



## The Oregon Garden: From Bad Dream to Dream Garden

*by Jim McCausland*

Created in 1999 to showcase plants produced by Oregon's nursery industry, the Oregon Garden was on the ropes just a few years later. In its younger days the garden was too raw to attract many visitors. But as time passed the landscape flourished, a resort hotel opened on site, and the garden matured into the alluring beauty it was intended to be.

Now, with fruit on the vine and flowers going full bloom, it's the perfect time to visit.

### The Big Picture

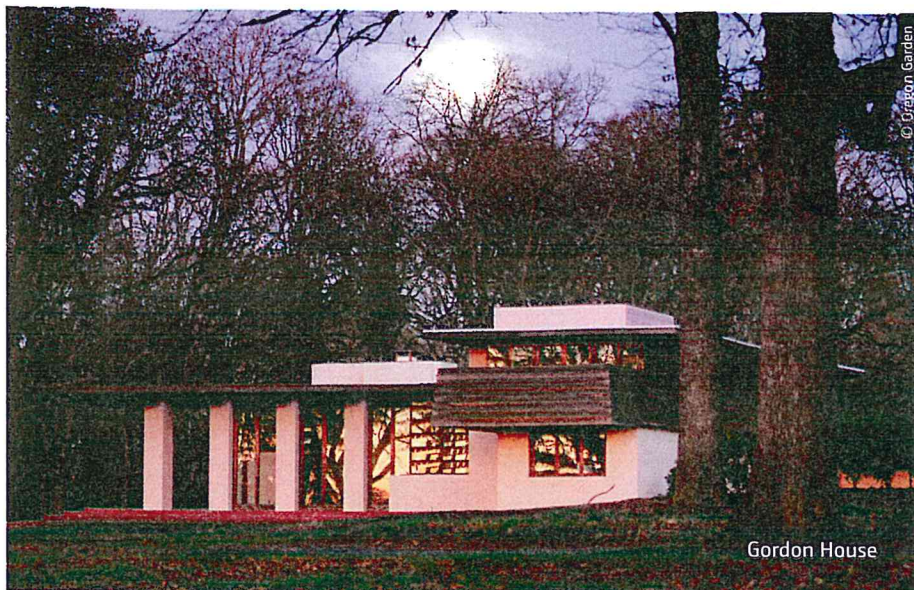
Go early in the day and start with a free 25-minute narrated tram ride through the grounds. It gives you a quick

overview of the two dozen theme gardens within the 80-acre site, and helps you plan your visit.

You'll notice water everywhere on the tour: besides numerous pools and fountains, 16 acres of wetlands attract everything from herons and ducks to the birders who watch them. The wetlands, which predate the gardens, exist to cool treated wastewater before it's returned to Silver Creek. They're also the reason the garden is located here, since both wetlands and gardens share a strong environmental focus. The garden also includes a 25-acre Oregon white oak grove (don't miss the 100-foot-tall, 400-year-old Signature Oak) and a Rediscovery Forest.



# cultivate



Gordon House

## Close-up

Whatever kind of gardening you do, the Oregon Garden can make you better at it.

- >> If you have kids, spend time in the Children's Garden. They'll love the play areas, but it's the hobbit house they'll want to take home.
- >> If you have animals, learn how pets and gardens can coexist in the Pet Friendly Garden. And bring Fido, who's welcome here and at the resort.
- >> If you're an architecture buff, visit the Gordon House, which

is the only public Frank Lloyd Wright house in the Northwest. Its style was a precursor to mid-century ranch houses.

- >> If you're a food gardener, stop at the Silverton Market Garden (its produce shows up on plates at the Oregon Garden Resort's restaurant) and at One Green World's home demonstration garden.

>> For a look into the future, note the promising new vegetables and annual flowers at the All-America Selections trial garden. These are being tested across the United States, and the best will eventually show up at nurseries. You can even vote for your favorites in the related American Garden Award program.

- >> The Conifer Garden is among the best of its kind in the United States. Scout it for plants whose forms, textures and colors can take your garden to the next level.

There are also native plant gardens, a drought-tolerant garden, a sensory garden, and more. Plants are well-labeled, and both master gardeners and staff horticulturists are on site to field your questions.

## Extras

For a more leisurely visit, spend the night at the Oregon Garden Resort, whose guests are free to stroll through the Oregon Garden any time between sunrise and sunset. Go an hour after sunrise or before sunset, when dramatic light, beguiling fragrances and birding are at their best.

Before you head home, stop at the nursery and pick up a few perennials for next season's foliage and flowers.

Also check the gift shop for honey harvested from the Oregon Garden's solar-cooled bee hives (they're in the oak grove).

## Planning your visit

The Oregon Garden is an hour southeast of Portland at 879 W. Main St. in Silverton. Hours are 9–6 daily through September, then 10–4 October through April. Get information at [oregongarden.org](http://oregongarden.org) or 877-674-2733; book resort accommodations at [oregongardenresort.com](http://oregongardenresort.com) or 503-874-2500. ☎



Sensory Garden