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Coast Guard

PROTECTING THE NATURE
OF OUR COASTLINES

Also THE VERSATILE AGAVE • NATIVE GRASSES • GREEN ROOFS

inBLOOM

NATIVE PLANTS IN YOUR WORLD



The owner of a West Linn, Oregon, native plant nursery, Bosky Dell Natives, Lory Duralia, practices what she preaches in its gardens that are on view to public visitors. Natives like this meadow foam (*Limnanthes douglasii*), penstemon (*Penstemon rupicola*) and great camas (*Camassia leichlinii*) are planted in a swale along the year-round, spring-fed Fields Creek.

Bosky Dell Natives Owner Lory Duralia printed plant tags that read: "I'm an Oregon native rescued from forests destined to be developed or logged."

Oregon Transplants

Home is an award-winning nursery PHOTOGRAPHY BY DON JACOBSON

In Oregon, where a mild climate allows plants from all over the globe to thrive in showy, colorful gardens and issues like drought tolerance are not yet a universal concern, native plants can be a hard sell. So, how can Oregon's elusive trillium compete with an eye-catching bed of tulips? To one intrepid gardener, the answer is obvious. Lory Duralia recalls childhood memories of camping, fishing and rock-collecting with her father; it was during these adventures that the state's indigenous plants took seed in her soul.

Years later, Duralia was a single parent, struggling to raise two children in a crime-ridden north Portland neighborhood. She supported her family by running an in-home daycare, but she dreamed of finding a safer, more peaceful place to live. "One day as I

was driving around West Linn [a suburb south of Portland], I saw a little 'For Sale' sign tacked to a tree," Duralia says. "There was no phone number, so I left a note on the door of the old farmhouse there. About a month later, I got a call asking me if I'd like to come look at the property."

The property owners, well-known naturalists Stanley and Doris Jewett, operated a small home-based nursery on a hill above the house Duralia desperately wanted to buy. She recalls, "I was \$200 short, but I got a loan, continued my daycare business and worked one night a week as a bartender. With every extra \$50 I made, I began buying native plant seeds, pots and soil. I've always loved growing things."

Once settled in her new home, Duralia's plant education was enriched by the Jewetts'

scientific background. Jewett was a fisheries biologist and amateur entomologist, and both he and his father, an ornithologist, wrote numerous books on Oregon birds and insects. After Jewett died, his wife asked Duralia to help run the nursery. As she took over sales, the shop flourished alongside her steadfast commitment to native plants. Duralia eventually obtained a permit to dig plants out of a coastal logging zone, and she printed plant tags that read: "I'm an Oregon native rescued from forests destined to be developed or logged."

Just as retail nurseries became interested, Duralia's children were starting school. She now had six hours per weekday to develop the nursery and her dreams. The results are evident in her restored Victorian house that overlooks the tidy plots and greenhouses of Bosky Dell Natives, a three-acre nursery. Today, Bosky Dell Natives propagates and sells more than 300 native species.

Duralia's charming front porch is the focal point of the nursery, and she often invites customers to enjoy her all-native garden. Directly behind the house sits a private deck and modest pond filled with native water plants. More intimate spaces are scattered about, including a new alpine forest and a rain garden replete with bog plants. All are made livelier with whimsical works of art. Duralia applied stucco and paint to the exterior of an old pump house to depict Mount Hood. Stones represent the mountain's foothills, and the plantings suggest a hiking trail. Behind a former garage – now a classroom – is a terrace that overlooks Fields Creek on the property's south side.

Fields Creek originates from a hillside behind the nursery and meanders 1.6 miles through a tranquil neighborhood before flowing into the Tualatin River. For the past 12 years, Duralia – with the help of volunteers and a small grant from the Oregon Watershed Enhancement Board – has worked to restore plants along most of the creek. The group replaced vast thickets of invasive plants with thousands of natives, and Water Environment Services now

deems it one of the lower Tualatin River basin's healthiest tributaries. "When I first reported catching a 9-inch cutthroat trout, they thought I was telling a fish story," says Duralia, "but the creek has become an essential habitat not only for native trout but also for red-legged frogs [an endangered species], salamanders, golden-mantled ground squirrels, Douglas squirrels, deer and a wide variety of wildlife."

Since 1998, an impressively large group has gathered annually for a Fields Creek maintenance workday. As the workday became a full-blown event, Duralia's dedication garnered media attention. The coverage provided a welcome opportunity to expand native plant education with numerous feature articles touting the benefits of natives. "Duralia has been a true leader in using native plants for landscape restoration in Oregon," says Steve Kennett, program coordinator of SOLV, a well-respected Oregon non-profit that coordinates volunteer efforts toward stewardship of the land. "She was advocating habitat restoration long before it was in vogue."

On her own property, Duralia nurtured a few existing non-native shrubs – including a 50-year-old camellia that she could not bear to remove – she inherited with the home purchase but has since planted only natives. She notes that the now-mature surrounding landscape "helps people envision what a little tree in a pot will look like in 20 years." This vision, along with her patient manner and educational approach, helped her build a large and loyal customer base – so much so that advertising has never been necessary.

The lush natives throughout the property invoke memories of a childhood spent in nature and remind Duralia of all she still wants to accomplish. Disease resistance, drought tolerance and maintenance ease are important reasons to go native, but protecting the area's wildlife remains her passion. "When we build our homes, we remove theirs," she gently reminds us all. 🌱

— NAN BOOTH SIMPSON

FROM TOP RIGHT Entry to Fields Creek – where restoration included replacing invasive species. Plants for sale in the courtyard. White-flowered cultivar of *Ribes sanguineum*. Duralia sells the slow-to-propagate *Trillium kurabayashii* and cautions customers not to remove them from the wild.

