



Annual Report 2023-2024:

A year to celebrate

A Brief History of EA&G

In 1963 the Everett Garden Club appointed a committee to find a site for a local arboretum. An 8-acre site in north Everett was donated by the Everett Parks Department. The original Arboretum board planted the first tree, a pin oak, which still lives on the 10th hole of Legion Memorial Golf Course.

The golf course was redesigned in the 1970s, and the Arboretum was moved to a 3.3-acre spot west of the golf course. A decision was made to focus on creating a place for the public to learn about a variety of landscape designs appropriate to urban residential settings. This direction is reflected in our mission statement and led to a name change, from Evergreen Area Arboretum to Evergreen Arboretum and Gardens.

Governance and Organizational Structure

Evergreen Arboretum and Gardens (EA&G) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit governed by a volunteer board which works with the Everett Department of Parks and Facilities to provide garden maintenance, renovation, and the addition of original sculptures in the gardens. The Arboretum Board raises money for the gardens through an annual plant sale, grants, memberships, sponsorships, and donations. Funds raised are used to purchase trees, shrubs, bulbs, perennials, annuals, and to support the organization's business needs. EA&G also provides a cadre of dedicated volunteers who organize classes, events, programs, docent tours, and special projects to improve the gardens, provide educational opportunities, and connect visitors to nature.

Mission

To create and maintain an inspirational arboretum and gardens accessible to all, internationally acclaimed, and locally enjoyed for its plant diversity, original art, and educational opportunities.



Dear Evergreen Arboretum & Gardens Members,

This year was indeed a year to celebrate. EA&G turned 60 in 2023, and we held two special events to mark our anniversary. The first, “Out on a Limb: Poetry in the Trees,” was made possible thanks to partnerships with Everett Public Library, Everett Community College’s Ceramics Department, and all the poets who sent us their poems. In April we hung 24 original poems in the Arboretum. The second special event, “Color Storm,” is a yarn bombing event that is on display during the month of March 2024—a bright beginning to our new fiscal year.



We have benefitted greatly from COVID relief money designated for arts and cultural organizations, money that has allowed us to begin our largest project to date—the complete renovation of the Backyard Garden. This project started as a dream in 2022 when Edmonds College Horticulture instructor Alejandra Feliciano made this garden a project for her landscape design class. As I write this, visitors can see the large concrete patio and benches already in place. Then came drainage and irrigation work—not visible but critical to the success of the garden. We hope to begin replanting this spring.

We are extremely grateful to City Council members Brenda Stonecipher and Mary Fosse who each gave us \$25,000 from COVID funds to use to fix the gravel paths that run from the Small Tree Walk through the Conifer and Woodland Gardens, add features to the Backyard Garden, fund Wintertide Lights 2024, and, depending on how far this money goes, maybe a few special projects.

I’m excited even thinking about all we can accomplish this year, and I hope you’ll be pleased to see what the improvements we have planned. Please consider joining us as a member or a volunteer, or both.

Sincerely,

Eileen Simmons, President

Board of Directors, 2023—2024

Eileen Simmons, President

Trevor Cameron

Wayne Walker, Vice President

Tracie Dessart

Libbie Soden, Recording Secretary

Jeanne Crisp

Renee Greenleaf, Corresponding Secretary

Dee Drake

Marylou Hart, Treasurer Accounts Payable

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Agnes Eros, Treasurer Accounts Receivable

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Emile van den Akker

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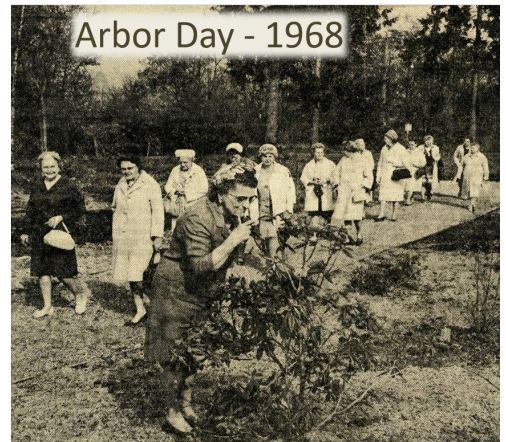
Arboretum Special Projects, 2023-24



- 🌿 **Out on a Limb: Poetry in the Trees in April**
- 🌿 **Classroom Makeover in May and June**
- 🌿 **Renovation of Backyard Garden begins**
- 🌿 **Color Storm: Yarn Bombing the Arboretum in March**
- 🌿 **Bylaws revision project**



In addition to the special projects listed above, we maintained our usual work schedule in the Arboretum this past year— regular work parties in the gardens and for the plant sale, classes for children and adults, docent tours, pop-up plant sales during volunteer work days, two Family Fun events, our annual plant sale, outreach activities at Sorticulture and Fresh Paint, Sculpture Walk including the reception for members, volunteers, and artists, and Wintertide Lights. These last two began as special events that have been brought back by popular demand. They are still special, but we have incorporated them into our regular calendar.





