

# Manito Park



CITY OF  
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PARKS  
& RECREATION  
*spokaneparks.org*



Top—Duncan Garden  
(courtesy Tia Weyrauch)  
From Left—Rose Hill,  
Japanese Garden Waterfall,  
Flowers at Maito (courtesy  
Tia Weyrauch)

## About Manito

Manito Park was officially established in April 1904 and has evolved from an undeveloped recreational area with a few flower beds, picnic spots and a zoo to one of Spokane's primary showplaces. Comprised of five major garden areas (the Nishinomiya Tsutakawa Japanese Garden, Duncan Garden, Rose Hill, Lilac Garden and Ferris Perennial Garden), Manito Park is nationally recognized for its diverse horticultural displays.

The Parks and Recreation Department maintains Manito Park's 78 acres of native and cultivated landscape and 20 acres of world class botanical gardens. Other Manito Park features include Mirror Pond, a favorite of those who enjoy watching ducks and other water fowl; the Park Bench Café, open in season for light meals; Loop Drive and Bridge, offering majestic views of the Rose Garden; Upper and Lower Playgrounds—a favorite gathering spot of children; and the large basalt rock office building constructed in 1912. Central to the Park is the Gaiser Conservatory, where beautiful flowing displays change seasonally.

The park is open from dawn to dusk every day. Golf is not permitted on the lawns and pets must be on a leash. Please respect the park and refrain from picking flowers, trimming blossoms or plants of any kind. Enjoy the park's serenity and beauty while making your visit one that has no environmental impact on the park. Large grassy areas are great for a game of ultimate frisbee and the many large trees offer ample opportunity to sit and read a book in the filtered sunlight. Reading A Book At Manito Park is a great use of some time off.

## The Friends of Manito

The Friends of Manito (TFM) is a non-profit group that supports Manito Park by providing funds for improvements for the general enhancement of Manito Park. Three major plant sales are given each year with approximately 100 volunteers working months before to prepare the plant material—making the events the premier plant sales for Spokane gardeners. Throughout the year, TFM also offers educational programs to further promote the community's use and enjoyment of Manito Park. Since their beginning, TFM has contributed over \$525,000 to Manito Park.

The Friends of Manito was founded in 1990 by John Dodson—then Horticultural Supervisor of Manito Park—in response to a park showing signs of deterioration. The Parks Department budget was insufficient to maintain an improve the park. Over the years, this nonprofit group has acted as a partner with the Parks Department, contributing substantial funding towards improvements, preservation and park promotion, as well as educational gardening activities and programs (The Olmsted Series). In 1998 TFM received the "Organizational Citation of Merit Award"—an award given annually by the Washington Recreation and Park Association, Inc.—recognizing these contributions.

## Gardens

### Duncan Garden

The most dramatic of the gardens in Manito Park is Duncan Garden, created in a classical European Renaissance style. The garden encompasses three acres and includes manicured turf areas and vast displays of colorful annual bedding plants. It is a favorite location for weddings and offers abundant paths for a marvelous slow-pace walk among the plants.

### Nishinomiya Tsutakawa Japanese Garden

Open daily from 8 am to one half hour before dusk, April 1st–November 1st. The Nishinomiya Tsutakawa Japanese Garden was completed in 1974 and symbolizes the friendship of Spokane for its sister city, Nishinomiya, Japan.

The well-known Japanese landscape architect, Nagao Sakurai, who at one time was in charge of the Imperial Palace grounds, was enlisted to design the garden in 1967.

Construction of the waterfall and pond began in 1970. Late in 1973, after the original architect suffered a stroke, two landscape architects from Kobe, Japan, Shosuke Nagai and Hirohiko Kawai, were contracted to complete the garden, which was dedicated by both cities on May 17, 1974.

Ed Tsutakawa, founder of the Spokane Nishinomiya Sister City relationship and a champion of the Sister City movement in Spokane for 45 years until his death in 2006, was instrumental in the design and development of the Japanese Garden.

To honor Mr. Tsutakawa, the suggestion was made that renaming the Japanese Garden would be an appropriate accolade. That idea was presented to Mr. Tsutakawa's family, and, at the same time to the Mayor of Nishinomiya, who immediately responded saying, "I believe that the re-naming is an excellent way to honor Mr. Tsutakawa and to pass on a record of his great legacy to future generations. The garden is truly a symbol of our friendly relationship." At its December 2007 meeting the Spokane Park Board approved the re-naming of the Japanese Garden to be known henceforth as the Nishinomiya Tsutakawa Japanese Garden. The site was re-dedicated April 20, 2008, with the planting of a flowering cherry tree which was a commemorative gift from the Nishinomyia and Spokane Sister City Societies.

