The Garden Gazette

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The Connie Hansen Garden Conservancy
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2026 Calendar of Events

Coming up soon!

March 14th (Sat) *– 11am-1pm*
Petal Heads talk and plant sale

April 25 (Sat) *– Linda Beutler*
Lily talk and workshop

May 9 (Sat) *– 11am and 3pm Tea Party*

Visit our website for up to date details.
Share your photos of CHG on our Facebook page.



Christmas Cheer blooms into February

From the President's Desk….

"The first blooms of spring always make my heart sing." ~ S. Brown

Greetings Friends of the Garden:

Spring is almost here and we have some sure signs of things to come in the garden right now. Christmas Cheer, one of the first rhododendrons to bloom, is in its full glory. Lovely pink blossoms light up the garden and put a smile on our faces.

Our gardeners have taken advantage of our nice and unusually dry weather to work their magic in the garden. Beds have been weeded and a new trellis has been installed with a climbing hydrangea eager to climb it. They are in the garden each Tuesday and you are welcome to come talk to them about our plants and trees, or if you are inclined to pick up a trowel, hoe or rake – that would be most welcome too.

Our board of directors have been planning some fun activities for the next few months, and we'd like to invite you to participate. In addition to our annual tea in May, we have invited Petal Heads to come talk to us again, and we are finalizing dates for classes on lilies, insects and more. Please check the Gazette, Facebook and our website for dates and times, we'd love to see you.

Happy Spring!

~Cheri Rice, CHG President



Rhody - Racemosum

Petal Heads

A perennial favorite at CHG

There will be a Petal Heads informative presentation on Saturday March 14th.

Petal Heads is a private nursery from West Linn operated by Dave and Annalise Dolittle. They like to tell the story behind the plants. This couple gives a slide show of their latest favorite plants that may not be in the local nurseries, choosing plants that do well in our Ocean climate.

It is an informal session where you can ask any questions. You can then purchase these plants at reasonable prices. They always come to Connie Hansen Garden in October and March. Check out their website at portlandpetalheads.com.

~Jenny Dahrens, Volunteer Coordinator



Cyclamen showing us that they are worthy of attention

Garden Report

This report might accurately be entitled “The Winter That Wasn't” although current predictions are for actual snowfall in the Cascades and a spell of wetter and much cooler weather here at the beach. Needless to say, the warm and dry weather in December and January kept us busy filling up the new debris bin, which appears to hold substantially more than the former bin despite a similar footprint. And it's decidedly easier to use and much more conveniently located.

Fall and winter cleanup has seamlessly transitioned into early spring weeding, with very little respite. The coming year looks to be quite challenging for our small and aging crew as we learn to deal with the vagaries of climate change. Much of the Connie Hansen Garden is designed and constructed around environmentally sensitive wetland areas and, as such, limits the use of even mildly toxic materials such as pesticides and synthetic chemical fertilizers, so we are actively exploring the use of alternative solutions.

One method is the use of cardboard and mulch in areas requiring constant maintenance such as bed and border edges, especially where border edging has already been installed (see accompanying article). We like the way this provides a neat and clean appearance that is relatively easy to maintain, and will continue to utilize it in appropriate areas. We are also considering the use of vinegar based herbicides on pathways and organic oils in other applications.

We will also be reinstating community work parties for special projects such as pathway resurfacing, bridge repair, and seasonal weed removal. Much of this type of outreach was suspended due to Covid and the Phytophthora infestation, but we plan to start these activities back up this year. The dates for work parties will be posted on our website and Facebook pages.

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Plans are to keep acquiring and planting shrubs and ornamental trees as features in the now wide open areas. These plantings will be carefully selected for Phytophthora resistance; hopefully, they will also prove to be deer resistant!

~Priscilla Patterson, Head Gardener

The CHG Cardboard Project

Editors note: Thank you Roberta for submitting your first article for the Gazette. We look forward to more from you and other volunteers who wish to contribute to our quarterly newsletter.

