

## DEMONSTRATION GARDENS

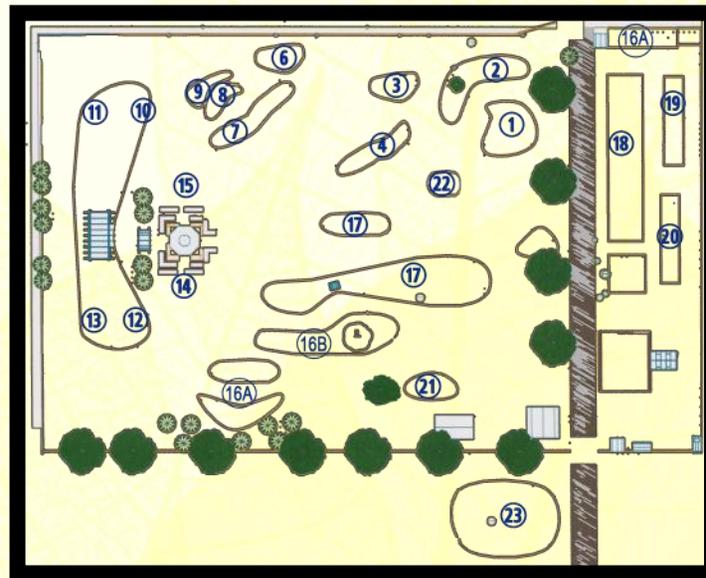
Union County Master Gardeners have maintained Demonstration Gardens on a one-acre site at Trailside in the Watchung Reservation, Mountainside, NJ since 1999. These gardens are run entirely by the volunteer Master Gardeners of Union County, Rutgers Cooperative Extension.

During the first years of the gardens, each Master Gardener class designed and planted a themed garden. Since 2004, maintaining these gardens has become a project for each current class. In addition, many of these gardens have been "adopted" by volunteer Master Gardeners who care for them on an on-going basis.

## FRUIT AND VEGETABLE GARDENS

**18** **The Sharing Garden**, in operation since 2002, grows fresh produce for donation to low-income Union County families. As of 2010, the Sharing Garden has donated more than 15,000 pounds of vegetables to 20 community food banks.

Some of the vegetables are grown in raised beds. A raised bed is a frame placed on the ground and filled with rich garden soil. The soil in the bed is higher than the surrounding ground, resulting in better drainage. The soil is not compacted by foot traffic so it stays fluffy and yields more. The elevated plants are also at a convenient working level, making it easier to care for them. Crops are seasonally rotated to prevent pests and diseases. Our most prolific summer crop is



tomatoes; other crops include lettuce, cabbage, green beans, zucchini, Swiss chard, cucumbers, eggplant, and peppers. In the spring and fall we grow broccoli, cauliflower, Savoy cabbage, collards, kohlrabi, and winter lettuce.

**19** **The Sharing Garden Annex** provides volunteers with a space to develop their gardening skills, experiment with new varieties of vegetables and organic gardening techniques, and teach land stewardship to the general public. Much of the Annex produce is combined with Sharing Garden produce for donation to Union County soup kitchens.

**20** **The Berry Patch** was started in late September, 2006. Included in the patch are blueberries, raspberries, blackberries, Juneberries, figs, cherries and strawberries. To protect the crops, bird netting is placed over the hoops.

## THEMED GARDENS

**1** **Green and White Welcome Garden**  
Welcome! A green and white planting theme has been used to promote a cooling, peaceful feeling as you begin a tour of our gardens. A stone path leads you through a planting of shrubs, ferns, perennials and bulbs.

**2** **The Shade Garden** contains a variety of plants, from woody plants to bulbs, annuals, and perennials. Properly selected shade plants ensure interest throughout the season and offer a variety of foliage textures and colors.



**3** **The Friendship Garden** The plants in this garden were selected to be shared with friends by various methods of propagation: digging up and dividing the crowns, clumps, or rhizomes, and then replanting; lifting bulbs and separating the small offsets and then replanting; or collecting seeds to plant.

**4** **The Cold-Hardy Tropical Bed** displays a surprising number of exotic and unusual plants that can survive winters in NJ. While the term *cold-hardy tropical* may sound strange, many plants of at least subtropical and warmer-climate origin are more tolerant of cold than expected. Some of these plants naturally originate in climates that are fairly cold in winter and have evolved strategies for coping with periods of climatic cooling.



**6 Integrated Pest Management (IPM) Garden** IPM is an approach that focuses on preventing problems by providing the best possible growing conditions and selecting pest and disease resistant plants. Once an area is planted, any weeds or pests are treated using the method with the least impact on the environment.

**7 The Freedom Garden** This red, white, and blue garden was planted to inspire patriotism, honor our American flag and to remember those affected by the events of September 11, 2001.

**8 Drought Tolerant Garden** Many of these plants are also tolerant of poor-to-average soils. Some may even prefer poor, but well drained soils.

**9 The Native Plant Garden** Environmentally beneficial, these native-to-the-USA plants require less water, no fertilization, are resistant to most pests and diseases and are low maintenance.

**Memorial Gardens** - planted with small trees and shrubs suitable for the home garden. All the varieties were selected for their multiple seasons of interest, suitability to the site, or are a unique plant you don't see every day.

**The Cutting Gardens** contain flowering annuals and perennials, which are cut

**16A** weekly throughout the growing season, arranged into bouquets and donated to cancer centers. Started in 2007 they have donated over 13,000 flowers and greens in bouquets.



**14 15 The Herb Garden** is a series of small themed beds, including a sensory garden, a culinary herb garden and a potpourri garden.



**22 The Ground Cover Bed** contains low spreading plants that can be used effectively as ornamentals or to control weeds, storm water runoff, and erosion.

**17 The Conifer Shrub and Evergreen Tree Beds** illustrate the beauty of using trees and shrubs as excellent ornamentals in the landscape. Shrubs, groundcovers, and tree roots provide a fibrous web that stabilizes and anchors the soil, preventing erosion.

**16B The Perennial Bed** contains plants that will return year after year, creating a lasting foundation for our flower gardens. Plant selection is based on form, color, season of bloom, flowers and foliage that is beautiful even after bloom.

**21 The Entry Bed**, named for its location within the Demonstration Gardens, combines trees, groundcovers, and perennials to create a garden design and color scheme for season-long interest.

**23 The Deer-Resistant Bed** demonstrates that deer damage can be lessened by using certain plants with year-round interest.

### Master Gardeners of Union County

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Demonstration Gardens  
At Watchung Reservation, Mountainside, NJ

