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In Love With A Hillside Garden



Synopsis

It all began when architect Daniel, then a bachelor, built his own house on a wild hillside lot, developing his garden as next-door-neighbor, Ann, was developing a garden around natural springs in her backyard. We married, and together with our growing son, Benjamin, continued these gardens as we also fought through blackberries, horsetails, and morning glories to push intersecting paths through the adjacent two-lot wilderness we later purchased, creating a little park which we planted and nurtured and ultimately gave to the City of Seattle in 1996, with our promise to maintain it through our lifetimes.

from the Introduction

“It all began when architect Daniel, then a bachelor, built his own house on a wild hillside lot, developing his garden as next-door-neighbor, Ann, was developing a garden around natural springs in her backyard. We married, and together with our growing son, Benjamin, continued these gardens as we also fought through blackberries, horsetails, and morning glories to push intersecting paths through the adjacent two-lot wilderness we later purchased, creating a little park which we planted and nurtured and ultimately gave to the City of Seattle in 1996, with our promise to maintain it through our lifetimes.”

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This richly illustrated book offers timely inspiration to gardeners in an increasingly urban world. In an engaging narrative, the Streissguths show the emergence of their gardening partnership during forty years of marriage, and their philosophy that developing a site along a public stairway gave them the opportunity to share their garden with neighbors and passersby. They offer practical insight into concepts of linking inside and outside rooms and of combining private and public spaces, and they describe the process through which they transformed a steep forested hillside in the heart of Seattle into a deciduous woodland garden with banks of perennials, a dell, vistas of the city and lake, and a site for ornamental and food-producing plants. Finally, they consider the future stewardship of the Streissguth Gardens, a park linking the wild and tamed sections of a unique greenbelt garden shared with joggers, strollers, fellow gardeners, schoolchildren, and those who call it “a touch of Eden in a big city.”

Book Information

Paperback: 128 pages

Publisher: University of Washington Press (June 25, 2009)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0295988576

ISBN-13: 978-0295988573

Product Dimensions: 7.1 x 0.5 x 9.9 inches

Shipping Weight: 13.4 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 3.9 out of 5 stars 3 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #795,171 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #38 in [Books > Crafts, Hobbies & Home > Gardening & Landscape Design > By Region > Pacific Northwest](#) #132 in [Books > Crafts, Hobbies & Home > Gardening & Landscape Design > By Technique > Urban](#) #561 in [Books > Arts & Photography > Architecture > Landscape](#)

Customer Reviews

"The Streissguth's labor of love over the years reminds us there are no accidental gardeners. Their admirable story should be better known hereabouts." [City Living](#) "In this richly illustrated book, the couple explain how developing a site along a public stairway gave them the opportunity to share their garden with neighbors and passersby." [Salem Statesman-Review](#) "Filled with color photographs taken over the years and with maps that highlight every aspect of the garden, this little book distills the essence, in miniature, of our garden-happy city." [Seattle Times](#) "[This] book is one of the fruits of the city's greenscape movement. . .and it instructs and delights along the way. The Streissguth's labor of love over the years reminds us that there are no accidental gardeners. [Their] admirable story should be better known hereabouts." [Seattle City Living](#)

Streissguth Gardens, now owned by Seattle Parks and Recreation Department, is located on the northwest slope of Capitol Hill, linked with the St. Mark's Greenbelt and adjacent to the East Blaine Street public stairway. Access to this one-acre woodland site is down the public stairway from 10th Avenue East, a block north of St. Mark's Cathedral, or up the stairway from Broadway Avenue East, a dead end reached by way of East Boston or East Newton Streets. The public part of the garden is south of the stairway, noted by stone markers at the two main garden entrances.

I think his garden is absolutely wonderful. My wife is more qualified to make any critic of Dan's efforts there. Perhaps, when I get the chance to view the garden this summer, I can more adequately judge his writings in relation to the physical site. I do believe, though the photography was adequate, the organization of the photo's and his comments were somewhat confusing in their presentation. I think a "re-read" might be necessary for me to reach a more satisfactory conclusion. I give this book three (3) stars. I might add that I enjoyed having Dan Streissguth as one of our more "favored" CRITS @ The College of Architecture and Urban Planning at The U of W.

This book is so upbeat and fun to read. Sharing one's love of nature with others in such a generous way is something to be very proud of, and makes me want to get into my garden and appreciate every little leaf and bloom. The pictures and explanations of how and why the garden is so beautiful are outstanding. This is a wonderful way for a family to learn to work together in a wholesome way. I would recommend this book to anyone interested in gardening.

A truly remarkable story of urban renewal in the heart of Seattle. The Streissguths took a barren piece of hillside and turned it into an exquisite garden for the entire city of Seattle (and the nation) to enjoy. Written in a cheerful and informative way (lots of garden tips), it is easy to pick up again and again. The reader hopes the Streissguths will follow this up with a large book of photographs of more of the plants and the garden layout.

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