

RAMBLE ON

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

BY TOVAH MARTIN
PHOTOS MARION BRENNER
ILLUSTRATIONS
BRIANA WENGERT

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.



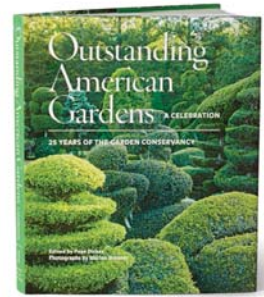
GARDENS THAT INSPIRE

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 alpine plants 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.



18 PLANTS FOR ROCK GARDENS

Turn a gravelly site
into a colorful
rock garden with
these picks.

[BHG.com/
RockPlants](https://www.bhg.com/rockplants)

↑ 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.

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.



↑
**POINT OF
CONTRAST**

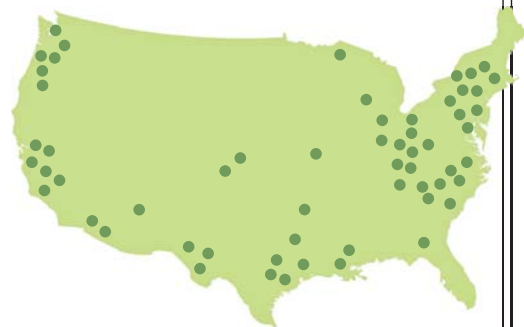
Accents of clipped shrubs
such as this conical boxwood
make even the most
loosely planted flowerbed
appear much tidier.

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

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.



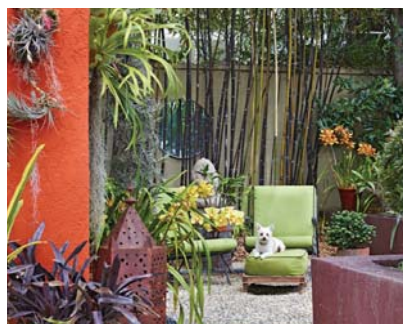
SOUTHEAST

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. ■