



## Flowers for Unsung Heroes

### The WSDOT Incident Response Team keeps Washington moving safely every day

**D**edicated to keeping Washington's highways safe and traffic moving, the WSDOT Incident Response Team (IRT) is a specialized, rapid-clearance patrol unit.

Officially established in 2002 from early '90s pilot programs, the IRT's mission is to safely clear highway incidents within 90 minutes. Responding to up to 60,000 incidents annually, these roving patrols save drivers over \$120 million a year in wasted fuel and lost time.

#### What do They do?

**Motorist Assistance:** Assist stranded drivers with flat tires, jump starts, or a small amount of gas.

**Debris Removal:** Quickly remove roadway debris to prevent accidents.

**Crash Management:** Manage crash scenes with traffic control to keep everyone safe.

**Quick Clearance:** Clear disabled vehicles to restore traffic flow.

Rain or shine, day or night, the IRT is on the road. They are the ultimate highway heroes, working quietly behind the scenes to make sure we all get home safely.



## Celebrate Jazz Appreciation Month: Find Your Rhythm

April is Jazz Appreciation Month, a time to celebrate the rich history and influence of jazz music. Beyond its cultural roots, jazz also brings real benefits to everyday life, both in the office and at home.

With its smooth, flowing sound, jazz creates a calm and focused atmosphere. It can help reduce stress, improve concentration, and spark creativity, making it the perfect background for work or unwinding after a long day.

Jazz music provides a sense of balance and rhythm that supports focus and mental clarity. Its natural flow encourages a present and energized mindset, enhancing both work and daily routines.

This April, take a moment to explore a new jazz playlist or revisit a classic favorite. You might just find that a little jazz can make a big difference in how you work, relax, and connect with your day.

## Top 10 Gardens to Visit in the Puget Sound Area

### Skagit Valley Tulip Festival (Mount Vernon, Washington)

Experience Spring in Full Bloom April 1-30 (Exact bloom timing may vary depending on weather conditions)

### Washington Park Arboretum (Seattle)

A 230-acre "living museum" with incredible biodiversity and a spectacular Japanese Garden

### Bloedel Reserve (Bainbridge Island)

A 150-acre forest reserve with curated landscapes and tranquil, expansive views.

### Lakewood Garden (Lakewood)

A 10-acre estate designed by famed landscape architect Thomas Church, featuring a stunning Georgian-style mansion and gardens.

### Kubota Garden (South Seattle)

A 20-acre historical Japanese garden known for its expert landscaping and bridges

### Seattle Japanese Garden (Seattle)

A 3.5-acre, authentic, strolling garden designed in the traditional style located inside the Arboretum.

### Carl S. English Jr. Botanical Garden (Seattle/Locks)

Located at the Chittenden Locks, it is a hidden gem with over 500 species of plants.

### Bellevue Botanical Garden (Eastside)

Features over 50 acres of cultivated gardens, woodlands, and a suspension bridge.

### Rhododendron Species Botanic Garden (Federal Way)

It houses one of the world's largest collections of species rhododendrons.

### Kruckeberg Botanic Garden (Shoreline)

A 4-acre garden highlighting Pacific Northwest native plants alongside exotic species.



## *National Garden Month & Earth Day:* **Work Wild: Bringing Nature to the Office**



**A**pril in the Pacific Northwest marks the start of a vibrant season, with early blooms, fresh greenery, and natural beauty all around Puget Sound. National Garden Month, alongside Earth Day on April 22, is the perfect reminder of how closely our well-being and workplaces are connected to nature.

From cherry blossoms to native ferns, the region offers endless inspiration. Bringing that beauty indoors through plants is a simple way to create more welcoming, calming work environments. Beyond aesthetics, plants help reduce stress, improve focus, and boost overall mood, making them a valuable addition to any workspace.



Earth Day is also a great opportunity to introduce small, eco-friendly initiatives, such as adding low-maintenance plants, creating shared green spaces, using sustainable planters, or encouraging employees to bring in plants from home. Popular indoor options like snake plants, pothos, ZZ plants, ferns, and peace lilies thrive with minimal care while making a big impact.

Whether it's a desk plant or a refreshed lobby, even small touches of greenery can transform a space. This April, celebrate by bringing nature indoors and creating healthier, more inspiring environments for your team and clients.