As we end our 60th year, we wonder if the people who had the vision to imagine an arboretum in Everett would have ever imaged the variety of activities that have become part of our work. We hope they would be both pleased and proud to see how their original vision, which began with the planting of a pin oak, has been carried out for more than half a century.


Our Education Program


Education is at the heart of what we do. We offer classes and events for all ages, introducing children to the joys of nature and gardening and providing educational opportunities to urban gardeners looking for inspiration and help designing a home garden that will thrive in our climate. Docent-led tours returned after a COVID hiatus, providing organizations with tours tailored to their interests.


2023-2024 Highlights


 Our partnership with the Imagine! Children’s Museum expanded to two classes, Bees & Botany and Little Scientists, bringing preschoolers into the Arboretum to learn about nature. The Museum also provided two luminary-making workshops for parents and children during Wintertide Lights.

 Spring and summer Family Fun Events brought families out to enjoy the Arboretum. Children planted peas in April, and in July they enjoyed nature-themed craft projects and games thanks to organizations such as the YMCA, Master Gardeners, Dawson Place Child Advocacy Center, Pilchuck Audubon Society, the Everett Public Library, and others.

 Our partnership with the Everett Public Library provided three Story Walks during the year as well as assistance with “Out on a Limb” —the first special event for our 60th Anniversary.

 Our Thursday morning plant sale work parties became mini-classes in plant propagation and hanging basket design thanks to Sandy Milam. Sandy also invited work party volunteers to the amazing garden she and husband Ted have created to dig and pot plants for our June sale.

 In the spring, volunteer Kendall McLean taught a class in making rabbit cloches which help to keep those pesky rabbits from eating your plants without making your garden look like a fortress.

 Edmonds College Horticulture student Nina Shim, pictured below helping with a plant sale work party, interned with EA&G this fall. We miss her already.



July Family Fun



Plant sale volunteers



Rabbit cloche class

Art in the Gardens



Our mission statement says the Arboretum is “enjoyed for its ... original art, and educational opportunities.” Read below to see how we work to make that mission a reality.


Members of the Northwest Stone Sculptors Association, three of whom are pictured above on the left, returned to the Arboretum in August for a two-day event featuring smaller works placed in the gardens. The sculptors talked about their work to our many visitors, provided demonstrations using hand carving tools, and even helped us set up our Saturday evening reception for members, volunteers, and artists.


Thanks to The City of Everett, Fibonacci, our much-loved fountain, pictured above in the middle, received a new coat of paint and was turned back on in time for our July Family Fun Event. It’s due to get another coat this summer—and we’re hoping someone can figure out what is making the weird clunking noise.

In more Fibonacci news, we’re pleased to report that the City also paid to have the sinking concrete sections around the fountain leveled. More work is needed to smooth out a few areas, but the work done has already made for safer walking.

The Arboretum Board commissioned a lighted sculpture to hang in the gazebo during Wintertide Lights 2023. Artist Cindy Morris created “Nebula,” a beautiful sculpture made out of recycled materials that she said was inspired by plants and seeds. Cindy tells us that she is still thinking about the piece and plans to add even more elements for its 2024 outing in the gazebo.

Special Project Highlights of 2023– 2024

 Eagle Scout candidate Ginger Scherb worked with fellow scouts and her father to repaint the Classroom Building. Arboretum board members enhanced the project by painting the doors a vibrant magenta, adding a large, colorful sign, and creating a spectacular display in two planters near the entrance. Ginger is pictured on the far left with some of her crew.

 Board member Libbie Soden has begun a much-needed update of our plant inventory. She is close to finishing—although with the Backyard Garden Renovation, we seem to keep adding more to her list.



Wintertide Lights, 2023

Wintertide Lights gets a page all to itself this year. Not only did the weather mostly cooperate with no rain on the weekends, but we added more features to make the event more family-friendly than ever.










