

# **BETTY BAHN**

***NOV. 8, 1939 - MAY 15, 2020***

***She will always be loved,***



***remembered, and missed.***

***Lincoln County Master Gardener Association***

Long before I knew Betty as a Master Gardener and botanist, she and I worked together at Pacific Communities Hospital Home Health. Betty was working as a nurse and I was working as a medical social worker. She dealt with a number of different medical issues that patients had, but what I remember most was her expertise in wound care. I do not exaggerate when I state that I'm sure she saved many feet from being amputated, and helped many very deep bedsores heal. We worked on some pretty complicated cases together. Betty was very skilled and no nonsense when it came to what needed to be done. She also had a great sense of humor. She will be greatly missed!

Lynn Alexanderson

I did not know Betty very well. Yet it always felt very good to see her. When I would occasionally run into her, she was very pleasant and more than willing to give an educated answer to a question I may have had. That Betty had: besides being very likable, she always a willingness to help and consult with great expertise. I cannot believe she is no longer with us and was quite shocked - she was so full of energy and enthusiasm - she will be missed terribly by many including me. She was one of a kind in the very best sense. Ineke Rawie, Master Gardeners.

Ineke Raul

My Betty Bahn Story May 22nd, 2020

Back in 2009 I was an apprentice who wanted to be involved in everything. Betty put out an invitation to the new students to help prepare for a fall bulb sale. I responded right away. The mission was to sort, bag and price thousands of bulbs. Mary Jane Bonelitz was also there and we called this event "Bagging Bulbs at Betty Bahn's". We followed her instructions until the job was done. Afterwards she took us on a tour of her garden and said that we could take cuttings of anything in her gardens. I had no idea what she was talking about but was curious. Since I found Betty to be rather intimidating I took just 3 cuttings of salvia "Hot Lips", one of her favorite shrubs. She explained to me exactly what to do with them when I got home. Naturally, I did exactly what she said.....no one wanted to disappoint Betty!

To my surprise and joy all 3 cuttings rooted and every year I have this wonderful shrub. I continue to take cuttings from it so that I will always have it!

But the very best part of this story is that I developed such an interest in taking cuttings that I had a small shed built just for housing the cuttings I take every year. Obsessed is really what it is! Not only do I grow anywhere from 300 to 350 plants each year for the annual Spring Garden Sale, but I'm so passionate about it that I invite the new students to come to my yard and do a one-on-one cuttings workshop starting in June. Plant propagation is what I love and I continue to experiment with the various methods. Betty inspired and mentored me then and for many years afterwards.

Thank you, Betty!

Cathi Block

As a master-gardener-In-training a few years ago, the answer to the most perplexing plant identification questions was “ask Betty Bahn, she’ll know.” And that was even before I’d had an opportunity to meet Betty!

Then when I had a turn trying to answer questions called in or walked in by the public, our team was delighted when Betty would casually stop by the office and ask if she could help with any questions. Of course we usually had a couple waiting for her confirmation and additional information. Betty could explain how to tell Hooker’s Fairybells from Smith’s Fairybells or some other obscure question. She never seemed to be too busy to help the newbies, even with common questions or tasks that were second nature to her. She was a treasure and will be missed.

Pat Shaw  
LCMGA Past-President  
Lincoln City OR

This once soggy, weedy, grassy vacant lot the church used for Easter egg hunts was transformed by a small handful of very determined south county MGs into the garden it is today. Betty was a crucial part of our planning and along with Loyd and Verna Collett we MGs stayed the course and kept our focus on the goal of a sustainable demonstration garden. With little experience between us and a truckload of recycled chain-link fencing somehow we did it! Betty's voice of knowledge, humor, and experience would always prevail when we were toying with different garden plans. If anyone knew what would and wouldn't grow in Yachats, or most anywhere else for that matter, it was Betty. And she could always explain to you the science of why. When it came to getting the work done, she was no slouch, always at the front of the work party. Her love and sweat will nourish the YDCG for many seasons to come. We miss you Betty. *Mark & Nancy Dixon*



Empty field where the Yachats Garden is now.  
Thanks to the Dixons for the photo.



BETTY . . . . .

OMG – What will we do without her?

