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## Metro sprouts tours of Gresham, Fairview gardens

The Gresham Outlook, Jun 17, 2008, Updated 1 minute ago

**Metro's wildly popular Gardens of Natural Delights tour returns July 13, featuring beautiful backyards and the people who grow them naturally, without chemicals.**

This free tour, now in its tenth year, will knock your gardening clogs off.

On Sunday, July 13, participants may select from 30 gardens that are part of the self-guided tour, located throughout the greater metropolitan area.

Of these, 25 are gardens at private homes, and four are in Gresham and Fairview, with others in East Multnomah County. Highlights include 16 blossom bonanza gardens, nine greenest lawns on the block, seven small suburban sensations, 15 incredible edible gardens and 11 naturescapes.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Marilyn and Terry Lindsey stand in their backyard arbor with its blue bottles. The Gresham residents' garden is on the Garden of Natural Delights tour.

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The host gardeners' enthusiasm, knowledge and creativity drive the success of this popular tour. They love plants and are part of a rapidly growing group of folks committed to using methods and techniques safe for kids, pets, wildlife and local rivers and streams.

### Garden highlights

The garden of Terry and Marilyn Lindsey, located on a quiet Gresham cul-de-sac, features a wide selection of roses, vegetables and hummingbird-attracting flowers. The Lindseys have made creative use of found objects for decorating, such as clear blue bottles that extend like branches from the upright posts of the backyard arbor. When it was time to replace an old wood deck, Terry used the wood to create 15 birdhouses and a boardwalk that provides a dry path during the soggy months.

The couple reduced the lawn in their spacious yard by half during the 15 years they have lived in the home. "We just covered the lawn with about six inches of leaves and let nature do the work. If you rototill, all you do is bring up the weeds," Terry said.

When the Lindseys moved to Oregon from North Dakota, they were delighted with the long growing season and the variety of plants that thrive here. They also started learning about different gardening methods.

"At first, we didn't think much about the pesticides and herbicides we were using," Marilyn said. "Then we went to the Metro garden tour, just to get ideas for the yard, but we also learned a lot about how to garden without chemicals. One of the first changes we made was to stop using pesticides. The yard is full of earth worms now, and we have a lot of birds."

Rita and Richard Alm care for 1 1/2 acres on W.K Anderson Road. A centerpiece of the yard is the 103-foot-long constructed cascading stream, complete with tranquil pools. Colorful, curving flowerbeds border a vibrant green lawn. A drip-irrigation system with automatic timers and a sprinkler system for the lawn make watering efficient and easy. The site includes a natural woodland, a large area dedicated to rows of vegetables and a great view of Mount Hood.

This year's tour also includes two public demonstration gardens, one in Blue Lake Park and the other located on the grounds of the Gresham History Museum.

Blue Lake Natural Discovery Garden in Fairview is designed to illustrate how fun, safe and easy a natural garden can be for the whole family. This is a garden where kids are encouraged to get their hands dirty. All are invited to dig in the soil, explore a worm bin, scratch and sniff plants, feel leaves, climb on the large logs and boulders or rest under the huge log gazebo. The garden is planted with beautiful Pacific Northwest native plants and noninvasive exotics, including lots of drought-tolerant plants and edibles.

The Gresham Discovery Garden is in the heart of historic downtown Gresham. Run by the city's watershed management division, this demonstration garden promotes techniques to help residents keep chemicals out of the area's stormwater system, creeks and rivers. The garden features an eco-lawn, a rain garden, drought-tolerant native perennials and shrubs, and pervious pathways made from crushed-rock.

Register now

About 2,600 people attended last year's Gardens of Natural Delight and Metro has raised the limit to 2,700 participants this year. Tickets are free,



SPECIAL SECTIONS

but space is limited to Multnomah, Clackamas and Washington county residents and their guests. To register, call the Metro Recycling Information hot line at 503-234-3000. For more information on the tour – including volunteer opportunities – visit [www.oregonmetro.gov/garden](http://www.oregonmetro.gov/garden).

Metro, the regional government that serves 1.4 million people who live in the 25 cities and three counties of the Portland metropolitan area, provides planning and other services that protect the nature and livability of our region.

Story content provided by Metro's Natural Gardening Program.



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