

THE BLOEDEL RESERVE

Self-Guided Tour



PLEASE RETURN THIS BOOKLET TO THE GATE HOUSE UPON COMPLETION OF YOUR TOUR, THAT IT MAY BE USED BY OTHER VISITORS. THANK YOU!

WELCOME

On behalf of the staff and trustees of the Arbor Fund, a not-for-profit foundation established by Mr. and Mrs. Bloedel, which owns and operates the Bloedel Reserve, we are pleased to welcome you.

Feature #1, THE GATE HOUSE

You are standing at the Gate House that was built 1988. The design was intended to capture the feel and architectural character of the main residence, that you will see later in your tour, that was home for the Bloedels for over 30 years.



As you examine the three-dimensional model of the grounds, you will notice that roughly half of the 150 acres displayed before you has been developed. The remaining 80 acres are in forest and will not be developed except for the addition of a few trails.

What you are going to experience as you walk today are gardens that were developed by the Bloedels since 1954. To give some sense of perspective about this place, it will be useful to cover a little history and background about the people and events that have affected this property before it was acquired by the Bloedels.

In 1856, President Franklin Pierce gave this property and most of Agate Point to officials representing the Washington Territories for the purposes of development of a territorial university. Records from archives at the University indicate that this property was logged soon after that and sale of that timber paid for some of the first structures on the new campus in Seattle. Somewhat later, the property, known as Agate Point, was sold. The money obtained was used to fund some of the first academic programs at the University of Washington.

In 1906, 67-acres of Agate Point were purchased by Mrs. John Collins. Angela Collins had come west in a covered wagon and married John Collins who was some 30 years her senior. Together they became rather influential people within the Seattle community. John Collins, owner of the Seattle Hotel (1st & Yesler), was the sixth mayor of the city and was very active in Democratic Party politics. Their busy life included entertaining VIPs and even Presidents. It was with the intent of developing a beach retreat, after his death, that Mrs. Collins bought this property. And certainly Bainbridge Island in 1906 would have been a retreat. There were few roads, no bridges and only limited public access by boat. Mrs. Collins developed a beach cottage on land that is adjacent to us, to the north. The Collins' children were ultimately given that property. It was about 1928 when Mrs. Collins decided to build another house for her own use on the upper property. Bertrand Collins, Mr. Collins' son by a previous marriage, introduced Mrs. Collins to J. Lister Holmes, an up-and-coming Seattle architect. Apparently, collectively, Holmes, Bertrand Collins, and Mrs. Collins came up with the design that resulted in the house that we now use as our Visitor Center. The house with its 67 acres was called *Collinswood*.

The next owners were the Bloedels. Mr. Bloedel retired in 1950 as one of the Vice Presidents of MacMillan Bloedel Ltd., a firm he helped to establish in Canada. He was born in Bellingham, Washington. His father had come west from Wisconsin and started what would become a life-long relationship with the Pacific Northwest timber industry. Mrs. Bloedel's father, R. D. Merrill, who also was in the timber business, was one of the early loggers on the Olympic Peninsula. Together, Mr. and Mrs. Bloedel found *Collinswood*. Mrs. Bloedel, most interested in things French, found the house more than attractive. Mr. Bloedel, as best we know, was not so taken with the house as he was impressed by the land with its trees and the open space. Both, for these different reasons, fell in love with *Collinswood* and so they decided to purchase it.

As you walk along the meadow trail toward the distant barns, take a moment to consider the philosophy and intent of the Reserve as it was first expressed by Mr. Bloedel:

The Bloedel Reserve should be regarded as a natural reserve that also possesses some of the attributes of an arboretum. Its primary purpose is the creation and maintenance of a place where people enjoy natural beauty as evidenced by plants. It will specialize in the preservation of the wildflowers, shrubs and trees native to this area and of the woods, fields and streams which are their natural environment. The impression of raw nature is often one of chaos and confusion. Accordingly, the enjoyment of natural beauty may be enhanced by introducing some organization into the primitive confusion, but that organization should not destroy a sense of naturalness. The Reserve as a whole should be

an example of man working harmoniously with nature; where his power to manage is used cautiously and wisely. (06/14/1976)

Feature #2, THE MEADOW, BARNS AND BIRD MARSH

Allow the walk across the meadow to be a pleasant one; one that will lead you into a series of designed experiences involving nature and over 35 years of ordered vision. Mr. Bloedel often said, “Nature does not need us to survive, but we need nature in order to connect with a sense of creation.”

