

The background of the cover is a photograph of a lush garden. A light-colored gravel path winds through the center of the garden. On the left, there are large, dense shrubs with bright pink flowers. In the foreground, there are tall, golden-brown grasses. The background is filled with various green plants and trees, creating a dense and colorful scene.

WALKING WASHINGTON'S GARDENS

*A guide to 30 of the best
gardens in Washington State that are
open to the public*

ANGIE NARUS



Benches along the paths at Albers Vista Gardens offer resting places with views of the Port Washington Narrows

2 Albers Vista Gardens

"An oasis in the city"

Located in a residential neighborhood in East Bremerton, West Puget Sound

124 NE 31st St.
Bremerton, WA 98310
www.albersvistagardens.org

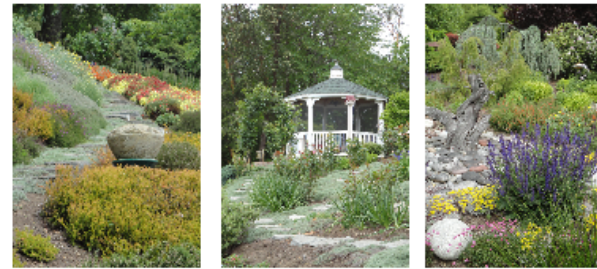
Albers Vista Gardens is a botanic tapestry of 4.2 acres in Kitsap County. The garden was created by John Albers and Santica Marcovina, research professors of medicine at the University of Washington. Professors Albers and Marcovina purchased the property in 1998 after they saw it while touring the Olympic Peninsula. At that time, it was a mere acre of grass and fruit trees with a maple and madrona woodland overlooking the Port Washington Narrows. Professors Albers and

Marcovina later purchased adjacent land that was overgrown with blackberry vines and scotch broom. Guided by the knowledge Professor Albers gained from horticulture classes, hands-on experience from gardening on properties he previously owned, and observing landscapes, the couple transformed the hillside. Their hard work, along with Professor Marcovina's sense of color and design, resulted in a beautiful, sustainable garden that combines native and non-native plants and trees.

Professor Albers started by laying a path of granite stepping stones to create distinct garden areas. He planted conifers in key locations to give the garden structure, then gradually integrated other plants by their characteristics and suitability for each area. More than 1,200 native species and cultivars now fill the garden, including a collection of 350 conifer cultivars such as Japanese cedars, dwarf conifers, and the rare *Abies nebrodensis* 'Sicilian Gold' (Sicilian fir).



A view from the path, looking down onto the Three Islands and Lentz Garden, in Albers Vista Gardens



Left to right: The Biofiltration Garden, the gazebo in Santica's Perfect Solitude, and plantings along the Pollination Pathway

The 14 garden rooms in this hillside oasis are as diverse as the plants they display. The planted areas are adorned with sculptures, ceramic pots, benches, bird-baths, and whimsical features. Some of the old fruit trees still remain in the garden and continue to bear fruit. A mat of Woolly Thyme and other ground covers soften the stepping-stone path as it weaves its way through rhododendrons and Japanese maples, and under a canopy of dawn redwoods and other evergreens in the lower *Lentz Garden*.

The path continues up the hillside through a series of other areas including memorial gardens, the Asian-inspired *Three Islands*, the *Biofiltration Garden* featuring sunroses and other drought-tolerant plants, the *Stroll Gallery* of unique trees and shrubs, a *Shade Garden* designed by Professor Marcovina, *Sam's Conifer Reserve* of dwarf conifers, *Santica's Perfect Solitude*, a restoration area, and the bordering woodland. The garden room named Santica's Perfect Solitude showcases climbing, English, floribunda, hybrid, tea, and shrub roses, surrounding an elegant gazebo with a panoramic view of Mt. Rainier and the Port Washington Narrows. Professor Albers' book, *Gardening for Sustainability: Albers Vista Gardens of Kitsap*, gives a detailed look

into the garden and its development. The book is available on the Albers Vista Gardens website.

