

GCMGA 2013 Garden Tour Feature Descriptions

North Area of Gwinnett County

McDaniel Farm Park, Duluth

GCMGA works both with Gwinnett County Parks and Recreation and the Environmental Heritage Center to plan, plant, and maintain this circa 1930's "Archie's Garden", the farm house grounds, and the orchard at McDaniel Farm Park. Harvest from the vegetable garden is donated to "Feed the Hungry." Our members volunteer weekly at this location and GCMGA has supported this project with grants. Do visit the garden to see what a typical farm of the era would look like.

Norman Downs, Duluth

This garden is a certified National Wildlife Habitat. Living on a lake affords wonderful views of year-round and migrating waterfowl, but gardening with beavers, geese and deer can be challenging. Therefore, fencing protects many shrubs and trees.

The front yard has a rock-lined bed that contains seasonal bulbs, perennials and azaleas. There is also a small area to attract butterflies. This area includes butterfly weed and butterfly bushes. Enter the back garden area via the deck entrance at the back of the driveway. This entrance provides a view of the lake with birches and a wonderful bald cypress tree on the left. The deck has multiple bird feeders as well as a small fountain and birdbath. The tiered garden on the left is primarily for vegetables and strawberries, although some perennials flower on the top level.

A wooded area to the right of an expanse of open turf, which is a perfect playground for croquet and volleyball, provides a natural garden room where trilliums, bloodroot and ferns hide behind the rhododendrons. A buckwheat tree (*Cliftonia monophylla*) is a new addition in the seating area, where vintage lawn furniture provides a place in the shade. Later in the summer hydrangeas are the main attraction. A swing near the lake provides a good vista of the lake, especially at twilight.

Arlene's Garden, Duluth

My yard is 17 years old with essentially all mature specimens of flora. When the house was new, the yard only held what trees were left - some pines and a few hardwoods. What is here now was all put in over the years. I usually would gravitate towards plants that were not as commonly noticed in the Atlanta scenery.

Landscaping is always a changing and ongoing work in progress. Many bushes, flowers, shrubs, and trees have made their home in this yard; some have moved on for one reason or the other, but as always what remains is still pleasing to my eye. I have many azaleas, grasses, Japanese maples, hydrangeas, camellias, anise, river birch, and Florida Pipe stem *Leucothoe*. I have Knockout roses -- red and yellow, as well as *Arborvitae* fern and truly some whose name I don't remember! I have a little patch of Lily of the Valley plants that smell amazing in the early Spring. I have a wonderful MoneyBush shrub that has the sweetest smelling blooms, and I enjoy those in February. I have pretty Lilies of the Nile, and nice grassy ground covers here and there. I like it because I have something to look at most every season.

There is a beautiful dry creek bed in back and a couple other stone pathways that make for an interesting walkabout the yard. Other than a bit of seasonal color and, of course, sharing what I have (Hostas!), with the resident deer and rabbits, my landscape is in place and complete. Putting everything together - over the years - has brought many moments of joy.

Colibri Haven, Duluth

What was a half-acre yard of fescue lawn ten years ago has been transformed into a Certified Wildlife Habitat with only a small patch of Zoysia grass to calm the eyes. This entirely organic garden is fed only with leaf mold, worm tea and mulch, which creates a garden awash with lush color and an extensive vegetable garden for year-round munching.

Colibri Haven starts at the driveway with a mass of flowers specifically for its namesake, the hummingbird, which is equally loved by bees and wasps. The main front yard is a formal French style with trimmed miniature hedges, structured beds and interesting sightlines. This is adjacent to a much more curvaceous bed divided into separate areas for reds, blues and pinks, with dry stacked stone walls and a small lotus pond.

A dogwood tree anchors the shade garden with mass plantings of hellebores, ferns and native wildflowers. The side bed leading to the backyard is spattered with lungwort, celandine poppy, columbine and other shade-lovers. The shade bed continues in the backyard with azaleas, hydrangeas and glossy-leaved camellias.

The goldfish pond in the backyard is flanked by a stonecrop rockery and a raspberry patch along the back fence. The majority of the backyard is dedicated to growing vegetables in several raised beds which allows for methodical crop rotation. A trellised muscadine, blueberry bushes and a large fig tree in the corner provide a long season of fruit.

The motto at Colibri Haven is, "If it doesn't do well, pull it out and plant a native."

