

Smith Short Biographical Sketch

Steve Smith is a dedicated gardener with a lifelong passion for horticulture, which was sparked in his youth during summers spent with his grandparents. Both of his grandparents had remarkable gardens, and it was his grandmother's extensive collection of peonies—cultivated for over 50 years—that left a lasting impression. Before she left her property, Steve was fortunate to inherit a portion of her cherished peonies, which he continues to grow in his own garden today.

Steve's enthusiasm for peonies blossomed in 2016, when he discovered local peony growers and visited Adelman's Peony Gardens in Salem, Oregon, which he describes as "peony paradise." This experience deepened his love for the flower and expanded his knowledge of its varieties.

In March of 2020, Steve and his husband, Larry, relocated to Edgewood, Washington, where they began cultivating a ¼-acre property. Starting with little more than barren land, they have since transformed it into a flourishing garden sanctuary. Over the past five years, Steve has expanded his collection to include more than 170 varieties of peonies—ranging from herbaceous and woody to intersectional species—along with hundreds of companion plants.

In addition to cultivating mature plants, Steve is actively engaged in growing peonies from seed, with over 400 seedlings in various stages of development. Each year, approximately 50 of these seedlings bloom for the first time.

Beyond his personal gardening endeavors, Steve is an influential leader in the peony community. He serves as President of the Pacific Northwest Peony Society and is a member of the Board of Directors for the American Peony Society.