These meadows once contained grazing sheep and cattle. The barn on your right once housed Mrs. Bloedel’s sheep. It is now a place where you may sit and rest if you wish. The barn in front of you was built to protect a supply of old growth cedar logs cut decades ago, but left in the forest to rot. Mr. Bloedel gathered these from various timberlands, but mostly from those near the Olympic National Park. Those logs have since been cut and split to form rails for a fence along West Port Madison Road. A barn that once was located to your left (now open space) was remodeled in 1979 to serve as a Maintenance Center and was moved in 1985 to property further south and west.



Continue through this meadow and beyond the barns. It was designed to be a quiet and non-stimulating space; a space to begin a transition from the outer world to the special spaces within the Reserve. As you leave this area, you will follow the bark covered trail down a descending slope, through a wooded area and ultimately to the Bird Marsh. (Continue walking until you reach the Bird Marsh.) As you view the Marsh, notice that there are water areas with two different characters. In the distance, is a large, nearly circular pond; the area closest to you contains several islands and more decorative plant materials. The area to the east, the original circular pond, was built in 1954 to provide irrigation for Mr. Bloedel's forest nursery once located outside the main entrance. In 1979 and 1980, the pond was evaluated from the standpoint of enhancing its irrigation capacity. After much design discussion, it was decided that the area west of the original pond would be cleared and excavated to create a new, expanded water feature. The pond derives its water from both surface runoff and from subsurface springs revealed during the excavation of the peaty topsoil. Over 400 cubic yards of peat were removed and recycled. In some places, the excavation went down as many as 14 feet.



The decision to enhance the original irrigation pond not only provided additional irrigation capacity, it also provided an opportunity to create an environment that would attract wildlife, particularly birds. In designing the new pond a decision was made to

leave islands of undisturbed soil for water fowl to locate secure nests. The water around the islands was dredged deep enough so that predators such as dogs, cats and raccoons could not simply wade to the nesting birds.

Plantings were selected that were known to provide food and cover for birds. The cattails (*Typha latifolia*) were introduced to provide a nesting place for redwing blackbirds. We stock the pool annually with rainbow trout, which are often quite evident as they feed. The trout are here as food for the kingfishers, the herons, and occasionally, osprey. In 1985, we introduced a pair of trumpeter swans. The trumpeter swans and tundra swans are the only birds on the Reserve that have been introduced as a pinioned (flightless) waterfowl. All other birds in the area are free to move in and out as they wish. Note the plantings of red osier dogwood (*Cornus sericea*) and Winterberry (*Ilex verticillata*), a heavy fruiting holly species with small orange-red berries in winter.

Other plantings include native pink spiraea (*Spiraea douglasii*) at the south end of the pond and native viburnum or moosewood (*Viburnum ellipticum*) which is almost never used in northwest gardens but is extremely attractive for its bright red fall color. You may see a few perennials around the border of the pool that were added to provide bit of interest.

The pool took about one year to construct and then it was left to settle for about four years to see what nature was going to do with it. You now are witness to a man-made Bird Marsh in a natural wetlands setting. The goal now is to continue the gentle but necessary maintenance that will enable the habitat to prosper, to impart a sense of naturalness, that the space may appear not too decorated, too ornamental nor too highly maintained.

Feature #3, THE TRESTLE BRIDGE AND BOARDWALK



From the Bird Marsh, the trail takes us to a unique landscape feature — the trestle footbridge. Built in 1991, by hand without the use of cranes or other large machines, the bridge enables us to obtain a special view into this woodland. The railings and benches along the bridge are made from Jarrah wood (*Eucalyptus marginata*) noted for its resistance to rot and insect damage.

