. Each feather you pick up is designed or manipulated for a unique color and purpose.

A series of barbs, with barbules and barbicels, interlock (think Velcro) to form tight knit surfaces. When you see a bird preening feathers, it is likely reorganizing these after a bath or flight and many birds apply an oil secreted from a special gland to aid in waterproofing and feather durability.

Down (fluffy), Contour (exterior surface) and Flight (primary, secondary, tail) are the three main types of feathers. Which bit of evolutionary magic are you holding in your hand?



Bob Swain

Master Gardener Report

Last spring the Master Gardeners received a 500 sq ft increase in garden space when Eagle Scout candidate Austin Macdonald along with a team of fellow scouts constructed an attractive well-built retaining wall. The scouts spread 25 yards of new garden soil in that area.

The growth of squash planted there this summer has been overwhelming. The ordinarily short variety of sunflowers are towering over everything else thanks to the boost in soil depth, soil quality and improved drainage.

The arched trellis in the main garden which had become unusable due to rot was rebuilt by another busy Eagle Scout candidate Kyle Hill and his fellow scout crew. They installed quarter inch mesh in the gaps in our storage shed to prevent access by invasive species. Kyle's team also removed all the roots of a beautiful but
(Master Gardener Report continued on page 2)

(**Master Gardener Report** continued from page 1)
invasive passion plant vine that was growing on the trellis. This involved removal of all the soil in the raised bed, screening the soil and returning it to the raised bed.

The achievements of both Austin and Kyle contributed to a better infrastructure for vegetable gardening this spring.

The Master Garden demo garden contribution of freshly harvested produce to the Auburn food bank is approaching 1,400 pounds at present and will be much higher when an estimated 300 pounds of winter squash are harvested.

Nancy Purcell, Manager of the King County Master Gardeners Growing Groceries Garden at SCBG.



Austin M. (in uniform) and members of his scout project team from Troop 401.

Volunteer Appreciation Picnic

Katie Swickard

The volunteer appreciation picnic was held in early September and is just one way we say thank you to our volunteers. There were several long-time volunteers in attendance who had been with the Garden since it opened as a public garden in 2011, as well as some who just joined the volunteer work force this year.

Volunteers are vitally important in carrying on the vision of the Garden founders, Maurice Skagen and Jim Daly. Community is a core value. Our volunteers originate from the local and regional community and become a strong community, banded together to protect and preserve the Garden.

We welcome those who started volunteering this year at the Garden: Achara S., Anna H., Bill S., Bob S., David H., Harjot B., Jennifer T., Joann W., Krystal A., Lynee B., and Mark P.

The Garden is also grateful to the many Master Gardener volunteers who staff the vegetable demonstration garden.



There was a terrific turn out for the Volunteer Appreciation Picnic held in September.

October is soup month!

Robbi's Chicken Tortilla Soup

(Chick-Fil-A copycat)

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| 1 onion, chopped | 2 cans Rotel (I use one mild, and one original) |
| 2 cloves garlic | 1 can whole kernel corn |
| 2 tsp. cumin | 1 can cream style corn |
| 2 tsp. Italian Seasoning | 1 can Black Beans |
| 1 tsp salt | Rotisserie Chicken |
| 3 cans Cannellini Beans, divided | |

Sauté onion with garlic, add cumin, salt, and seasonings. Blend 2 cans of Cannellini beans and add to onions. Add Rotel and Corn. Rinse remaining can of Cannellini Beans and Black beans, add to pot. Add cut-up chicken. Serve with tortilla chips, cilantro, cheese, and sour cream.

SCBG Mission Statement

Soos Creek Botanical Garden is dedicated to promoting the enjoyment, understanding and conservation of plants and the natural world along with our community's local history through education, research, and stewardship.

Vision Statement

To bring inspiration to our local and regional community through nature, a designed landscape and local history, maintaining and protecting Soos Creek Botanical Garden & Heritage Center for future generations.

Education and Events in the 2023 Season



Container Gardening with Lauren Linscott



Emerald Theatre presents Shakespeare's comedy, "Twelfth Night"



The Great Blue Heron, Connie Sidles



Backyard Chickens, Mary Stueber



Rainier Youth Choir



Grand Opening of the Rosarian Walk



Strings in the Garden, Auburn Symphony Chamber Orchestra



Seattle Jazz Network



Beauty and Duty: 100 Years of Women in Our Armed Forces Photo by Krystal A.

- Education and Events from 2023 Season.**
- Container Gardening - Lauren Linscott
 - Great Blue Heron - Connie Sidles
 - The Romance of Roses - Rose Lee
 - Beauty and Duty: 100 Years of Women in Our Armed Forces - Alice Miller
 - Summer Clematis - Laura Watson
 - Backyard Chickens - Mary Stueber
 - Symphony Chamber Orchestra.
 - Rosarian Walk Grand Opening
 - Rainier Youth Choir
 - Seattle Jazz Network
 - Emerald Theatre "Twelfth Night"
 - Auburn Symphony Chamber Orchestra "Strings in the Garden."

Many people who had never visited the Garden before, as well as many long-time supporters, came out and enjoyed this year's events and educational programs. We hope to see even larger audiences for the 2024 schedule. Yes, Seattle Jazz Network will be returning, along with the Emerald Theatre and the Auburn Symphony Chamber Orchestra.



New Members on the Board of Directors

My name is Matt Jennings and I'm thrilled to join the SCBG Board of Directors. I moved to the Seattle area from San Francisco a couple of years ago, settling with my husband just a half-mile down the street from the garden. I'm recently retired from a career in technology and now spend nearly all my time volunteering and of course, gardening!

I'm passionate about being involved with my local community, and when not in my own garden I can usually be found growing food for the Food Bank at the Auburn Community Garden, teaching youth about gardening at the Auburn Teen Center, or in the Master Gardener Plant Clinic booth at the local farmer's market. I also volunteer at the Puget Sound Goat Rescue and serve on the boards for Auburn Parks & Recreation and the Master Gardener Foundation of King County.

I'm excited for the opportunity to join the other passionate and dedicated SCBG board members that help guide and support this incredible garden.

Thanks, Matt Jennings



My name is Tony Skagen, nephew of Maurice Skagen. I've lived in Kent my entire life, growing up a few miles away from SCBG. I've watched the Garden evolve and flourish over the years. As a boy, I remember cows in the lower field and fishing in the creek. As an adult, I have special memories of the Garden. My father's memorial resides there as well as other family members. The Heritage Center is full of my family's history. My wedding reception was held there also. My wife and I live in Kent not too far from the Garden.

I am the owner of a local business, Skagen Boats. My father, Jerry Skagen, Maurice's brother, started the business in the 60's. I specialize in performance boats and high end classic cars. On the weekends you can usually find me at a car show over the summer months. In the winter I enjoy snowmobiling.

I am very honored to be asked to be a part of the SCBG Board. While I have limited gardening experience, I do have business experience. I have a personal investment in the preservation of SCBG and am grateful to join the wonderful SCBG team.

Tony Skagen

Thanks for being a part of the 2023 Garden Season.

Your enjoyment of the Garden is so important to us as Volunteers!

We treasure your kind words about the beauty and peacefulness you experience as you stroll the grounds. Come see us before we close for the season on October 28th, at 4pm. Mark your calendar for our Spring re-opening in March.

View our website in late January for details about 2024 Pavilion Programs and Special Events. Follow us on FaceBook and Instagram to keep up to date on what's happening in the Garden.

GARDEN CLIPPINGS is a publication of the Soos Creek Botanical Garden and Heritage Center

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