

Feature Story



The Ziegler Garden

by Monica Roth with photos by Teresa Craighead

This garden was inspired by Master Gardener volunteer Pat (Patrica) Ziegler who joined the program in 1987 and was active into her later years, easily maneuvering around in her motorized scooter. She was a regular on the Growline answering garden questions for many years. She passed away in 2009 at age 85. Pat was a progressive early childhood development educator with Cornell Cooperative Extension. Her interest in perennials and landscaping was deepened by a course in English Garden Design while in London and also while volunteering at Morton Arboretum to teach children.

Pat and husband Jerry had lovely gardens around their home in Ellis Hollow. Her garden included a raised stone garden bed and a sunny border featuring iris, peonies, geraniums, daylilies, roses, clematis and more for season long bloom. The front door entry featured shade plants, the rest of the property

was filled with evergreen trees, shrubs and ground covers. My memory is faint, but as I recall, it featured new and interesting plants, not just juniper plantings.



With Pat's passing, a former graduate student friend suggested a memorial planting at Cooperative Extension. At that time, the side lot owned by Cooperative Extension which adjoins our parking lot was pretty much a blank slate. We had a drawing of how we hoped the garden would evolve as a teaching garden, but no funding to move it forward. With money raised for the memorial garden to honor Pat, the CCE Hort Staff were able to hire garden designer Barbara Martin to come up with a plan featuring many of the plants that Pat loved.

The project included a border fence and gate (Whitmore Fence), a stone walkway (Seneca Landscape) and two large perennial beds, one to feature shade plants and a center island with sunny perennials. Of course, as trees have grown, more of the garden is in the shade. One BIG piece of advice from Barb Martin was to make sure we got rid of any goutweed before planting...but alas, we did not do a good job so the shade garden has in part been overrun by goutweed. As

every gardener knows, gardening is not a one-time affair, regular attention is needed.



In recent years several Master Gardeners have been working to rejuvenate this garden, now 10 years old. For the time being, we are attempting to tame what has overgrown to find some of the special plants in the garden. In the long run, a few of the larger plants will need to be replaced with shorter cultivars that are more commonly available in the nursery trade.

This winter we finally installed an engraved memorial rock to honor Pat and the contributions she made to Cooperative Extension as a Master Gardener and educator. We thank the Ziegler family, Jerry, Sharon, and Nick, for their contributions towards making this garden happen and for their patience with our inconsistent attention and maintenance. We are truly honored to have this garden space. A blue (Pat's favorite color) table and two chairs on the patio make it a nice small meeting space for staff and visitors.

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