In 2007, the Albers Vista Garden Foundation of Kitsap was formed to preserve, enhance, and display in perpetuity a collection of unique and botanically diverse plants in the garden, using sustainable, pesticide-free gardening practices. The foundation schedules tours and offers opportunities for horticultural research and education at the garden. The foundation's policies are governed by a Board of Directors made up of professionals in horticulture, landscape design, and land management.

Albers Vista Gardens can be visited through the garden's scheduled tours offered April through October, and by appointment. Requests for private group tours can be made at info@albersvistagardens.org. Scheduled tours for the season are listed on the garden's website. Visit www.albersvistagardens.org for more information and to register for tours and special events.

DIRECTIONS FROM SR 3 (SR 16 becomes SR 3 just west of Port Orchard): Take Kitsap Way/SR 310 Exit. Go east on through Bremerton. Bear left onto 11th St., then turn left onto Warren Ave./SR 303. * Cross the Warren Ave. Bridge. Turn left onto Sheridan Rd. after crossing the bridge. At the bottom of the hill (at the T), turn right onto Tracyton Beach Rd., then turn right onto NE 31st St. Look for the black iron gate and the sign for Albers Vista Gardens about halfway up 31st St., on the left.

FROM BELFAIR OR PORT ORCHARD (Northbound on SR 3): Take SR 304 off SR 3. Go past the shipyard, bear right (stay on 304), then turn left onto SR 303/Warren Ave. From there, follow the directions from * above.

FROM SILVERDALE: Take the SR 303/NE Waaga Way Exit for several miles. Just before the Warren Ave. Bridge, turn right onto Sheridan Rd. At the bottom of the hill (at the T), turn right onto Tracyton Beach Rd. In about yards, turn right on NE 31st St. Look for the black iron gate and the sign for Albers Vista Gardens about halfway up 31st St., on the left.

ALBERS VISTA GARDENS

www.albersvistagardens.org

Can be visited through scheduled tours, events,
and by appointment. Tours are offered April through October.
Reservations are required for all visits

- 4.2 acres
- Suggested donation for admission
- Reservations required for all visits
- Restrooms available
- STRUCTURES/FEATURES: Private residence, sculptures, whimsical art, pottery, Woolly Thyme growing between granite stepping stones, birdbaths, gazebo, stone lantern, benches
- FEATURED PLANTS/COLLECTIONS: Hundreds of different conifers (including dwarf conifers and weeping evergreens), maples, dawn redwoods, trees from around the world, viburnums, rhododendrons, roses, sunroses, lavender, ornamental grasses, heaths and heathers, native plants
- ACTIVITIES: Educational events during summer months (usually May through September), volunteer opportunities
- TOURS: Guided tours only. Tours are offered monthly April through October on scheduled dates. Private group tours can be arranged by contacting info@albersvistagardens.org.
- NEARBY ATTRACTIONS: Bremerton - Lions Park (left on Tracyton Beach Rd. as you leave Albers Vista Gardens), Illahee State Park (trails, beach, camping); Bremerton marina (boardwalk, restaurants, ferry terminal, Navy Museum, USS Turner Joy museum); Silverdale - (north of Bremerton on SR 3. Mall, waterfront park and public marina (playground, restrooms, small beach, pier, kayak/paddleboard rentals); Port Orchard - (waterfront park and boardwalk, private marina, shops along Beach Drive, Sidney Gallery, Saturday Farmers' Market, foot ferry between Bremerton and Port Orchard)
- NEARBY GARDENS: Bloedel Reserve, Anna Smith Park and Children's Garden (north of Albers Vista Gardens on Tracyton Beach Rd.); Elandan Gardens (an outdoor bonsai display garden and specialty store on SR 16 between Bremerton and Port Orchard)

*There is a toll in the southbound lanes of the Tacoma Narrows Bridge, SR 16