



CITY OF THE DALLES

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PRESS RELEASE

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TOPIC: The Dalles Beautification & Tree Committee Announces
August 2026 Beautification Award Winner

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FOR RELEASE: IMMEDIATELY

The Dalles, Oregon – The Beautification & Tree Committee is pleased to recognize Marie Connell and Billy O’Keefe with the August Beautification Award for their garden at 223 W. 9th Street.

After spending 25 years in the high desert of northwest New Mexico, Marie and her husband, Billy, relocated to The Dalles in 2018. The change in climate opened new possibilities for gardening, and Marie began restoring and building upon the gardens established by previous homeowners.

Today, the garden features a variety of flowering plants, raised vegetable beds, and water-wise landscaping. One distinctive area features a basalt outcropping transformed with sedums and other drought-tolerant plants, inspired by the water-seep canyon oases Marie remembers from the Southwest. Timed spray and drip irrigation systems help efficiently water the landscape during the summer months.

The garden has also offered a few surprises, including the discovery of an unusual Voodoo Lily during Marie and Billy's first spring in The Dalles. For Marie, the garden has become more than a landscape. During the COVID-19 pandemic, she said it provided “refuge, exercise and a positive focus.”

The Beautification Award recognizes community members that contribute to the appearance and livability of The Dalles through exceptional landscaping, property maintenance, and community pride.

The Beautification & Tree Committee congratulates Marie Connell Connell and Billy O’Keefe on this well-deserved recognition and thanking them for making The Dalles a more beautiful place to live.

Photos can be found on the City Hall Facebook page:

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