RAMBLE ON
Meandering paths of wood chips recycled from tree trimmings are designed to blend in among the naturalistic plantings.

Ernie and Marietta O’Byrne transformed a site with poor soil in Eugene, Oregon, into a floral tapestry that includes allium, Japanese primrose, Siberian iris, and viburnum.
GARDENS THAT INSPIRE

WINTER IS DREAM TIME FOR GARDENERS. COME ALONG WITH US ON A VIRTUAL TOUR TO JUMP-START YOUR SPRING PLANNING.
ON A SUNNY MORNING IN EUGENE, OREGON, A GROUP OF GARDENERS ARMED WITH PENS AND NOTEPADS IS JOTTING DOWN specific plants that are thriving in the dry, challenging soil. A few are crouched low to get closer to the tiny alpines that grow in the rock garden. They’re taking advantage of The Garden Conservancy’s Open Days, a national program of private garden tours, visiting Marietta and Ernie O’Byrne’s lush property and adjoining Northwest Garden Nursery. “Tours open a dialogue,” Marietta says. “They’re an opportunity to learn from each other and gather ideas.” This seasoned pair share their knowledge and successes, a particularly valuable resource for local gardeners looking for plants and practices that work in their region. Visitors also have the opportunity to purchase rare Winter Jewels hellebore hybrids, bred on site by the O’Byrnes. Many leave as friends, galvanized by a fresh infusion of ideas to energize their own gardens. Marietta’s parting advice: “Edit! Gardens change—go with it.”

VIRTUAL TOUR
Find your garden aspirations in Outstanding American Gardens, a peek into 50 gardens of the sort Frank Cabot hoped to preserve when he founded The Garden Conservancy 25 years ago. Edited by Page Dickey, cofounder (with Penelope “Pepe” Maynard) of the Open Days Program; photographs by Marion Brenner. $33.46; Amazon.com

To create a water feature in a dry setting, the O’Byrnes dug a pond and softened the edges with rounded stones and moisture-loving plants such as marsh marigold, iris, and primrose.
The O'Byrnes brought in local volcanic basalt to create a rock garden with Rhodohypoxis, skullcaps, dianthus, and other alpines that thrive in dry, craggy terrain. Moss tuffets echo the shapes of boulders and plants.

PUNCTUATION MARKS

A trio of linear Graham Blandy boxwood and a false cypress topiary draw the eye up from ground-hugging alpine plants, inspiring curiosity for what lies farther along the path.
POINT OF CONTRAST

Accents of clipped shrubs such as this conical boxwood make even the most loosely planted flowerbed appear much tidier.
BEHIND THE GATE

EACH YEAR, THE OPEN DAYS PROGRAM PROVIDES A PEEK AT WHAT’S GOING ON IN AMERICA’S FINEST PRIVATE GARDENS.

When the Garden Conservancy sent out a call for great landscapes in 1995, 110 homes in Connecticut and New York opened their gardens for a day. The Open Days Program has been growing steadily ever since. This year, nearly 400 properties across the country will host tours. Go to gardenconservancy.org/open-days for a calendar of the 2016 sites.

Download a free pass: BHG.com/FreeTix

NEW ENGLAND
Every plant in Susan Burke’s Nantucket garden is chosen to thrive near the sea.

MIDWEST
John and Neville Bryan’s Illinois vegetable garden is as ornamental as it is useful.

SOUTHEAST
Pearl Fryar’s 3 acres in South Carolina are home to 500 topiary masterpieces.

SOUTHWEST
Colorful walls form a vivid backdrop in John and Ellen Giddins Stiteler’s Arizona garden.

WEST COAST
Joseph Marek and John Bernatz turned their Los Angeles yard into a tropical retreat.

NORTHEAST
Clipped hedges define spaces in Page Dickey and Bosco Schell’s New York garden.

A woodland ramble combines soothing green textures of ferns and Japanese forest grass, orbs of flowering alliums, and accents of fiery Sunjoy Tanglee barberry and Helmond Pillar barberry.