From the bridge, the trail winds into the heart of the second-growth forest, past old stumps and logs and near a small forest wetland. This wetland or bog forms the headwaters of a year-round flowing stream that discharges its flow into Puget Sound on the east side of the Reserve. To permit close-hand viewing of the wetland, without damaging it, we installed the Boardwalk. From the center portion of the Boardwalk, one can see an unusually large planting of Skunk Cabbage (*Lysichiton americanus*) which will reach its peak display by late summer. Many designs and plans have evolved over the years for treatments of this space. We elected to merely pass through it, to show it, with only these few minor changes added.

As you walk, you will notice a variety of native plant materials. Cedar, fir and hemlock trees along with sword ferns, lady ferns, deer ferns, salal, Oregon grape and salmonberry are the most prevalent plants here.

Follow the trail until you intersect the driveway, then turn right and proceed down the drive towards the Visitor Center.

Feature #4, THE MID POND

Before you is the Mid Pond (located midway between the Japanese Pool and the Swan Pond). Built in 1954, it was the first water feature created on the property. It was designed by Mr. Bloedel who personally guided local general contractors in its excavation. Originally this pond extended up through what is now the Japanese garden.

It was not until 1960-61 that the Japanese garden and its pool were developed and separated from the Mid Pond. In 1964, the Guest House was built.

The large shrub that you see on this south side of the pond is a Persian parrot tree (*Parrotia persica*), which comes from Iran. It belongs to the witch-hazel family and has spectacular fall color. The leaves turn yellow with touches of red, pink and orange. The common name of parrot tree comes from Dr. Parrot (pronounced pear-oh), a French physician for whom the tree was named. In winter, without its leaves, one can see its very handsome trunks exhibiting exfoliating bark – bark that peels off in flakes and chips revealing the lower layers in attractive patterns and colors. Mrs. Bloedel acquired this tree as a one-gallon size shrub probably in the 1960s.

Note the young English elm (*Ulmus procera*) nearby. It is an offspring of one of the two elms that grow in front of the Visitor Center.



Across the pond is a weeping willow (*Salix alba var. tristis*) and a group of Young's weeping birch (*Betula pendula CV. Youngii*). To the right of the willow, beyond the outlet of the pond, you can see a collection of Japanese maples (*Acer palmatum*) planted on a mossy slope along with a few birches. The Mid Pond drains, via a small stream, into another pond, which we call the Swan Pond. The stream banks are hidden in a low planting of heathers. Continuing your walk along the drive, you will pass some shrubs on the right (planted among the salal), which resemble the parrot tree. They are called leather leaf (*Fothergilla monticola*). Like the parrot tree, the leather leaf is a relative of witch-hazel and has the same attractive fall-colored foliage.

Continue walking towards the house and you will soon pass a large Portuguese laurel tree (*Prunus lusitanica*), on your right and a very large atlas cedar (*Cedrus atlantica*), on your left. The atlas cedar was a gift to Mrs. Collins from Mr. Jim Eddy of the Port Blakely Tree Farm. We believe he also may have given her the empress tree (*Paulownia tomentosa*) to the right of the Visitor Center front door. The two very large trees on the lawn are English elm trees (*Ulmus procera*) and have attractive, brilliant golden fall color. We are often asked if we are worried about Dutch elm disease. The elm trees are susceptible

to this disease, which is spread by beetles and inter-root contact with infected trees. Since there are so few elms in this area and we have not yet found any of the beetles here, we feel our trees are still reasonably free from this threat. We do watch for the beetles as they have been reported in King County.

Feature #5, THE VISITOR CENTER

As you approach the house, which we now call the Visitor Center, recall that it was constructed in 1931 by Angela Collins, J. Lister Holmes and Bertrand Collins. The Bloedels added the low concrete wall by the driveway, the flat-topped shop wing and the garage wing beyond about 1953. The handicap access ramp was added in 1987 and at the same time, all of the patios and porches were rebuilt, replacing some rather worn, fractured and old concrete.



