

Emily Aune

Head Gardener, Hendricks Park Rhododendron Garden
City of Eugene, Oregon

Hendricks Park is the City of Eugene's first park, designated in 1906. It spans 80 acres and is nestled above the University of Oregon, on the east side of Eugene. The park features a 13-acre Rhododendron Garden, planted in 1951, with the collaboration of the Rhododendron Society, plus a 3-acre native plant garden, a shelter with a fireplace, and miles of trails that connect to the Ridgeline trail system that spans the southern edge of town.

Emily Aune began working at Hendricks Park in 2009 and has served as the Head Gardener of the Rhododendron Garden for the past 11 years. With a total of 15 years at Hendricks Park, she has dedicated her career to maintaining and enhancing the beauty of this beloved community space.

Her passion for plants and the outdoors began in Bloomington, Indiana, where she spent summers working at a youth camp and later worked at a retail plant nursery during high school. In 1999, she moved to Oregon to be closer to family and quickly fell in love with the state's mountains, streams, and lush forests. She pursued gardening jobs while studying botany at Lane Community College, eventually earning a degree from the Evergreen State College in Washington.

After completing her Environmental Science degree, Emily worked as a Botany Assistant for the City of Eugene, where she collected seeds in the West Eugene Wetlands and cared for the Native Plant Nursery. This role was pivotal in building her deep understanding of native plants and their ecological importance.

In 2007, Emily joined the City of Eugene Parks Department, where she started on the Landscape crew. Her dedication and skills soon earned her a permanent assignment at Hendricks Park, where she began to specialize in maintaining the park's Rhododendron Garden.

In 2017, Emily joined the Eugene Chapter of the Rhododendron Society and became the society's secretary in 2019. She has contributed monthly articles to the society's newsletters, providing updates on Hendricks Park and other gardening topics. Two of her articles have also been published in the American Rhododendron Society Journal. Emily remains active in local gardening societies and continues to deepen her connections within the botanical community.

One of the most rewarding aspects of Emily's work is collaborating with the dedicated volunteers who show up every Tuesday to help maintain the garden. She enjoys working alongside people who share her passion for the park and its preservation.

Outside of work, Emily is often found adventuring with her dog Rhody or spending quality time with family and friends. Recently, she has developed an interest in woodworking, finding joy in crafting yard art using rhododendron wood and other natural materials.

For more information on Hendricks Park and the Rhododendron Garden, visit:

- [Hendricks Park Website](#)
- [Friends of Hendricks Park](#)
- [Eugene Chapter of the American Rhododendron Society](#)