From Top—Duncan Garden (courtesy Tia Weyrauch), Japanese Garden, Japanese Garden tree (courtesy spokaneparks.org), Japanese Garden statue (courtesy manitopark.org), Japanese Garden Koi (courtesy Tia Weyrauch)





## Gaiser Conservatory

The Gaiser Conservatory, located in Manito Park, was named for longtime Park Board member Dr. David Gaiser. The Conservatory is open to the public, free of charge, throughout the year. The greenhouses contain tropical, sub-tropical, and temperature plant specimens from around the world. The displays are changed seasonally. The Gaiser Conservatory hours are as follows

Spring	8am–6pm	First weekend of Daylight Savings Time–May 15
Summer	8am–7pm	May 16–September 15
Fall	8am–5pm	September 16–October 31
Winter	8am–3:30pm	November 1–the Friday before Daylight Savings Time

## Joel E. Ferris Perennial Garden

The perennial garden in Manito Park was named to honor Joel E. Ferris, a long term, devoted Park Board member. The garden provides an excellent example of the tremendous variety of colors, textures and flower types found in perennials.

Joel E. Ferris was a devoted and respected Park Board member for many years before he became ill and resigned in 1960. After he died, his fellow board members chose to name the perennial garden north of the greenhouses in this honor.

The culmination of many years of evolution, this garden contains more than 300 plants species and provides an excellent example of the tremendous variety of colors, textures and flower types that can be found in perennials. Beginning in the early spring with bulbs and primroses, the floral display continues into late autumn with beds of asters.

The perennial bedding space was quadrupled in 1996.

## Lilac Garden

The common purple lilac first arrived in the United States around the middle of the 1700s. The first recording of a lilac bush in Spokane was in 1906. Two lilac bushes were planted by J. J. Browne, one of Spokane's early builders, at West 2226 Second Avenue in Browne's Addition. In 1912, John Duncan obtained 128 named lilac cultivars from Rochester, New York. This marked the beginning of the official Lilac Garden in Manito Park. Today, the Lilac Garden contains well over 100 named cultivars from 23 distinct species, making it one of the most important lilac gardens in the West.

In 2003, the Spokane Lilac Society made a contribution to Manito Park for an extension of the garden that is now home to Syringa Spokane, the lovely double pink lilac. The idea to promote Spokane as "The Lilac City" came in the early 1930s when the local garden club was encouraged by community leaders to plant lilac bushes throughout the City. By 1938, there were 144 in Manito Park. The annual Spokane Lilac Festival has been a spring tradition since 1938.

## Syringa Spokane

Syringa Spokane had been chosen in July 1999 by members of the Spokane Lilac Society for introduction as a city namesake to represent Spokane, The Lilac City. The original plant, the ortet (#3–203), originated from the controlled cross *S. vulgaris* 'Tita' x *S. x hyacinthiflora* 'Mary Short.' Syringa Spokane was registered December 31, 2003. For the next five years, members of the Spokane Lilac Society carefully tended the first small starts in their home gardens. By Spring of 2008, some of the lilacs had grown and developed enough to be transplanted to city parks.

Information from the Spokane Lilac Society describes the Syringa Spokane variety as having "large trusses of very fragrant double-magenta-colored blooms that turn a lighter pink-silver-white when fully opened. The shrub itself has dark green foliage tipped with burgundy bronze when new. Eventually, gardeners can expect a double-pink estate-type lilac that grows up to 12 feet in height." Syringa Spokane typically blooms in the third year after propagation. The plants are described as being hardy in USDA Zones 5 to 8.

## Rose Hill

Manito Park's Rose Hill is located just west of the Joel E. Ferris Perennial Garden and continues to be one of Spokane's favorite locations for weddings, picnics and photography.

Each year All-American Rose Selections chooses one of its 125 gardens as the Outstanding Display Garden, and in 2007 Manito Park's own Rose Hill was named number one in the nation. In addition, Rose Hill has received an Outstanding Maintenance Award for the past 20 years from AARS, a non-profit association of rose growers and introducers dedicated to the introduction and promotion of exceptional roses.

