

Park Dedicated to Gardening
Mary Rothschild
8-11-2010

Master Gardener Park on Sims Way, in front of The Cup restaurant, was formally dedicated yesterday (8-10-10) to Mary Robson, the garden writer and former King County MG coordinator who now is a Port Townsend resident.

This tribute honors Robson's longtime work as sensible resource and inspiration for thousands of Northwest gardeners, but also highlights the spirit of volunteerism she fosters that is the heart of the MG program.

So Robson naturally praises the years of volunteering Judith Johnson and crew have put in to create Master Gardener Park. If you want ideas for your own yard, stop by and stroll through it. Most of the plants are labeled.

What once was a lovely but limited patch of daffodils and dahlias now has meandering gravel paths, drip irrigation and all-season character. There's a backdrop of forsythia 'Lynwood Gold' and *Cotinus coggygria* (smoke tree). Clematis 'Early Sensation' scrambles over the arbor crafted by Ray Hammar. *Euonymus* 'Kew Gardens' is creeping up the sign posts.

To fashion the beds, flattened cardboard boxes were used to smother dandelions and California poppies, then layered with Jefferson County Public Works/City of Port Townsend yard-waste compost. The first new foliage was planted five years ago in October, so that winter rains could help it get established.

Johnson also maintains a home garden and the Blessing Garden at the Christian Science Church. She likes to experiment. Her pet plant at MG Park may be the brilliant coral *Agastache* 'Acapulco Red,' which she says is so care-free it doesn't even need dead-heading. Look for it at the front as you approach the garden from town.

Johnson also favors ornamental grasses like *Molinia caerulea* (moor grass) a perennial she has found to be "so easy," or *Calamagrostis acutiflora* 'Overdam.' She raves about a low-growing, mounded allium, 'August confection,' which blooms all summer, and likes *Caryopteris clandonensis* 'Dark Knight,' but cautions that it "seeds like crazy."

Robson and Johnson both make themselves available to our community of gardeners. Master Gardener Park is testimony to how we benefit from their expertise.

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