

AHS NEWS SPECIAL: AHS INTRODUCES NEW DOMESTIC TRAVEL PROGRAM

The Gardens of Portland and the Farm-to-Table Bounty of the Willamette Valley

by Mercedes Bryant



Above: Vineyard in the Willamette Valley.
Left: Water Garden at the Oregon Garden.

Education meets exploration in the American Horticultural Society's Travel Study program, which offers a gateway to discover the world's most fascinating gardens and horticultural wonders. In a new initiative to provide opportunities to explore closer to home, the AHS is developing enriching domestic travel experiences beginning with a program in Portland, Oregon, and the Willamette Valley from **August 19–23, 2024**. Beyond its breathtaking beauty, the region stands as a beacon of best practices in sustainable horticulture and community-led farm-to-table living.

"We are delighted to offer our new Portland and Willamette Valley program, which brings to life the AHS's guiding pillars: health, beauty, community, and environmental stewardship," says AHS President and CEO Suzanne Laporte. "This unique program demonstrates firsthand how interconnected these pillars are."

AHS travelers will explore the region's magnificent gardens, including the **Port-**

land Japanese Garden, perched in the hills of the city's vibrant Washington Park, and the **Lan Su Chinese Garden** in the heart of the city, reflecting the beauty that horticulture can bring to urban spaces. In the captivating Willamette Valley, the **Oregon Garden** showcases the remarkable plants of the Pacific Northwest and beyond, including a Children's Garden, Water Garden, and Conifer Garden. In addition, the program is timed to coincide with the spectacular **Swan Island Dahlia Festival**, when more than 370 dahlia varieties burst into full bloom over nearly 40 acres.



Swan Island Dahlia Festival

Throughout the journey, travelers will learn firsthand how farmers, vintners, and gardeners are leading the way in embracing regenerative horticultural practices. They will enjoy locally sourced and seasonal meals at hand-picked restaurants dedicated to sustainability.

This program will be hosted by Holly and Osamu Shimizu, a renowned horticultural couple whose shared passion for gardening has inspired and beautified landscapes worldwide. "Although the farm-to-table movement is not new, it is highly developed in many parts of Oregon," says Holly, a member of the AHS Board of Directors and former executive director of the United States Botanic Garden. "Serving fresh food directly from the farmer to consumers results in eating a diet that follows the seasons, is more diverse, and often organically grown."

Beginning with this groundbreaking program, the AHS looks forward to offering travel program participants new perspectives on America's diverse landscapes and horticultural traditions.

To learn more about this and other AHS travel programs, visit www.ahsgardening.org/travel.

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