Wilson/Mullennix Garden, Duluth

This eclectic, naturalistic, artistic garden is a little piece of paradise on a little over an acre. The garden integrates all five senses in various garden rooms, using trees and shrubs; fruits and vegetables; perennials and annuals; along with natives and exotics.

As you descend the sloping driveway, look to the right where a blueberries hedge forms a backdrop to the Crape Myrtle allee. A lush mix of surprises - lungwort, hellebores, hydrangeas, beautyberries, carex, chrysanthemum, and corydalis – covers the understory. Tucked into the garden are a redbud and numerous Japanese maples. Be sure to take the journey behind the Japanese maple to test more of your senses with Rosemary and agastache.

Flanking the house are three 'Natchez' crape myrtles, with the beautiful coral bark maple 'Sango Kaku' shading the right side of the walkway. Don't miss the fragrant gardenias under the windows.

Framing the garage are 'Longwood' wisteria and Japanese climbing hydrangea (*Schizophragma hydrangeoides*). The early blooming Star magnolia sits in beside the garage.

Across from the garage is a 100 foot mixed perennial bed that integrates sun loving natives, hydrangeas and peonies, *Daphne odora* along with many other perennials.

A large Japanese rice paper plant (Edgeworthia) presents itself on the right and white fragrant white ginger on the left as you pass through the Lady Banks rose covered arbor. You are greeted by the 'Mother and Child' sculpture and the sound of many bird songs that hint at the warmth of this garden. It is clear that many plants have been chosen to attract birds and bees.

The garden explodes into a bountiful, informal, yet artistic pollinators paradise, where you'll find re-seeding annuals, perennials, herbs, fruit trees, raspberries, native azaleas, canna's, Angel Trumpets and crinum lilies.

The stone walkway is framed with a small herb and veggie garden providing fresh food all summer long. A small pathway on the left shows off the Patio peach tree, raspberries, herbs and oak leaf hydrangeas ('Little Honey' and 'Snow Flake').

Many lush exotics shelter the beautiful bluestone patio where lavish dinners take place. The sound of water from the fountain greets your ears. The antelope sculpture on the fountain is framed by the yellow hickory in the fall.

Stop at the top of the stairs to capture the Bustamente sculpture 'The Center Of Myself' which is framed by the Kadsura vine covered arbor. When you reach that area notice the Ninebark and green and gold ground cover. This shady nook is perfect for resting and sipping a glass of wine.

Meander through the shady wooded back garden rooms with eclectic artwork interspersed throughout. Spring ephemerals pop up to surprise you even in the pathways. The rain garden on the south side of the house slows the water from the dry steam. Louisiana iris, canna and beautyberry constitutes the foundation. Look for the 1000 gal rain water collection system under the deck that's used for irrigation.

You are welcome to visit the deck and leave the back garden through the screened porch. Containers soften the edges and spill a riot of color.

As you proceed up the driveway notice the three cryptomerias 'Sekkan-sugu', spring blooming azaleas, duetziars and hydrangeas. At the top look for the butterfly bushes, Vitex and iris, daylily border.

You really can feel the hum of life here. It reflects warmth to you, just like everything else in the garden.

Shady Lady Garden, Duluth

This garden will show you how you can garden in the shade and in the presence of deer. Less than three years ago the front yard was a wild hill of hollies and English ivy and is now a stone-terraced jewel in the shade. The backyard around the pool is fenced in, so no deer issues, but it is also mostly in the shade. This area is given a tropical feel with huge Alocasia elephant ears and other large leaved plants nestled amongst oakleaf hydrangeas, hostas and many other shade-lovers. This garden was designed and installed by Jane Burke.

South Area of Gwinnett County

Mastley's Garden, Snellville/Conyers Area

The Mastley's have transformed what was once a farm field into a delightful retreat. As you enter the driveway you are struck by the beauty of 'Annabelle' hydrangeas, loropetalum and rhododendron. Following up the azalea and acuba lined drive you will pass Mr. Bear, Mr. Bark, a fat little hummingbird and look for Mr. Turtell.

In front of the house is a magnificent arch of sasanqua camilla with a sprawling 'Little Gem' magnolia in the foreground.

As you roam over the 3.5 acre property you will see a variety of evergreens and behind them a huge waddle for clippings and a place all the little animals to call home.