Since 1938 the AARS seal of approval has continued to grace outstanding new rose varieties that have withstood the test of time—and Mother Nature. Rose Hill now is home to over 150 varieties of hybrid tea, frandiflora, floribunda and miniature roses, along with a collection of old-fashioned roses.

From Top—Gaiser Conservatory (courtesy spokaneparks.org), Manito Iris (courtesy Tia Weyrauch), Perennial Garden, Syringa Spokane Lilac (courtesy spokaneparks.org), Rose Hill, Manito Roses (courtesy Tia Weyrauch)



## Other Manito Attractions

### Picnic Shelter and Playground

In 1961 the Spokane Rotary Clubs donated a large picnic shelter near the 18th and Grand entrance. It contained fire pits, charcoal grills and picnic tables. In the early 1900s, a channel of water from the present pond extended through this area to Grand. At that time, there were entrances to the park from Grand at 19th and 20th, and a baseball field north of 19th. The popular sledding hill is east of the shelter, adjacent to Grand. In 1998 an attractive and functional playground designed by Debbie Clem-Olsen, landscape architect for the parks, was constructed west of the shelter.

### Duck/Mirror Pond

The pond in Manito Park, originally a natural lake called Mirror Lake, would dry up during summer months. To prevent that a concrete base was eventually installed and, as the pond then stayed full year round, canoes could be rented on site. From 1905–1907 a dance hall was opened on one side of the pond and open air movies were shown nearby.

A basalt rock fireplace, built near the west end of the pond in 1955, is a memorial to Lt. Lawrence Rist, an Air Force officer killed in action during the Korean War.

### Park Bench Café

Built in 1923, the “peanut shack” sold snacks for park visitors and peanuts for the monkeys. It is located at the intersections of Manito Place, Tekoa and Loop Drive, once the site of a natural pond. A private vendor sells refreshments during summer months.

### Loop Drive and Bridge

A scenic route through Manito Park is open during the summer months. The arched stone bridge, built in the 1930s, reflects the architectural design of the early park buildings.

### Upper Manito Playground

Grading for the playground and softball field at the south end of the park in 1912 was in response to the 1907 Olmsted report’s observation that the park did not have an adequate play field. Tennis courts and a bowling green were also built in the area. A wading pool was added in 1920. Charles Balzer, the first park superintendent, built the first playground equipment in two different locations at Manito. After the park board was formed, playground development became a priority.

### Greenhouse and Staff facilities

Built in 1912, the basalt rock building directly north of the greenhouses serves as offices for the park horticultural staff and The Friends of Manito.

## Random Facts

- ☼ In 2009, Manito Park was identified as “Best of Attractions—Spokane, Washington” by UpTake.com. UpTake.com awards are based on a careful analysis of customer reviews and expert ratings from across the web, collected from over 5,000 different websites and millions of customer opinions.
- ☼ Manito Park was originally named, “Montrose Park” and to this day the primary garden showplace in Spokane.
- ☼ Montrose Park was changed to Manito Park in 1903 and originally played host to a zoo among other family friendly activities. Manito means, “spirit of nature”.
- ☼ There are 90 acres worth of immaculate flower beds, greenhouse overflows, perfumes of roses and lilacs, living creatures such as swans, geese and ducks and so much more.
- ☼ The 90 acres worth of manicured lawns, flowers, topiary shrubs, greenhouse conservatory and playgrounds all overflow the perfumes of roses and lilacs in Spring.
- ☼ You can also see a variety of ducks, geese and other fowl at the Manito Park Duck Pond; also known as the Mirror Lake.
- ☼ Manito Park is located in the Spokane South Hill neighborhood and its five gardens, conservatory and duck pond are toured by over 150,000 visitors each year.
- ☼ Manito Park also has a picturesque stone bridge, the Park Bench Café located near Manito Place historic drive and an upper and lower playground.
- ☼ In 2007, Rose Hill was named number one in the nation by All-America Rose Selections (AARS), a nonprofit association dedicated to the introduction and promotion of exceptional roses.



From Top—Turtle in Duck Pond, flowers at Manito, Manito Lilies, (courtesy Tia Weyrauch), Mirror/Duck Pond (courtesy spokaneparks.org), flowers at Manito (courtesy Tia Weyrauch), Loop Drive Bridge (courtesy manitopark.org), flower at Manito (courtesy Tia Weyrauch)



# Park Map