I have often said that the main thing I learned from my Master Gardener classes was how much I did NOT know about gardening. Luckily, we had lots of experts to guide us along the way and you could always count on Betty to know the answer to any of your questions. And, you could always count on Betty to be as generous with her time and her energy as she was with her expertise. And she was FUNNY! I maybe didn't catch on to that at first, because I was so in awe of how much she knew, while I knew so little, but after a couple of "weeding sessions" (with many more to come!) I got to know the Real Betty and it was nothing but Fun from then on. A BIG PRESENCE. AN INTELLIGENT and FUNNY and COMFORTABLE PRESENCE. I hate knowing that she is gone.  
Pat Shaw

I met Betty in 2011 when I took the Master Gardener course. She taught classes that year. She was as kind and sweet as they come and very knowledgeable. She was so helpful during my time working the help desk at the extension office. After lots of research and not coming up with an answer for a client regarding natives or ornamentals, I knew who to approach next - a call to Betty was all it took! She was a worker bee in the Yachats garden. I know she will be missed there and throughout our organization. I am so thankful to have known her these past nine years and I will never forget her kindness toward others.

Sharon Busby

I met Bette in 1996. A friend and I just co-authored an article about our local Frist Nation history under Tribal supervision. Some in our local community were extremely critical of what we uncovered. Betty was one of our strongest allies of this historical truth knowing about the prison camp years and the horrific conditions that Coos, Lower Umpqua and Alsea people suffered. Since that time, Betty was always a rock of reliability and competence, be it medical, historical, botanical, and in many other ways. I came to Betty with many dozens of botanical questions over the years. Several times she came to my home and gave me suggestions for my garden, problem solving a number of issues I have had. Just last fall she consulted with me on a grove of trees that were doing poorly. She assessed and analyzed and made recommendations. I followed those. The trees are thriving this spring: Thanks to Betty!

She was an early supporter of the development of our trail system and the names we gave two trail that depicted our local First Nation history. She was an ongoing consultant to our trails and invasive weed program mentoring us in what to plant and what to pull. She worked right alongside us!

Betty also helped me out medically. My husband was a long-term cancer patient and I took care of my handicapped mother who lived with us. She was always willing to help with advice and suggestions. But more than that, she deeply cared about me and my welfare.

Betty shared her passion for travel. As I came to travel more, she generously shared her knowledge about her trips. Most recently, she mentored me about Iceland. I followed a number of her recommendations when I traveled there.

All in all, over the years, I learned that whatever Betty recommended was sound and worked out very well.

I admire not only her keen brilliance, but even more so her passion for nature, wildlife and cultural preservation. That passion is really a deep compassion for all living things. Most of all, her many qualities were bound up in her bottomless generosity to share and give of herself.

Betty was truly a role model for me and so many others.

Betty's generosity and passionate / compassionate spirit will forever be part of this community and my life.

Joanne Kittel

## My Friend Betty

We became friends at the Yachats Demonstration and Community Garden. I learned fast that Betty was a source of information with patience and my favorite kind of dry wit. Thank you Betty for your patience every time I asked "what is this plant?" Thank you Betty for teaching me about propagation and fertilizing blueberries. Thank you for wonderful conversation from skiing to NASCAR. Thank you Betty for making me laugh! Most of all thank you for your knowledge of conservation of our beautiful central Oregon coast.

One of my favorite days was in the garden last summer with Betty and the dragonflies. I was at the garden early one midsummers day and notice an abundance of dragonflies. They were hopping and flying and so beautiful in the sunshine. I could not wait to show Betty, and when she got there I learned about dragonflies in Yachats! She said "if you think this is a lot, head over to the bay." On hot summer days, when the east wind comes from upriver into the bay it brings the dragonflies, a wonderful, amazing mass of dragonflies! It was a happy day!

Thank you, Betty, for all the times over the last two years you said the garden never looked better. Thank you for being a founding member, thank you for all the hard work you put into it over the years, thank you for sharing your knowledge and teaching plant clinics. Most of all, thank you for being my friend.

Miss you, Laura Hauert

## Betty Bahn

I first met Betty soon after I moved here in 2012 and joined the Seal Rock Garden Club. Truthfully, I was somewhat intimidated by Betty in the beginning. She knew so much and I knew so little.

Soon I realized that I wanted to become a Master Gardener and be part of the Yachats Garden. I looked up to Betty for her expertise and knowledge and we became good friends. I could count on her to steer me in the right direction. My MG project was growing tomatoes and companion plants in the Yachats garden and Betty even helped with that although perennials were her forte. She was always available to answer my questions as an apprentice and afterwards whenever I had a question. And she knew the answer! She was an advocate for the food share beds.

Betty loved all plants and wildlife in general. She was a friend to every living creature; even the frogs and newts in the garden. And she was not squeamish a bit. She had no problem emptying the rat traps in the greenhouse at the garden or rescuing a bird that had fallen out of the nest.

Betty and whoever was ready for a break (or wanted to talk) would sit on the benches in the sensory garden and she would love to tell stories. Betty was proud of her family! She loved it when her son or daughter (best yet, both) would be visiting. I ran into Betty at Ray's market one day and she was getting last minute items for a visit from her son. She was glowing with pride and wanted to make everything perfect for the visit.