The ground floor of the building is open for public use, providing restrooms, use of the library and an opportunity to see some of the furnishings enjoyed by the Bloedels. You may pick up a description of the interior furnishings of the home if you wish or you may just walk through. Feel free to ask the volunteer staff person on duty any questions you may have. (Your tour will resume when you come back outside.)

Walk around the house to its East (waterfront) side. You are looking out toward Puget Sound and over a space that once served as a sheep pasture and as an orchard for Mrs. Collins. The far bluff edge was once some 15 feet higher, but in consultation with our landscape architect, Richard Haag, it was lowered in 1978 to facilitate enjoyment of an unobstructed water view. The patio at the edge of the lawn was designed by Thomas “Tommy” Church, the noted landscape architect from

California and long-time friend and landscape advisor to Mr. and Mrs. Bloedel.

Two noteworthy plants around the patio are the weeping Camperdown elm trees (*Ulmus glabra* CV. *Camperdownii*). They were planted by Mrs. Collins, probably in the 1940's. Normally Camperdown elms of this age would be much larger. We believe that graft incompatibility between the Camperdown elm on top of English elm trunks (*Ulmus glabra*) prevents the trees from getting much larger. There are a few cherry trees remaining near the house, but most have died over the years. The boxwood hedge (*Buxus sempervirens* CV. *Suffruticosa*) has its origins at the original Collins homestead at Second Avenue and James Street in Seattle. While the 1889 fire destroyed the house, the hedge surrounding the home survived. Mrs. Collins eventually had the hedge dug up and brought to Bainbridge Island and transplanted to this bluff edge where some of it remains today providing a hint of formal landscaping near the house. It's nice to think that within this hedge are survivors of the "Great Seattle Fire".

On the bank below the patio is St. John's wort (*Hypericum calycinum*) which is a yellow flowered, aggressive perennial, flanked on both sides by specimens of native evergreen huckleberry (*Vaccinium ovatum*). Beyond the huckleberries are some large specimens of *Stranvaesia davidiana* var. *salicifolia*, a plant closely related to cotoneaster.

Feature #6, THE WATERFALL OVERLOOK

Walk around to the north side of the house and notice the large copper beech (*Fagus sylvatica* CV. *Atropurpurea*). Proceed down the steps to our newest feature, the waterfall overlook.

At the bottom of the steps, on the right, is the path that will take you down into the Glen. The waterfall was built about 1954. This area is planted with rhododendrons, *Viburnum davidii*, *Skimmia japonica* and several Japanese maples. At the time the Bloedels purchased the property, there was a wooden bridge spanning this ravine. The pond formed by the creation of the waterfall is called the Swan Pond, as a pair of mute swans use to nest there. Now, a pair of tundra swans inhabit this pond as well as the Mid Pond.



The steps to the waterfall overlook are flanked by an allée of Dawson magnolias (*Magnolia dawsoniana*). The banks on either side are planted with lily turf (*Liriope spicata*), hardy geraniums, dwarf Hinoki cypress, and low growing azaleas. Just below the overlook is a group of *Edgeworthia papyrifera*, a small shrub from China also called paperbush. Related to daphne, it bears clusters of very fragrant yellow flowers in the spring.

Feature #7, TRAIL FROM THE WATERFALL TO THE CHRISTMAS POOL

As you depart the landing, notice on the right side of the walkway leading away from the waterfall, the native oxalis (*Oxalis oregana*), often called sorrel. It is an edible plant with a peppery flavor that comes from the presence of oxalic acid in the plant tissues. Further along, you will pass a number of other noticeable plants: periwinkle (*Vinca minor*), native or false Solomon Seal (*Smilacina racemosa*), true Solomon's Seal (*Polygonatum biflorum*), hardy cyclamen (*Cyclamen hederifolium*), ferns and shrubs.

Note the Himalayan white birch (*Betula jacquemontii*) and the conifers that extend the forest cover further along this trail.