You can't miss the model of the P51 airplane called "Miss America". This community is called an airpark with airplane hangars in the backyards and easy access to the 2500' runway.

Above the garage is a gorgeous 'Madison' jasmine trimmed by the man who constantly fusses about the wild wisteria and the ever winding jasmine.

Looking out from the deck the eye follows a line up the steps to the iron fountain in the parterre garden of boxwoods and up to the stone urn by the fence.

The blue bottle tree located under the spreading Yoshino Cherry trees adds whimsy and color in the winter garden. There are many varieties of hydrangeas throughout this garden so see if you can find them all.

Ashman Garden, Snellville/Conyers Area

Six years ago this three acre garden was a bare piece of Georgia concrete which had been scalped by the contractor. The tree loving home owners are in a continuing effort to turn this still new garden into a feast for the eyes and soul.

In the somewhat formal front garden you will find evergreen trees such as Carolina and Arizona sapphires, sequoia, Hollywood junipers, Japanese black pine, momi firs, blue china firs, magnolia and weeping yaupon hollies.

Deciduous trees include red, sugar and Japanese maple, hornbeam, catalpa, katsura, dawn redwood, bald cypress, weeping and contorting willows, kwanzan and yoshino cherries, Chinese fringe trees, sour woods and black gum. Just to name a few!

The backyard was redesigned this past fall to include several intimate seating areas. The spaces awaiting the trees' maturity are currently planted with roses, creeping gardenia, loropetalum, cotoneaster etc. In the still rare areas of shade mahonias, native azaleas and hydrangeas can be found.

A graceful curving dry river bed lined with Natchez crape myrtles and perennials has been created to address water runoff in an environmentally safe way. Gardenias, camellias and blackberries were planted, intended to become undulating hedges in the (hopefully near) future which in turn will create multiple 'secret' gardens.

Also found in the back yard are a raised bed vegetable garden, herb and fruit gardens and a fenced wildflower garden.

The hill at the back of the property is planted in gardenia, GG Gerbing azaleas and Abelia to create a fragrant moonlight garden. A "Folly" is planned for on top of the hill, designed to look like an old front porch, from which one will have a bird's eye view of all the spaces that will make up the back yard haven.

The side garden path is planted with jasmine and tea olives for a fragrant journey back to the front garden where a hidden swing bench under the only mature oak saved from the contractor's vengeance awaits the visitor to once more view the front yard at leisure.

The Mary Kistner Nature Center, Snellville

Gwinnett Master Gardeners offers an educational opportunity at this garden of a different sort. The Mary Kistner Nature Center is a 50 acre one-time farm owned by the Georgia Piedmont Land Trust (GPLT), a locally based conservation nonprofit. About two acres around the home of the former owner were originally created as distinct areas: a woodland garden, an herb garden, and a grass garden. Restoration and refocusing of the latter is a 2012 GMG grant project.

An informational tour around these areas will showcase the value of native plants and the effects of choosing invasive nonnatives. And along with hearing a bit of history about the tract, you'll have an opportunity to see a hidden gem of Gwinnett County.

Access information: The gardens are not ADA-accessible. Visitors must be able to walk a gentle grass incline, some uneven ground and woodland paths.

Genia's Retreat, Grayson

Over the past ten years, this low maintenance cluster home garden, which is also a Certified Wildlife Habitat, has become a delight for the homeowners and the wildlife. Whether following a day of gardening or a day at the office, it is relaxing to sit under the pergola and enjoy the backyard privacy this garden provides. It is just a wonderful place to read a good book, become inspired to plan the next garden project or just sit back and watch the wildlife frolic.

Genia is a hydrangea enthusiast. She is the Immediate Past President of the American Hydrangea Society and you will find many of her favorite hydrangeas throughout the garden.

Pet Parties Farm, Grayson

Pet Parties Plus, LLC Farm, is not a horticultural wonderland, so to speak, but it is a wonderland if you are an animal lover. Owner Theresa Russell, a master gardener and horticulturist, and her husband Ed (ironically allergic to animals, so is limited to the pool area) have made their farm a sanctuary for unwanted farm and pet animals and plant material. A certified wildlife habitat by the Wildlife Federation, it resides next to two wildlife attracting ponds in an informal natural garden setting. You will see on average 100 animals here, of 15 different species of farm and pet animals, a rescue organization, mobile petting zoo business and pet dealer in one. (Please inquire if you would like to adopt an animal!)