Betty loved her truck! She told me the story of how she got the deal! I felt honored when she invited me to ride over with her to the city debris trailer with the bags of weeds from the garden in the back. We were a team and I loved just being with her.

And what a hoot she was. After you got to know her, she was quite the comedian. She had that dry sense of humor and down to earth frankness. She said what she thought and was not concerned if you thought differently. Upon getting a new lab puppy, Betty asked what color she was. I told her I got a yellow one for the first time and she remarked that black was the only color for a lab! She had black labs in her family. But after that

conversation, she always asked about the puppy. I often saw Betty driving by the garden just to check.

Betty was always there to lend an ear and offer advice. She was an integral part of the garden and we all loved her. Now when I walk by the garden, I think of Betty and feel sad. I miss her a lot. The garden will carry on in her honor.

Carita Edson

Here's my thoughts about Betty.....

I became a Master Gardener in 2011, not because I was such a great gardener or had even gardened much, but I wanted to learn more. So, I became involved in the classes and classmates, and Betty was our Botany teacher--I feared and respected her--and her knowledge. Anyone who could rattle off those Latin names of plants were to be feared, at least in my brain. She was very involved in the plant sale at that time and I attached myself to her and followed her every command to trim this and clean this and organize these.....all with assurance, and friendliness and which I willingly scrambled to do. She, I'm sure never knew the effect she had not only on me, but all of us. When I joined the Yachats Demonstration Garden of which she, along with Verna and Loyd Collet, Mark Dixon, Joanne Kittel were part of the founding members of that garden and still involved in the garden I realized the full extent of her love for all things flowering. (well, maybe not the nemesis of our garden, the Yachats Daisy--yellow and way too prolific) All of us looked for a position to be near her during the never ending "weeding parties" just to engage her in obtaining information and knowledge about



whatever flower we had worries about. She never failed to offer up assistance.

When I became the coordinator for several years of that garden she, along with Verna and Loyd were always voices I made sure had a chance to express an opinion in our monthly meetings. She was our go to for advice on trimming and pruning, and was a fierce advocate for the safety of birds, bees, and little creatures in the garden. (Not, however, the occasional rat in the greenhouse, of which she commandeered the rat traps and disposal of all captured prisoners much to the relief of us more squeamish gardeners)

I am so sad that she is no longer with us, more than I can ever express, but her presence is to be felt everywhere in that garden in Yachats, and in all of our hearts.

Melinda Robinson

I had not heard of Betty's passing until your email. It seems like things went quickly and I pray it was painless, peaceful and surrounded by the strength of those who loved and admired her. It's kind of amazing we were just "video chatting" as an organization about a Yachats tribute to her and she was gone a few days later. I hope she at least knew of the tribute to such a special lady.

I first saw (from a distance) Betty Bahn in January, 2009. It was my first day as an apprentice and the veterans were introducing themselves. I remember that Betty talked about a connection to Lewis and Clark College and proudly announced she was a nurse. In a very naive statement, I said

my path to Master Gardeners was similar to Betty's, that I was an undergraduate at Lewis and Clark College and I too was a proud nurse. Little did I know I was comparing myself to Master Gardener Royalty.

Betty taught classes for the students and I recall her amazing botany classes. I always admired her encyclopedic knowledge of all things gardening and especially her command of Latin; easily speaking the Latin names of every plant we discussed. An Oregon Grape was never just an Oregon Grape. It was *Mahonia aquilifolium*. Betty later told me that her parents would discuss plants using their Latin names at the dinner table. Talk about home schooling.

As a student, as well as throughout my 11 years as a veteran Master Gardener I admired, respected and revered Betty. She was the ultimate Master Gardener. As an apprentice Cathi Block and I were able to help with creating the bags of bulbs for the fall bulb sale. As the story goes, a semi truck would navigate the steep, narrow slopes up to Betty's home and empty a truckload of bulbs. Then Master Gardeners would bag the bulbs in groups, preparing them for the sale. As the only two apprentices who had the nerve to volunteer to assist, Cathi and I coined the phrase, "Bagging Bulbs with Betty Bahn"!

While at her home Bagging Bulbs I learned that her incredible acreage was a designated Wildlife Habitat. I so admired this that I eventually had the Lincoln City Demonstration Garden and my personal garden also designated a Wildlife Habitat. I was also amazed at her extensive library. She had a gorgeous book stand in the "office" section of her house. I visualized her looking up references using this book stand while gazing at the ocean.

