



normal park neighborhood association

npna

ypsilanti, michigan

YARD & GARDEN TOUR

June 25, 2005, 1:00 to 5:00 pm

A :: 911 Pearl Street

Jim and Mary Baker, long time residents of Normal Park, raised a family in the house and established a sanctuary in their yard for dining, relaxing and playing.

The home is a 1929 historic structure made of brick, which is then reflected in paving and wall elements elsewhere in the yard. The front yard features a well-groomed yard with a planting of Pachysandra and Myrtle. The blue spruce in the front yard was the live Christmas of the residents in 1936.

The backyard is divided into outdoor "rooms" using different angled pathways and interesting gathering spaces.

A dining patio is linked to the middle area via a brick walk set in a sand and gravel base. A low hedge creates privacy from both the driveway and street views.

In the mid-yard area, Pearl Street seems a mile away, sheltered by the handsome garage (note the twig-style window box on the side of the garage, matching the bent-wood patio table,) and an arbor with arched crosspieces supporting an inviting bench swing.

The garden "shed" in back corner of lot, designed around six leaded glass windows salvaged from northern Michigan, creates a surprise or folly as you wind around and down to the rear. The retaining wall behind the garage was constructed of recycled brick from a neighbor's project and is the sheltered home to roses. Evergreens along the back provide year round interest and screening. The fence, designed and built by Jim Baker, uses scallops to create pattern and interest. 🏡

B :: 935 Pearl Street

Another Ypsilanti historic structure, from 1922, this Cotswold-roofed gem is the home of Vicki Patterson and Paul Mayes, owners for over a decade and leading members of the Ypsilanti Garden Club.

The ornamental trees in the front yard help create depth, interest and privacy along Pearl Street. The Redbud starts the show, followed by a crab apple and supported by the elegant cut leaves of a Bloodgood Japanese Maple.

A formal hedge along the sidewalk of Elm is perfectly suited to this English Cottage, framing the view to the rose collection on the side of the house. The roses boast names such as Mayor of Canterbury (light pink), Betty Prior, Iceberg and Fragrant Cloud.

The focus of the backyard is a rich perennial bed. Here you will find Iris, Allium, Clematis, Roses, Foxglove, and Poppies,

to name a small sample. Colors, sizes and bloom times have been planned and new shapes and colors appear all season. A majestic Butternut tree (*Juglans cinerea*), a relative of the Black Walnut, anchors the backyard where a collection of hostas thrives in its shade. Be sure to note the ornamental tiles with a leaf motif, as the perennial bed wraps around behind the garage. 🏡

C :: 302 Elm Street

Home to Bea and Willard Otis for half a century, the potentially tricky corner lot is cleverly handled with landscape elements to address the need for delineating public and private spaces. Successful use of techniques such as a berm at the intersection, screening, low, backless benches, and a variety of salvaged Huron River rock create interest and establish patterns in the yard.

The various landscape features noted above, as well as the charming garage (note the striking oversized doors) as well as bold landscape lighting, were all designed and implemented by the homeowners. The fencing on the side yard helps establish a secluded environment for the screened-in porch, a challenge for most corner lot owners. Stone is carried over here, reminiscent of a riverscape flowing from the front to the rear.

The drive is surfaced with a smaller size stone found throughout the property, creating unity and a pleasant sound as you walk or drive. The backyard has a continuation of the fencing and backless benches, along with flowing evergreen groundcovers, including Junipers and Vinca. 🏡

D :: 1008 Pearl Street

The stoic clapboard facade and quiet hosta display in the front of this home belies the dynamic plantings bursting from the backyard. A lover of plants with an obvious green thumb, Sue Stickle has been tending to her yard and gardens for over a dozen years. A small shed designed to compliment the house, helps provide a bit of privacy from the street and directs visitors either toward the paver patio or the plant collections in the backyard.

The protective branches of the large ornamental crab apple make the patio at the back of the house intimate and inviting. Underneath you will find samplings of shade-loving plants such as ferns, wild geranium and a cutleaf Japanese Maple.

