



FRIENDS OF Hendricks Park

NEWS FROM THE

# Park Bench

EUGENE'S FIRST PARK

SPRING 2024

## Rhodies on Show

The Eugene chapter of the Rhododendron Society has an annual flower show that includes a Truss Contest for the various classes of rhododendron. 'Truss' in this context refers to an intact flower cluster. For show purposes, the truss is cut along with the skirt—the circle of leaves immediately below the cluster. The Saturday morning before this year's show, Emily Aune, head gardener of Hendricks Park Rhododendron Garden and a board member of the Eugene chapter, along with a select group of volunteers, collected nearly 30 perfect trusses from among the many species and varieties that were then in bloom around the garden. On Sunday April 28, about 20 of those entries received ribbons, and six received first place in their class, including the winner of the People's Choice Award, named 'Colonel Cohen'.

This is the second time in recent years that Hendricks Park Rhododendron Garden, with help from volunteers, has competed in this event. Historically, the show was held at Hendricks Park, but it was moved to more protected locations to avoid the chance of wind and rain. This year, the show was held downtown, in Gordon Alley.

Roger Gossler, well-known plant expert and owner of Gossler Farms Nursery, visited Hendricks Park Rhododendron Garden this spring and was very impressed. "I have never seen it look so good," he said. He was particularly struck by lead gardener Emily Aune's extensive planting of new rhododendrons. Roger is right — Emily is on a roll. 



## The Story of Hendricks Park

The Story of Hendricks Park is now available. From the Kalapuya to the founding of Friends of Hendricks Park, this book relates the evolution of the park so many know and love.

To order a copy or to read the free on-line version, visit [friendsofhendrickspark.org](http://friendsofhendrickspark.org). You can also find it at J Michaels Books, Tsunami Books, The Natural History Museum and Down To Earth. 



## About Those Gates

In early April, big yellow gates were installed at each end of the Fairmount Boulevard section that runs through Hendricks Park Forest. Friends of Hendricks Park had been advocating for this infrastructure improvement for several years and, in the summer of 2023, City of Eugene Parks and Open Space conducted a survey to gauge support for closing the road permanently or temporarily for specific reasons such as fire risk or illegal camping. Of 300 or so responses, an overwhelming majority supported temporary road closures to manage the park if the risk of wildfire is high.

The gates may be closed when extreme fire conditions are reported or there is a high risk of slope collapse or tree



failure. They would be left open during an evacuation order if that route were considered safe. The gates could also be closed to control illegal overnight camping if that became a problem, though the forested section of the park is

technically already closed at night. Finally, the gates could potentially be closed for special permitted events in the park, such as car-free Sundays on Fairmount for family strolling and biking during spring and summer. 🌿

## Friends of Hendricks Park 2023 Accomplishments

Generous donations and membership dues paid for enhancement, restoration, and education at Hendricks Park in 2023. The impact of these efforts is clear in the beautiful planting beds in the Rhododendron Garden, the diversity of plantings in the Native Plant Garden, and the ivy-cleared areas of the forest. The Friends are grateful for the support of so many volunteers and donors.

### Key accomplishments:

- Half of the Volunteer Coordinator's salary was covered by Friends of Hendricks Park from January to September.
- We hosted 2,281 volunteer hours in the Rhododendron Garden, 808 in the Native Plant Garden and 1,288 in the Forest.
- *The Story of Hendricks Park* was published, partly funded by a \$5,000 Eugene Neighborhood Grant.

- Various events were organized, including a volunteer appreciation party and eight educational tours.
- Seasonal workers were hired for invasive plant removal in the forest and garden areas.
- Efforts were made to engage youth, including securing grants for youth involvement and providing scholarships for children from the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians.
- Partnerships were established with organizations such as the UO Student Center for Sustainability for invasive plant removal in the forest.
- Over \$85,000 was invested in enhancing the Rhododendron Garden, Native Plant Garden, and forest through masonry repair, professional pruning, new plantings, and invasive plant removal, with additional support from grants such as the \$1,500 from the Oregon Community Foundation. ♻️

## Emily Aune Sums up 2023

“2023 was another great year in the Rhododendron Garden, integrating the resources of Friends of Hendricks Park with our own staff wish lists. Having two seasonal staff in the Rhododendron Garden helped us home in on revamping beds and moving along with invasive species removal in the garden.

We expanded the Xeric Meadow, removing old evergreen azaleas and planting skyrocket juniper, lavender and lots of flowering perennials.

Thanks to a special donation, we added over 100 alpine flowering plants to the rock garden. We built a trail to Hannah’s Bench, landscaped with rocks and a sunny mix of perennials, and added boulders to the edge of Skyline lawn. In the beds near the McCready Arbor, staff and volunteers planted more crepe myrtles, and volunteer Jim Northup steadfastly continued removing excess stachys (Lambs Ear). Mulch was blown in on the steep pollinator bed along Parkside.

Last fall’s restoration planting below the office is filling in, with no sign of celandine. This area was previously smothered for 3 years with heavy landscape fabric to kill the celandine. Following removal of the fabric, that area was



reseeded and the fabric was re-used on weedy ground immediately downhill of the treated area.

Among structural Improvements, the City replaced old drinking fountains with standard metal bubblers. We removed one picnic table from the picnic area, shrinking the picnic area footprint to reduce maintenance and dissuade rogue trails. A Log bench was installed near the swing set, and we added three new metal trash cans. The Lamps have been converted from high pressure sodium to more energy-efficient LED. 