It was also during "Bagging Bulbs with Betty Bahn" that we were encouraged to take clippings of her numerous specimens of plants to start as our own. Many of us have beautiful specimens of *Salvia* 'Hot Lips', from Betty's Mother Plant, in our own yard. I never look at my *Salvia* "Hot Lips" plant without thinking of Betty.

Betty could be a little intimidating at times. Rarely could someone hold their own while conversing with her on most subjects, but especially gardening. I

remember being in such awe, as well as intimidated that when I saw her eating at the Drift Inn I was too shy to even go up and say hello. Gratefully, I slowly gained confidence and was able to converse and learn from such a master.

Betty came to a Master Gardener meeting one time wearing the most amazing and unusual jacket. I admired it and she proudly told me it was worn by one of her children while marching during the opening games of the Olympics. She clearly adored her family.

Betty has left an incredible legacy throughout the Lincoln County Master Gardener Association. We all sat at her feet while this amazing, beautiful and intelligent woman taught us at every opportunity she had. In this way she will always live on as a Master Gardener, through the work of those she sharing her knowledge and love of plants. As well as through all the “Hot Lips” that now thrive throughout the county.

Mary Jane Bonelitz  
Master Gardener  
Class of 2009

Dear Betty,  
Thank you for being my friend.  
Thank you for reaching out when my husband was diagnosed with cancer.  
Thank you for the many lessons you have taught me.  
Thank you for inspiring my curiosity about native plants.  
Thank you for being a mentor to me in my gardening and as coordinator for YDCG.  
Thank you for illuminating the importance of Botanical names by using them frequently.  
Thank you for your diligence in caring for the Blueberry Beds.  
Thank you for being my favorite Master Gardener.  
I am enclosing some pictures from last summer. They are great memories.  
I wish you a painless transition to whatever comes next...  
With Lots of Love,  
Donna Hadden

I met Betty in Master Gardener class in 2013. She was teaching a class on identifying trees. Betty strode into the room so tall, confident, knowledgeable, graceful and yet wry. I felt hungry for the knowledge she was about to impart. Betty handed out magnifying glass's and we shared copies of the book she was teaching from (I bought a copy at the end of class). Betty held the class rapt while she guided us through thorough inspections of the plant specimens she had passed around the room. The class time flew and was over much too quick. I saw Betty in the audience of some of the following classes. She always took notes and if she needed to, she posed questions. I was thrilled when Betty extended an invitation to join the Yachats garden meeting. I already counted myself lucky to be going to the Yachats garden as an apprentice to continue learning from Betty. After the Yachats garden meeting was over, we adjourned to the greenhouse to plant seeds. All the apprentices were discussing their projects. Mine involved ornamentals instead of vegetables and Betty expressed an interest in helping me choose plants in my effort to "Grow a Mermaid" from plants. We discussed different grasses I could use to paint the Mermaid's tail. When I attended the next Yachats garden meeting, Betty gifted me with 25 Ucinia Rubra plants she had dug out of her yard. The Ucinia was one portion of my Mermaid that was successful, all Thanks to Betty.

Betty participated in every work party, taught classes on propagation and tool maintenance, spent time working the Master Gardener help desk and attended most of the meetings. Betty never complained, but you could see she often gardened through pain. Other Master Gardeners aged out and left the garden, Betty never did. Betty loved the garden. The garden loved the attention Betty lavished on it. Betty was always finding newts and frogs in the garden, she loved the wildlife and they flourished under her stewardship. Betty told me that the garden never looked better or was more bountiful than it was in the last 2 years. Winnie, Laura and I appreciated the compliment.

I Loved Betty, She Was My Friend,  
She Was My Favorite Master Gardener,  
Donna Hadden

What can I say about Betty? She was always the one I went to when I needed help with Plant Identification. I would spend a ridiculous amount of time researching names, and finally narrowing it down to the “genus” or “family” of plants. In final frustration, I’d e-mail Betty. She would get back to me quickly, saying, “Oh, this is an easy one! It’s a \_\_\_\_\_” (I didn’t even have the “genus” correct!). I loved her dry sense of humor. She was a funny lady! She was always someone I could talk to about anything. We had lengthy discussions about health issues (her and friends), and we genuinely respected each other. I can’t imagine the void she’s leaving in our MG program. She was such a special person. I already miss her!

Marlene Shapiro

I have a beautiful *Blechnum* fern from Betty. Every time I’m in my yard and see it, I smile and think of Her. She was such a generous and kind person and my go-to for plant identification. Betty will sorely be missed.

Diane Primont

Betty was one of a kind and we are going to miss her so! We'll miss not just her knowledge, her commitment to her community, to Master Gardeners, and to all the other groups she was an integral part of, but her sense of humor. She was a hoot! There is going to be a big Betty-shaped hole in all of us for a long, long time.

Pam McElroy















