

## **History of the Gerdemann Botanical Garden**

In 1981, Jim and Janice Gerdemann purchased an acre of property on the edge of the Siuslaw National Forest in Yachats. Thickly forested with spruce and hemlock, but on a sloped site adjacent to the ocean, it was the perfect place to test the hardiness of rare and unusual plants from all over the world.

For almost thirty years, Jim (a retired University of Illinois plant pathology professor) and Janice (a retired teacher) collected and planted unusual specimens — most of which they grew from seed -- on the wooded hillside with its myriad microclimates.

Over the years, the site grew into a unique, 3.5-acre, richly-planted botanical preserve. The Gerdemann's world travels, as well as Jim's research into mycorrhizal fungi, informed their intense interest in growing seemingly challenging plants and helped them succeed with plants often deemed tender.

Today, the Preserve contains many unusual plants, from southern hemisphere shrubs and trees to significant collections of magnolia, camellia, and rhododendron species and hybrids -- including Jim's hand-crossed tropical vireya rhododendrons, in a glasshouse - - all nestled amid a vibrant native coastal habitat.

In 2008, the property was purchased by Jerry and Kathleen Sand, who shepherded the garden with care for nearly eight years. As of the summer of 2015, the property is under the care of Andreea Ghetie.

Plans are being developed to increase the garden accessibility to visitors; meantime, many beautiful plants can be enjoyed while wandering the public footpath leading from the road to the entrance to the Siuslaw National Forest. The Gerdemann public trail passes through a wooded hillside facing the Pacific Ocean, bordered by the Siuslaw National Forest in Yachats, Oregon.