As admirers of big trees, the property has mature landscaping of tall shady native oaks, dotted with an array of other sturdy drought tolerant plantings that must coexist with farm type animals. You will view 100 caged and pastured animals here that you may also feed and pet while visiting.

Expect to see African geese, heritage turkeys, show chickens, ferrets, toy poodle greeters, dwarf goats, mini pigs, mini donkey, guinea pigs, ponies, horses, rare peacocks, alpaca, bunnies and cats.

As you enter the long driveway, the mailbox area is planted with pansies, miscanthus and Dianthus pinks, plus 'Caesars Brother' Iris and white fall blooming clematis vine, plus a row of 'Okame' cherries and a red crabapple.

Along the driveway (you may park anywhere outside the wrought iron gates, just don't block the road) are a row of yellow forsythia, and Encore azaleas along with native oaks and red maples.

Once inside the gate, see our windmill and greeting yard art goats below the row of 'Bradford' Pears. To the left is a 20 yr old specimen of a favorite Deodar Cedar, then a small greenhouse surrounded by Variegated Dwarf Boxwoods and perennial iris and day lilies, lilacs etc, plus a giant Silver Maple tree.

The front of the house has an eclectic collection of dwarf cryptomeria, azaleas, smoke tree, false holly, nandina and a 'Crimson Queen' Japanese maple specimen. The left side of the house contains assorted perennials, including baptisia, iris, pink and lavender Crepe Myrtles, peonies, and a 'this and that' plant.

The pool area is filled with hardy 'Basjoo' clump banana trees (hubby's favorite) that reach 12 feet high, trailing 'Cecile Brunner' Rose, antique and English roses and potted tropical hibiscus, cannas, and hybrid honeysuckle, plus a wide span of hardy Amaryllis and fragrant hardy Confederate jasmine. And a large Pampas grass adjacent to burning bushes. Outside the pool area is a specimen 'Jane' tulip magnolia, and assorted blueberry bushes.

Behind the home is a shade garden collection of 10 foot camellias, azaleas, sasanquas, new hybrid hydrangeas, and hollies, with a Canadian hemlock and rhododendron thrown in. A couple of osmanthus, for holiday cuttings, reside there as well. A birdbath and fiberglass waterfall stands nearby. Stepping stone paths give us a place to ride our ponies too. The large water oaks provide welcome shade and acorns for both the wildlife and farm animals. Stay awhile and enjoy the nature! Sitting areas are provided on decks and at picnic tables.

Davidson's Garden, Lawrenceville

Arriving at Pat and John's home, you will be greeted by a mostly sunny front landscape originally designed by Georgia landscape architect Jane Bath. Planted on a steep bank are azalea, Indian hawthorn, crepe myrtle, old English tea roses, winter jasmine, holly, and a magnificent Japanese maple, bordered by a small Bermuda lawn.

Walking up the short driveway, you can see an English cottage style garden that wraps around the side and rear of their house, deck and screened porch. It is planted with a variety of annual and perennial flowers and shrubs, including a beautiful cut-leaf Japanese maple, native azalea, fragrant gardenias, hydrangeas and a huge Confederate Rose.

The back yard garden has been a 13 year labor of love by John. He has carved this ever changing landscape from a once vine covered and overgrown wooded area. It is now a National Wildlife Federation Certified Wildlife Habitat. Approaching the backyard, on the flagstone walkway, you will see a small sunny lawn and the vegetable garden area. The focal point of the Davidson's yard is their pond-less waterfall fed by two streams flowing from the shaded backyard garden. The

terraced ½ acre “semi natural” wooded back garden is covered with a magnificent canopy of Oak, Hickory and Wild Cherry trees.

The gravel pathways and vine and moss covered retaining walls in this cool retreat provide several seating areas for relaxing and enjoying the beauty of nature on a warm Georgia afternoon. The garden is planted with a large variety of deciduous native and evergreen azaleas, hostas, rhododendron, ferns, camellias, oak leaf, lace cap, mop head and Annabelle hydrangeas, Lenten roses and coral bells. There is also a variety of naturally occurring native plants such as hollies, Solomon’s seal, Virginia creeper, dogwoods, redbuds, and Eastern red cedar have been preserved in the landscape. Interspersed in the garden are decorative planted containers, a colorful bottle tree, statuary and other forms of yard art collected by Pat.