

## September 2013 Lorene Edwards Forkner: Handmade garden projects

Our speaker for the evening was Lorene Edwards Forkner, author of *Handmade Garden Projects*, published in 2011, sharing some of her ideas. Her major point is that a garden is more than just a collection of plants, but also expresses the personal touch of the gardener through use of garden accessories which can be created by the gardener. Lorene lives in the West Seattle area and has appeared in national and regional publications as well as publishing several gardening books. Her experience in owning and operating Fremont Gardens, a small specialty retail nursery in Seattle, has led her to create and write about personalizing gardens no matter what their size. You can follow her at her website: [PlantedAtHome.com](http://PlantedAtHome.com). During the slide presentation, Lorene talked about and showed various designers (below) and their specialties which were personable and whimsical.

Kate Farley: She uses strong colors with an old-fashioned palette evoking romance and nostalgia. She also reinvents objects to fit into a garden; for example, an old wheelbarrow. Paul Cowley: He uses nature friendly water features which try to invoke as many of the senses as possible. Virginia Hand: She is a graphic designer, as well as a landscape designer using unusual materials in a modern way. She suggests gravel pathways with accessories of color and texture such as tiles, mosaics, and even making individual pavers. Keeyla Meadows: Keeyla uses fearless color in her gardens. She is an artist in Berkeley using mosaics and is also a sculptor. Marcia Donahue: She is also an artist/sculptor from Berkeley whose medium is stone. She created a garden for art, but art became the garden.

Lorene suggests that you give the eye more to look at than just at eye level--try high and low sights. Gilroy Gardens: Specialized garden containing "circus trees"--strangely grafted trees which are whimsical and amazing. Reflector House: Dick and Jane's art site and home in Ellensburg is an eclectic collection of over 10,000 bottle caps and thousands of reflectors, and various other collections. It has a garden, but it is not about plants. Common items such as colored bottles and hubcaps create their own "garden". Bob and Betty Hawkins: Their Vashon Island garden specializes in labyrinths. They also have "turf tattoos" which are designs in the lawn itself. Sylvia Matlock and Ross Johnson: Operate DIG Nursery (a past Vashon Island field trip) and Lorene featured their artsy rooster-topped gabion pillar (cool rock and wire constructions) at the entrance. Their nursery is known for its seasonal, drought-tolerant plantings, art, and reclaimed materials. Johanna and Richard Marquis: Their garden contains such things as a pyramid of bowling balls and metal roadside signs. They are both artists with one specializing in multi-media projects and the other in glass. Kathy and Ed Fries: The Fries's garden which has been featured in *Pacific Magazine* uses whimsical wirework and turning things upside down for a new perspective.

After the slide show, Lorene demonstrated how to use some common materials and turn them into lanterns and “fireflies”. She also showed us how to “age” copper sheeting to get a patina. Mix vinegar and salt and apply; wait a while to see the changes. Or make an ammonia tent by draping a towel or some fabric to create a tent. Place the copper under it; then pour ammonia into a safe container and wait two hours. Same effect.

**Making Luminaries:** You need a Mason jar with complete lid, spray can of frost paint, and a round, small LED attachable closet light. Spray the inside of the jar. Attach the light to the inside of the lid; turn on, screw on the top and you’re done. They last a long time.

**Making “Fireflies”:** These are actually small LED lights with a watch battery. Put one wire on each side of the battery and attach a small magnet. Attach to wires and hang in garden haphazardly. The LED lasts longer than the watch battery but the effect is lovely. Lorene’s book, “Handmade Garden Projects” was available for a book signing/purchase after her presentation.