

## A Teaching Garden by the Cherokee County Master Gardeners

The Cherokee County Master Gardeners have put their knowledge to work and on display. They have come up with solutions to many gardening dilemmas. Their teaching garden is located on the grounds of the Senior Citizens Center at 1001 Univeter Road in Canton, GA.



Lifetime Master Gardener Marcia Winchester oversees the entire garden, holding two work days a month. The sessions are educational and are an excellent tool for teaching new Master Gardener interns.

In 1996, the CCMG had no budget so the garden was developed solely with plant donations from the Master Gardeners and senior citizens. A large portion of it was a vegetable garden, planted so that seniors could enjoy fresh vegetables.

Over the years, the garden has slowly evolved. A cement pad and two swings were donated by contractor Bob Castle. Home Depot in Woodstock donated materials for a pergola, and Bates Lumber Co. in Canton contributed nails. On April 27th, instructor Carlos Jones of the Sequoia Vocation Arts Dept. directed some of his students in the building of the pergola. This anchored the garden, giving it a nice central focal point. Modeled after the Cobb county Backacher garden, the garden was broken into several smaller gardens and a chair and co-chair were assigned to maintain it. A grant was given to pour a cement path so that seniors could maneuver easily.

Plantings in the front of the building are formal. Plants are low maintenance, drought tolerant, annuals and perennials. A shaded, dry area underneath a spanse of windows near the entrance posed a challenge. It is planted with evergreen plants and white blooming annuals that take very little time to maintain. If you are tired of watering, this is an excellent example of drought tolerant plants that work well in home gardens.

In 2003, a Patriot Garden was installed around the roadside mailbox, with a memorial plaque dedicating the garden to our military. The color scheme is predominately red, white and blue, in memory of 9/11 and military veterans who use the senior center.

The large area in back is divided into several gardens, separated by cement paths. The "Vegetable Garden" consists of several raised beds. Permanent trellises were installed several years ago to provide support for climbing vegetable plants. Recently the two front vegetable beds were converted into experimental peanut beds. Five blueberry bushes, donated by a MG training class from several years ago, provide senior citizens with blueberries for several weeks during the summer.

The area around the pergola is the "Fragrant Garden". Plants there were funded by a State Master Gardener grant. This is a lovely place to sit in the shade and enjoy the fragrances year round.

The "Heirloom Garden" is full of plants reminiscent of gardens from the Old South. China plates mark plants with their common names, and the area includes yard art to support the garden's theme: a gazing ball, a wheel barrel used as a

planter, an old chest left open with annuals cascading out, and a brass headboard that serves as a short fence. Purple, yellow, orange, and white blooming flowers are repeated throughout the garden.

The "Butterfly Garden" is one of our oldest gardens. It is in the process of being redesigned as light patterns have changed. The "Memorial Garden" (in memory of all the Meals-on-Wheels volunteers) is a small heart-shaped garden, outlined with dwarf hollies and inset with ice plant for summer color. It includes a white Crepe Myrtle for gentle shade. A donated wrought iron table and two chairs are located nearby—for sitting and remembering old friends.

A "Xeriscape Garden" is located by one of the downspouts of the Senior Center. In one corner it gets lots of water when it rains; otherwise the soil is extremely hot and dry. The soil is a mixture of orange clay and gravel from the construction of the building. Native plants have been used in its design. The "Holding Area" was expanded and screened off with a decorative white picket fence. Two new propagation beds were installed this summer.

In 2004 the Cherokee County Commissioners funded the installation of an irrigation system. At the request of the County Extension Agent, Todd Hurt, we decided to install a "drip" irrigation system to demonstrate water use efficiency and minimize weed growth. A variety of low volume emitters were used to show the flexibility of low volume systems.

DIRECTIONS to the garden driving from I-575: Take exit 14. Traveling from the south, turn left at the end of the exit ramp. Go through 3 lights and at 4th light turn right onto Univeter Road. Travel .8 miles and the Senior Center will be on the left. Traveling from the north, turn right at the end of the exit ramp and go through 2 lights. At the 3rd light turn right onto Univeter Road. Travel .8 miles and the Senior Center will be on the left.

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