On the left side, as one walks away from the house, the under-plantings below the birches are rhododendrons, hydrangeas, and perennial ground covers similar to those seen near the waterfall. On the far right are meadow grasses and turf areas. You might notice how we repeated the presence of the Himalayan birches on the far side on the grassy meadow below the house.



At the trail junction, the trail that leads to the right will ultimately take visitors across the bluff top and south into the old, heavily forested area along the waterfront part of the Reserve. (At present, we do not recommend taking this trail into the woods as it dead-ends and is often impassable in wet weather.)

The small collection of Japanese maples (*Acer palmatum*) along the edge of the ravine to the left was a gift from Mrs. Bloedel to Mr. Bloedel in 1986. The lace cap hydrangeas (*Hydrangea macrophylla*) nearby were particularly enjoyed by Mrs. Bloedel for their color. She often cut the hydrangeas and dried them for use on the dining room table.

As you enter the trees again, a chain link fence is visible on the right. It marks the northeast corner of the property. The beach house, once owned by Mrs. Collins and now extensively remodeled, lies down the little ravine at the outlet onto the beach.

Feature #8, THE CHRISTMAS POOL

Note the old, big leaf maple tree (*Acer macrophyllum*), which frames the view of the Christmas Pool. It has gone through many abuses of nature and man, giving it its present character. A large branch of this tree recently fell and is visible down in the stream

channel. The Christmas Pool is so named because it was a Christmas gift to Mrs. Bloedel from Mr. Bloedel in 1970. The crew worked on the area during the winter months through snow, cold and damp. The rock in the middle of the pond is known as turtle rock by virtue of its shape.

The rock closer to the trail was placed there by an act of gravity when it tumbled down the bank out of the truck that delivered it. With no means to move it, it was left in its resting position.



The plantings around the pool were designed to appeal to Mrs. Bloedel. On the bank below the Japanese maples is a display of soft yellow primroses (*Primula veris*) that start flowering in March. As they fade, a large planting of candelabra primroses (*Primula pulverulenta*), located upstream from the bridge, starts flowering in late April and lasts through all of May. In June, another primrose (*Primula frondosa*) starts to flower and may last into July or perhaps early August. White azaleas (*Rhododendron mucronatum*), London pride (*Saxifraga X urbinum*), hosta (*Hosta sieboldiana*), birch (*Betula pendula*), and native deer fern (*Blechnum spicant*) line the trail and spaces in this garden. Note the beautiful old nurse log spanning the stream to your left as you walk away from the footbridge.

Feature #9, THROUGH THE GLEN

As you enter the Glen, you are entering a part of the Garden that features more flowers than any other part of the Reserve. Planted to appeal to Mrs. Bloedel, it contains such plants as lungworts (*Pulmonaria ssp.*), rhododendrons, trillium, and hardy cyclamen (*Cyclamen hederifolium*), which we believe may be the largest planting in the western United States, if not in the whole U.S. They flower from late August through September. The flowers are followed by mottled foliage and then, in late spring, the leaves fall off and the bulbs go completely dormant until the fall when the flowers again emerge.

The plants on the right of the trail with the spotted (mottled) leaves are lungworts, (*Pulmonaria saccharata*), also called boy-girl plants, because they flower with pink and blue blossoms at the same time. Note the large leafed Himalayan rhododendrons, the Douglas fir stump with the old spring-board notches reminiscent of logging practices long past. Below it is a form of comfrey (*Symphytum grandiflorum*), which is similar to lungwort, except that its flowers are a soft yellow in April-May; it also lacks the mottling of the leaves. As you continue to walk, observe the native wild ginger (*Asarum caudatum*) on your right at the top of the glen. This is a plant that occurs naturally on the Reserve, on Bainbridge Island and throughout the northwest. It was once used as a flavoring for cooking, but is not the ginger of the grocery store, which is a South American tropical herb. Feel free to pinch a leaf and smell its strong fragrance. Notice too, if in bloom, the unusual purple triangular flowers and how close to the earth they are. The flowers are pollinated by beetles and the seeds are distributed by ants.

