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**PRESS RELEASE**

**DATE:** May 27, 2026

**TOPIC:** The Dalles Beautification & Tree Committee Announces May 2026 Beautification Award Winner.

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**FOR RELEASE:** IMMEDIATELY

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The Dalles, Oregon – The Beautification & Tree Committee proudly honors Cindy and Steve Russell with the May Beautification Award for their outstanding garden at 300 W 6<sup>th</sup> Street.

After more than 40 years in their home, the couple’s yard has transformed into a colorful and carefully cultivated landscape shaped by patience, experimentation, and a deep appreciation for nature. What began as an ongoing project has become, in their words, “a long-running conversation — with nature always getting the final word.”

Designed with a focus on color, interest, waterwise practices, and low-maintenance landscaping, the garden continues to evolve year after year. A colorful concrete retaining wall now frames the space, providing structure while creating opportunities to experiment with a wide variety of plants and garden designs.

Throughout the years, the homeowners have created “test areas” within the yard, learning through experience which plants thrive in full sun, which prefer shade, and which simply refuse to cooperate. Cynthia’s experience as a master gardener, along with guidance and wisdom shared by fellow gardeners, has played an important role in shaping the landscape.

When asked to describe their garden, Cynthia shared:  
“Gardening keeps us humble. Plants still surprise us, weather keeps us guessing, and there is always something new to learn.”

The couple noted that recent additions to the garden brought some uncertainty heading into winter, particularly for first-year plantings. However, the mild season allowed many of the new plants to establish themselves more successfully than expected.

One of the garden’s more unique features includes a collection of cactus plants that require special care during the colder months. To protect the investment, the homeowners constructed a rolling winter house for the cactus collection — a creative solution that occupies much of the yard during the winter season. Their efforts proved successful, as the cactus not only survived but thrived, producing an abundance of new growth this spring.

The garden remains a work in progress, continuing to evolve with each season and each new planting. Decades of dedication, curiosity, and creativity are reflected throughout the landscape, making it a meaningful contribution to the beauty and character of the community.

Photos can be found on the City Hall Facebook page: <https://www.facebook.com/share/p/1U2PmvYZ8p/>

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