Roberta says:
My main area of expertise at the Connie Hansen Garden is weeding. This has been my focus so far, for new ideas. Weeds, although often lacking in aesthetic qualities, are botanically superior specimens when it comes to adaptability and abundance. Collectively, we volunteer gardeners spend a good many hours digging up weeds.

For a well-maintained garden, I believe that every bed and border should be weeded 3 or 4 times a year. The reality is that there is no way that we volunteers can come even close to that.

Okay, enough doom and gloom, here comes a bit of good news! We have recently started a small program that I will call The Cardboard Project. It is still in an experimental stage, but I am optimistic that it will prove to be very useful and could be expanded. This is how it works: After an area that is sparsely planted, such as a border, or around a tree, has been thoroughly weeded, we can now take steps to "secure" it. We do this so that we won't have to spend time that we don't really have weeding it again anytime soon.

First, we put down two or three layers of well-soaked cardboard, to suppress new weeds. Then a thick layer of rich, black compost is applied, to cover up the cardboard and to hold it in place. The result is that what was once a weed patch, or a "mucking fess", as Joannie would fondly put it, now looks orderly and attractive. The lovely trees and bushes are showcased, and that area has been reclaimed. We can now move on to something else that needs to be done.

These photos show the first stage, laying down cardboard, and the final stage, mulching, for our large Gunnera, a favorite feature of our garden. Of course, the real first stage was the three weeks that volunteer Terry spent, digging buttercups out of this moist and mucky bed! Thank you, Terry, for your efforts.



Volunteer Terry weeding Buttercups around Gunnera

We are in the process of building a new and much improved set up at the garden to store our compost. Once timely projects such as this are completed, we will return to our Cardboard Project. Meanwhile, we have identified more areas to work on for the first step for the cardboard and mulch areas, which is thoroughly weeding the areas that will later be covered with cardboard and mulch. Our unusual dry winter weather is great for weeding. Hopefully there will be rain in March, which is helpful for laying down the cardboard.

~Roberta Baker, longtime volunteer





Compost on top of cardboard

Compost: A Garden's Friend

What Connie Hansen's Journals Show Us

If there's one thing that shows up repeatedly in Connie Hansen's garden journals, it's **compost**. 77 times as a matter of fact. Not as a special project or a once-a-year task, but as a steady, reliable part of everyday gardening. For volunteers and home gardeners alike, the journals offer a simple reminder: good gardens are built from the soil up.

Compost as Part of Everyday Garden Work

In the journals, compost appears alongside regular garden chores—planting, mulching, edging beds, and caring for established plants. Connie notes when compost is added to new beds, spread around perennials, or used to freshen up tired spots in the garden. The simple message is that compost isn't fancy, it makes everything work better.

Homemade Compost: Using What the Garden Gives Back

A big part of the story is on-site compost. Connie kept compost piles for garden debris, leaves, and prunings, and she paid attention to how they perform.

A Simple Takeaway

For anyone helping care for a shared garden, or tending one at home, Connie Hansen's journals offer an encouraging message: every bit of compost matters, and every time you return organic material to the soil, you're investing in what comes next.

A copy of Connie Hansen's garden journals are located in the house for anyone to browse through.

~ Connie Peabody , Co-Editor

MEMBERSHIP

If you are not currently a member and would like to be, the options are listed below. Payments may be sent to: CHGC, PO Box 776, Lincoln City, OR 97367.

There are no meetings and no requirements. Benefits of membership include this quarterly publication, a 10% discount in our gift shop and the joy of knowing you are helping to save this beautiful garden!

____Individual $25 ____Family $35
____Senior individual $15 ___Senior family $25
____Supporter $100 ___Sponsor $500
____Business Supporter $100

____Please send my "Gazette" by Email!
The E-Gazette includes beautiful color photos of the garden in its seasons.

Name_____

Address_____

_____

Phone_____

Email_____



Connie Hansen Garden is always open from dawn to dusk for the public to visit, walk the pathways, or sit and enjoy.

Editors: Nancy Chase and Connie Peabody