Feature #10, THE ORCHID TRAIL

You are now at the top of the Glen and are about to cross the paved road and go up to the Orchid Trail. This was the one place on the property where one could see coral root orchids (*Corallorhiza maculata*) in fair numbers, hence the name Orchid Trail. Only a few remain today. The orchids exist by means of a mycorrhizal (fungal) association with the rotting roots of the evergreen trees. They get their “food” from this fungal association and so can live and grow in the absence of sunlight. Over time the environment has changed sufficiently that the orchids are gradually disappearing from this particular location. Because the orchids are so fragile, we encourage visitors to stay on the bark trail.

Some of the plants that might be of interest here are the low primroses under the Japanese maples (on your left next to the driveway). They bear a deep pink flower in March. The dogwood on the right of the path is called Goldspot or variegated dogwood (*Cornus nuttallii* CV. Eddiei). It is a hybrid form of the western dogwood. Further along

to your right up the driveway, is a big leaf magnolia (*Magnolia macrophylla*) and beyond it, up the road, is a dawn redwood tree (*Metasequoia glyptostroboides*) with its deeply furrowed trunk. The dawn redwood was a tree well known as a fossil long before living specimens of it were found. Living trees were discovered in China in 1947 and introduced to horticulture about 1949. It is a deciduous conifer — that is, it will lose all of its needles in the winter.

As you enter the Orchid Trail, look on the left side beyond the azalea plantings where there is a small garden designed by our landscape architect, Geoffrey Rausch. This garden was a birthday gift to Mrs. Bloedel from Mr. Bloedel. It consists of a little viewing area of the Swan Pond, a teak bench, and plantings of hardy cyclamen, trillium, native fragrant azaleas, skimmia, and native western rhododendron (*Rhododendron macrophyllum*) — all favorites of Mrs. Bloedel. It is a particularly pleasant place to come, sit and enjoy the Swan Pond, although now the swans are infrequent visitors.

The route of the Orchid Trail was proposed by Tommy Church. We understand that it was a space that Mr. Church felt was particularly handsome with its tall conifers and views down into the garden, and so he recommended to the Bloedels that they place a path through this woods and such was done about 1974.

Note the very large, old stump of Douglas fir (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*) up the trail and to the left. Apparently in 1975, this tree was a tall, dead snag partially with and partially without bark. Mr. Bloedel arranged for a tree climber to come to cut the top, barkless part of the snag off and to leave a bit of a stump. Well, the day prior to the climber's arrival, the entire tree-top fell off into the Swan Pond. When the fellow arrived, he was quite relieved to find he had come a day late. So instead of having to take the tree down, all he had to do was climb up the remnant of the stump and trim off the ragged portion.

We have attempted to preserve this old stump as best we can by keeping the bark intact. One can see bands of wire going around the stump holding the bark together. Once the bark falls off, it is usually a short time later that the whole stump decays away. It is a striking example of the size of the Douglas fir trees that once grew here. In front of it is a very young western yew (*Taxus brevifolia*), a tree with exceptionally hard wood, which was important to Native Americans for fashioning digging sticks and making bows. It is a native of the Island, and is usually found in wet, swampy areas. Note the attractive flaky bark.

On the left, at the little steps, is an opening through the trees planted with several species of maples. It is worth noting that the whole group of Douglas fir trees along the Orchid Trail was planted in 1956 to replace a number of trees removed in 1954 when the clearing took place for the Mid Pond, the entry drive and Guest House meadow.

Feature #11, THE JAPANESE GARDEN, GUEST HOUSE AND ZEN GARDEN

Leaving the Orchid Trail, you will enter the Japanese Garden. The gate (torii) was designed by Dr. Koichi Kawana, and is located between Hinoki cypress (*Chamaecyparis obtusa*) plants. The stone garden, also designed by Dr. Kawana, was installed in 1986. One could call it an example of a Zen or meditation garden. It is, as explained by Dr. Kawana, a feature that does, as does most Zen art, involve the viewer. It is fairly monochromatic and simple in its design. The visitor becomes involved by interpreting the setting and imagining features that seem appropriate for that visitor. By imagining features (water, mountains, colors) the viewer completes the feature design within their mind, thus playing an active role in completing the art form. This garden was designed to be viewed from inside the Guest House while seated in the living room. It is also attractive when viewed from the deck.



