

Carol Sherman and Terry Hull have been hard at work creating a Garden Rhapsody in their own back yard. They appreciate the lovely views that serve as a backdrop to their hard work and know how lucky they are to live in such a beautiful place. Puget Sound is a constant reminder to garden as naturally as possible and they take the responsibility seriously. The garden begins at the street with closely-spaced plants that don't leave any space for weeds and a small pond that beckons visitors to spend a moment and walk the narrow path to enjoy many points-of-view. The pond flows down and around the house, offering peeks of cool water through the shades of green, all while helping to deal with storm water run off from the road. An open-air tea house invites contemplation while the sound of flowing water creates a calm that belies the hard work that has gone into co-creating the beauty of this garden. Wonderful garden art and secluded places to sit and relax create a space that invites visitors to linger and simply breathe.

What are your watering strategies? Sprinklers take care of most of the watering area. A few areas get hand watered after careful soil measurement. If the soil is dry one inch below the surface, it is time to water that area until that one inch surface area is damp.

How do you control pests? In general, these gardeners are lucky to mostly avoid pest problems. Slugs are an occasional concern, aphids just get the hose, and while moles can be frustrating, they don't do anything to try and eradicate them.

How do you fertilize? This garden does not get fertilized.

What approach do you use for controlling diseases? Carol and Terry avoid diseases by watering in the morning so that leaves can dry out and not retain dampness overnight. The roses get black spot occasionally. Problems are minimized by keeping them well-pruned and cleaning up any leaves on the ground that can spread it.

How do you handle weeds? These gardeners are happy to simply hand pull weeds. The grassy area has been reduced and is mowed regularly so that weeds don't have the chance to go to seed and spread. Carol shared that they work on accepting the weeds so that the beauty of the garden can be appreciated without focusing on the small weedy irritations!

How many hours a week do you spend in the garden? In the spring it can be as much as 25 hours a week, in the summer, it's down to 5 or so.

Do you attract wildlife to your garden? A variety of berry bushes and flowering plants attract birds and beneficial bugs to the garden. In the winter, several large bird feeders on the deck provide hours of entertainment and support several local birds. Hummingbird feeders are scattered throughout the landscape in the summer months to attract their buzzing flutters.

What are your biggest gardening challenges? "Too many plants – too little space!"

What makes gardening fun or satisfying for you? Carol likes the feel of dirt on her hands and sun on her face. Terry enjoys the physical work of construction and supporting his partner's interest. It is an artistic pursuit that the two can share.