## Meanwhile, In the Forest

Our forest seasonal worker, Angela Soto, hit the ground running. She focused on storm cleanup in the first few weeks, before moving on to weed scouting and weed control in the second two weeks. She then moved on to areas of the Forest she hadn’t visited before, and has been heavily engaged in weed removal. Angela also hosted two Forest Keeper work parties. She generally works Wednesday through Friday, plus twice a month on Saturday and will be with us through June. If you see Angela out in the forest, please stop and say hello!

Work on the West Trail Project continues. Debris that fell anew on top of plantings was removed, and colored flagging on newly planted shrubs was replaced with bamboo stakes. Scouting for invasive species found no new shining geranium. Herb Robert was mostly along Fairmount Blvd. and trail edges—areas that were not previously covered in ivy or blackberry. The most prevalent weed was nipplewort, with possibly 5% coverage of the whole West Trail Project area. 





# That Ice Storm? It Could Have Been Worse

Emily Steel reports that the January ice storm brought down several very large Douglas-fir trees in Hendricks Park Forest, with areas along Fairmount and just uphill sustaining some of the worst damage. “The loss of these giants is disappointing,” she said, “but the bright side is that the impacts from this storm appear to have been somewhat localized. Most of the trees withstood the storm and, overall, the forest fared better than it did in the heavy snows of early winter 2019. One silver lining is that the downed trees will now provide the forest floor with large woody debris, an important piece of a healthy forest ecosystem.”

One of the huge Douglas-firs that fell across Fairmount Blvd. severely damaged the lathe house in the maintenance area, where staff propagate and nurture plants destined for planting in the gardens. We are now collecting bids to rebuild or repair this vital facility. Meanwhile, the portion closest to the entrance is still useable and has a water supply.

Damage in the Rhododendron and Native Plant Gardens was relatively minor. 



## Volunteer Spotlight

**L**auren Eichler first visited Hendricks Park while a graduate student at the University of Oregon. After moving back to Eugene 20 years later, she attended a walking tour sponsored by Friends of Hendricks Park. “Volunteering in the park is a way for me to meet new people, get some physical activity, and hone skills I can use in my home garden,” Lauren says. “The Tuesday Regulars are an amazing group — wise, kind, and dedicated to beautifying Hendricks Park. I feel very fortunate to work with them.” 



## Stay Connected with Friends of Hendricks Park

**T**he board of Friends of Hendricks Park is updating our database so we can more easily inform members about upcoming tours and other events in the park.

If we don't have your email address and you are willing to share it, please let us know by emailing [info@friendsofhendrickspark.org](mailto:info@friendsofhendrickspark.org).

If you would prefer to receive our newsletters by email (with color photos!), let us know that too.

Also let us know if you have moved recently, or if there is any other change in your address. We'd like to keep up to date.

Thank you! 

**Our Mission: To provide stewardship for Hendricks Park through education, restoration and community support.**



# New and Renewing Friends of Hendricks Park

*On behalf of the FoHP Board, thank you to the many people who contribute financially to our organization.*

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Donations to Friends of Hendricks Park may be made by Venmo, Paypal or credit card at [www.friendsofhendrickspark.org](http://www.friendsofhendrickspark.org)  
Thank you!



Special Thanks for the Oregon Community Foundation Grant from The Hendricks Park Native Plant Garden Fund (Blakely) and to our Anonymous Donor!

**Yes! I want to become a member of Friends of Hendricks Park**

- ANNUAL MEMBERSHIP DUES**
- Senior/student/limited income \$20
  - Individual \$30
  - Family/household \$50
  - Sponsor/business \$100
  - Sustaining \$250
  - Guarantor \$500
  - Benefactor \$1,000
  - Other amount \$\_\_\_\_\_

- ADDITIONAL CONTRIBUTIONS \$\_\_\_\_\_**
- Forest restoration
  - Native Plant Garden
  - Rhododendron Garden
  - Unrestricted gift
  - Memorial/commemorative gifts

- ENDOWMENT FUND \$\_\_\_\_\_ TOTAL ENCLOSED \$\_\_\_\_\_**  
Make checks payable to Friends of Hendricks Park
- Rhododendron Garden
  - Native Plant Garden
  - Forest Endowment
  - General Endowment
- Yes! I want to volunteer**
- Work parties
  - Education

**PERSONAL INFORMATION**

name \_\_\_\_\_

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## Volunteer Opportunities

**Free the Forest:** Saturday June 8, 9 a.m. – noon. Meet at the F.M. Wilkins Picnic Shelter.

**Rhododendron Work Parties:** Every Tuesday, 9 a.m. – noon. Meet at the kiosk on the top lawn, off Skyline Blvd.

**Native Plant Garden work parties:** Every Thursday, 9:00 a.m. to noon. Meet at the F.M. Wilkins Picnic Shelter.

**Questions? Contact Cait Wisbeski,  
Hendricks Park Volunteer Coordinator  
541-510-4636  
([cwisbeski@eugene-or.gov](mailto:cwisbeski@eugene-or.gov)).**



## Hendricks Park Walking Tours

Meet at the F.M. Wilkins Picnic Shelter 1 p.m. Sunday, June 16, 2024

**Botanically Speaking:** Field botanist Howie Brounstein leads our spring tour in the Native Plant Garden. Learn to identify and use edible and medicinal plants with one of the preeminent herbal educators in the Northwest.

**Check for future walking tours at  
<https://friendsofhendrickspark.org/activities>**