The Guest House was designed by Paul Hayden Kirk, a Seattle architect recommended to the Bloedels by Tommy Church. The structure was completed in 1964. It is made of vertical grain, clear, western red cedar (*Thuja plicata*), supported by round Douglas fir poles that came from Mr. Bloedel's timber property in Bellingham. The rest of the wood came from MacMillan-Bloedel Ltd. in Canada. The floor inside is teak from the battleship U.S.S. New Jersey, acquired from a government surplus property disposal sale. The chairs and coffee

tables were hand-made by master furniture-maker George Nakashima of New Hope, Pennsylvania, and were a gift to the Bloedels from the architect. Paul Kirk once commented in an interview that this building attempts to combine a Japanese style with northwest Native American and some northwestern thinking. One might call it a truly hybrid design structure.

Walk around the deck to view the Japanese stroll garden. Unlike the Zen Garden, which was intended to be viewed from “outside” and contemplated, the Stroll Garden is intended to be experienced by walking through it. It was designed and built in 1960-61 by Fujitaro Kubota of Seattle. Most of the key conifers and maples came from Mr. Kubota’s collection. The garden contains a very old lace leaf maple (just below the deck), Japanese red, black and white pines. Apparently, the black pines represent the male element of the garden and the red pines represent the female element. Continue walking around the deck towards the walkway leading out.



The stone walkway beyond the second torii is flanked by black lily turf (*Ophiopogon planescapens* CV. *Arabicus*). It is one of a very small number of plants known to have black leaves. Black has some cultural significance in Japan. Black dyes were very difficult to obtain from natural sources. Those who could afford black-dyed fabrics or other materials were considered to be of a higher class. Note that the fence has been hand-

tied with black twine.

To the right of the walkway next to the drive is a Katsura tree (*Cercidiphyllum japonicum*.) It may be one of the larger specimens of this species in the Seattle area. It is a handsome tree known for its yellow fall color and leaves that emit a very sweet fragrance after they have fallen. Cross the driveway and follow the bark trail into the Moss Garden.

Feature #12, THE MOSS GARDEN

This area was never successfully defined until 1982, when Mr. Richard Haag (the Reserve's landscape architect at the time) and Mr. Richard Brown (Reserve Executive Director) brought an idea to Mr. Bloedel after attending a meeting of the American Association of Botanical Gardens and Arboreta in Vancouver, Canada. There they had seen a small display of deciduous huckleberries growing out of moss. The idea of featuring our huckleberries in a similar manner through use of moss seemed to be a good one, as well as one transferable to this much larger space.



The project was begun by grubbing out all of the salmonberry and more weedy materials, leaving just a few sword ferns, deer ferns, salal plants and the huckleberries (*Vaccinium parvifolium*). Just about everything else was removed. A number of alders were cut down to provide light, leaving several quite tall remnants as a source of food for woodpeckers.

To create the moss cover, 2200 flats of Irish moss (*Sagina subulata*) were brought in. Those flats were cut into little cubes, amounting to 275,000 starts, which were planted about six inches apart, creating a temporary “moss” floor for the garden. The native true mosses then invaded the Irish moss and crowded most of it out in time, creating the beautiful green carpet you now see. You can see an understory of thriving huckleberries and above that, a

few *Aralia spinosa* trees or Hercules' walking stick. Also, to the left of the path leading in, are a couple of plants of *Decaisnea fargesii*, a plant from western China that resembles the *Aralias*, but which produces beautiful, turquoise-colored seed pods in late fall. Large leafed skunk cabbage plants flank the little drainage way through the garden.