The gnomes were back, entertaining both children and their parents as they looked high and low to find all of them. Our volunteers and board members staffed the kiosk on weekends to welcome visitors with candy canes and smiles, and Everett Public Library provided us with Ezra Jack Keats' *The Snowy Day* for our winter book walk. Librarian Andrea Wallis told us a family saw the book walk and let her know they loved the lights and reading the book. The oldest child saw one of the book pages from "The Snowy Day" and yelled, "Hey, there's Peter!" It wasn't the first page of the story, so they went through the park again so they could read the full story.

Our experiment with adding a Solstice Walk was more successful than we ever imagined. Approximately 100 people attended the three luminary workshops (thanks Imagine Children's Museum and YMCA). December 21st people came flooding in. We ran out of luminaries before the walk even started, and the parking lot was totally full. Visitors enjoyed songs and a story in the gazebo. It was a magical night. We are grateful to the Skagit Valley Watershed Council for sharing their expertise with luminaries.

Thanks to another City of Everett Lodging Tax Grant and Council member Mary Fosse's COVID relief grant, Wintertide Lights will return in 2024, including another Solstice Walk.



Membership, Volunteers, and Fund Development

-  We have 227 members as of January 2024. Membership has still not returned to its pre-COVID level, and has even dropped a bit from the previous year.
-  An \$18,600 COVID relief grant for arts and cultural organizations from the Department of Commerce enabled us to begin work on the Backyard Garden renovation.
-  A \$20,000 grant from the Stanley Smith Horticultural Trust helped us complete a much-needed renovation of the Small Tree Walk with the addition of a new kiosk, signage, and bike rack.
-  The final year of our Everett Forward grant provided the resources to increase the number of lights for Wintertide Lights 2023.
-  An August Arboretum reception during Sculpture Walk for artists, members, and volunteers was very well received. It will return in 2024.
-  Our Tribute Tree program added six new trees to the Arboretum.
-  Social media fundraisers and our Light a Tree Campaign have raised \$5,000 for Wintertide Lights. We also received a very generous \$5,000 donation in memory of Sue Long for Wintertide Lights or other needs in the Arboretum.

Volunteers: How It All Happens

In 2023 our volunteers spent 2,330 hours working directly in the Arboretum—including planting, weeding, hauling away debris, spreading woodchips and mulch, and lighting up the gardens for Wintertide.

EA&G board and volunteers spent at least 1,262 hours on responsibilities such as grant writing, event and class planning and implementation, public relations, record-keeping, and volunteer-intensive events such as Sorticulture, Wintertide Lights, the plant sale, and Sculpture Walk.

Our volunteers make the Arboretum the special place that it is. In summer we merged our Volunteer Appreciation Luncheon into the Sculpture Walk dinner reception for artists and members, which proved to be a very popular decision. Look for this event to return in 2024.



Financials: March 1, 2022—February 28, 2023 (unaudited)

Revenue

| | |
|-------------------------|---------------------|
| General Donations | \$61,661.95 |
| Sponsorships and Grants | \$28,150.00 |
| Membership | \$8,263.59 |
| Special Events | \$38,661.27 |
| Gross Profit | \$137,165.91 |

Expenses

| | |
|-----------------------|---------------------|
| Special Events | \$3,615.97 |
| Special Projects | \$98,290.66 |
| Outreach Events | \$27,537.80 |
| Business Expenses | \$6,116.66 |
| Total Expenses | \$142,534.33 |

Net Income \$9,837.76

Assets

| | |
|--|-------------|
| Checking Account | \$88,110.76 |
| Money Market | \$20,618.54 |
| Community Foundation of Snohomish County Endowment | \$49,915.86 |

- *Our fiscal year currently runs from March 1 through February 28. All figures are as of February 27, 2024*

City of Everett Assistance in the Gardens

This year Everett Parks and Facilities provided the following support for the Arboretum:

- Electrical assistance for Wintertide Lights
- Scheduled rangers to close the gates during Wintertide Lights
- Project to level the area around Fibonacci
- Irrigation improvements for Backyard Garden
- New ramps and trim on Classroom Building
- Classroom and office space for EA&G
- Lawn mowing

Thank You to 2023—2024 Sponsors



Thank You to Our Partners

- Everett Public Library
- Northwest Stone Sculptors Association
- Imagine Children’s Museum
- YMCA of Everett
- Great Yarns

