

## The Labyrinth Story by Chuck Pettis

The peninsula where the Earth Sanctuary labyrinth is located was originally a 16-foot high Himalayan blackberry "jungle" -- a true impenetrable mass of non-native plants.

We used machetes to clear them out, which was the slow way to remove blackberries. At the time, we didn't know about the professional tools made for this huge task, so it took us months to do and a lot of manual labor. One of the things we would also do in this long process was to take the vines that we cut down and wrap them in circles to make geodesic artwork, and then hung them from the trees.

We planted all the shrubs and trees you see around the labyrinth--except the largest trees - from the location where the path branches off to go down to the labyrinth, all the way down to the water. So when you walk down there and look around, all the vegetation you see was hand-planted and watered and lovingly tended and trimmed for the first couple of years to ensure it would grow into a wildlife habitat and a magical place for our guests to wander.



The labyrinth was carefully constructed on a sand foundation according to a traditional labyrinth design from Crete. I chose this design, and Dan Borroff translated that design into the exact dimensions and materials that would be used.

He chose Pennsylvania Blue Stone for the path and Salal as the Northwest native plant for the hedge. Dave Schmidt planted 135 individual salal plants, each 2 feet apart and carefully placed the stones for the path. Today, as you see, it has all grown together into a nice hedge. If you notice that the outside circuit of the labyrinth is somewhat lower than the inner circles, this is because the nearby beavers come and munch on it. We didn't know at the time that we were creating a snack lounge for the beavers!