Feature #13, THE REFLECTION POOL AND THE CAMELLIA WALK

As you enter the Reflection Garden, notice two basic hedge plantings: the clipped English yews (*Taxus baccata*) around the pool perimeter and the English yews at the sides of the Moss Garden path at the entry, which were left in an unpruned state. Behind those on the right are a half-dozen or so devils' club (*Oplopanax horridus*) plants, a Northwest native, interesting because of their large maple-like leaves and spiny trunks.

The Reflection Pool, with some advice from Tommy Church, was built in 1970 after two years of studying the water table of the area. Once the natural groundwater level was determined, the pool was designed to have its water surface at that level. The pool is approximately 200 feet long. The concrete curb merely holds back the turf. Natural springs in the sandy soils maintain the depth of the water. The pool is about 6 feet deep at the center of its "V"-shaped bottom. Pit run gravel was added to allow for natural recharge without erosion of the pond bottom. Surplus water exits the pool through openings in the curb/retaining edge and flows on to the Japanese garden.



Many have commented about the stark simplicity of this feature. Some have expressed the view that the feature needs sculpture or art work to complete the overall design. In fact, the Bloedels considered many variations of artwork and design before settling on this particular approach. It was their preference that the beauty of nature, reflected in the pool, be the focus and not the handiwork of man. We provide the “frame”; nature provides the “painting”.

At one time, there were benches placed around the pool constructed from timbers that served as the buttress support beams of the old Hall Brothers Shipyard in Winslow where tall sailing schooners were once built, but these ultimately decayed and have not been replaced.

The Reflection Garden was a much-favored place of the Bloedels. Upon their death and at their request, their remains were placed in this garden at a site indicated by a slate marker that expresses lines from Mrs. Bloedel’s favorite poem, written by the English author, Emily Brontë. It is located at the south end of the pool.

SYMPATHY

*There should be no despair for you
While nightly stars are burning;
While evening pours its silent dew
And sunshine gilds the morning.
There should be no despair — though tears
May flow down like a river:
Are not the best beloved of years
Around your heart for ever?*

*They weep, you weep, it must be so;
Winds sigh as you are sighing,
And Winter sheds his grief in snow
Where Autumn’s leaves are lying:
Yet, these revive, and from their fate
Your fate cannot be parted:
Then, journey on, if not elate,
Still, never broken-hearted!*

As you leave the Reflection Garden, down the short set of stairs, follow the path called the Camellia Walk. (There is a left turn a short distance from these steps that will take you back to the driveway that leads to the Gate House or to the Visitor Center.) IF YOU ELECT TO STAY ON THE TRAIL, you will enjoy a wooded walk that will complete your tour of our gardens and will return you to the parking area and to Gate House. On the way, you will pass a number of perennials, trilliums, wood poppies, white violets, Grecian windflowers and ferns. Despite the shade, the old camellias do bloom well in early spring.

Bloedel Reserve

You are now at the edge of the meadow, by the rock wall. You are at eye level with the grasses of the meadow and have completed your tour of the gardens.

We hope that you indeed found quiet and tranquility on your walk and that one or more of the garden vistas provided you with an experience that will inspire you to come again to enjoy this special place that is the Bloedel Reserve.



Photos by Richard A. Brown, Executive Director
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Philosophy and Purpose

The Bloedel Reserve is intended to be a place where people may find refreshment and tranquility in the presence of natural beauty.

The Reserve is an arboretum and natural reserve situated in a region that enjoys a most favorable climate for growing a diversity of plants.

The Reserve's primary interest is in the relationship between plants and people. There is a generally acknowledged but little understood ability of plants and landscapes to evoke a wide variety of deeply felt emotions, ranging from tranquility to exhilaration.

The Reserve is a place to experience the bond between people and nature. It is a place for people but not in clamorous crowds. It is a place in which to enjoy and learn from the emotional and aesthetic experience of nature the values of harmony, respect for life and tranquility. It is a place to enjoy and learn the values of eclectic design, aesthetics and ecology as the catalysts for the harmonious interaction of people and nature.