The fence along the back has examples of older shrubs typical to houses of this era: Common Lilac, Weigelia, Bridal Wreath Spirea. Kitchen gardens are planted along the western side of

the property, with mature plants already in evidence. Between the vegetables and the small shed is a healthy herb garden. As you look toward the east a young Johnny Appleseed tree completes the culinary offerings.

The perennial garden bed along the east side is home to roses, peonies, poppies and a stubborn wisteria. The sounds from the neighbor's water feature complete the setting. 🌿

E :: 89 Oakwood Street

Melissa Armstrong and Michael Grant have been steadily working on their house and yard for a decade and a half. The initial gardens included many sun-loving varieties that languished in the growing shade of the maturing trees. The hemlock that had once provided privacy and winter interest also struggled, leaving numerous vacancies in the garden. Melissa, a Master Gardener, has been able to apply her knowledge and skills and helped the yard keep pace with the environmental conditions.

The shady north side hosts various hostas, a fern collection and some wildflowers such as Solomon's Seal. At the northwest corner of the yard, a shed with clean lines perfectly suited to the house and carport helps define the property and add some screening. Bishops Weed, a lackluster groundcover, has been competing with the Pachysandra (and Melissa's patience) for attention.

Some features from the previous owners, such as the sunken square in the back area, still offer some challenges for this energetic gardener. The Smoke Trees along the sidewalk side of the house are threatening to quit, after so many years of spectacular performances. These hurdles will not deter someone who has started from seeds in her basement all the perennials that are found in the lawn extension. In these rich public gardens you will find interesting color and texture from plants such as Variegated Red Twig Dogwood, Verbena, Peonies and Nicotiana. 🌿

F :: 1124 North Congress

Craig Hupy and Marie Lemmer have lived here 13 years. In 2003 they completed a major renovation and used this as an opportunity to put theory into practice regarding storm water. All downspouts, save one on the home and one on the garage, and most of the grading are directed toward a low spot in the west side of their yard instead of the storm drain. There planting beds and a rain garden benefit from the infusion of moisture.

This low area bordered in stones hosts Native Michigan plants. Native plants have the ability to endure changes between excess water and droughts. The plants in the rain garden are from seeds collected in Michigan. Staff at Ann Arbor's Native Plant Nursery provided technical advice and some locally grown plants. Swamp Buttercups, Iris and Black-eyed Susans and rescued wildflowers such as Trout Lily, Pennsylvania Sedge, Jack in the Pulpit and May Apple flourish in the rain garden. The rescued plants are established in the area just west of the rain garden. A long time resident recently recalled a goldfish pond once occupying the same site.

Craig and Marie have generously provided copies of materials related to rain gardens. More information can be found on line at: www.raingardens.com. 🌿

G :: Recreation Park Community Garden

Prior to its establishment in April of 2004 (by two over-extended NP residents with the help from Growing Hope,) Ypsilanti gardeners with small or shady yards had to carve out tiny vegetable beds in their front extensions or trek out to one of the community gardens in Ann Arbor. Now, this jewel of a community garden is in its second year and is thriving.

The organizing and volunteer efforts were heroic. 2,500 square feet of sod were cut and donated, over 10 yards of compost were delivered, spread and tilled into the existing soil, a hose system was developed and installed, and policies and plots laid out. Then, thanks to contributions from residents, gardeners and the NPNA, a cedar fence was installed as part of Ypsi Pride that year. The garden and gardeners are proud supporters of the Plant a Row for the Hungry program, growing and donating over 150 pounds of varied produce through the first season. The demand for local community gardening has been so strong that a second garden was established in spring of 2005 behind West Middle School. In addition to the chance for a sunny growing space and camaraderie, the garden coordinators and the Growing Hope staff have offered technical support and classes on topics such as Worm Bin Composting, companion planting and cooking your harvest throughout the growing season. 🌿

H :: The Rose Garden at the Senior Center

Located on the east side of the Senior Center patio, this gem of a sitting/strolling garden was established around the time of initial construction of the building as an outdoor gathering space and gardening outlet for seniors at the center.

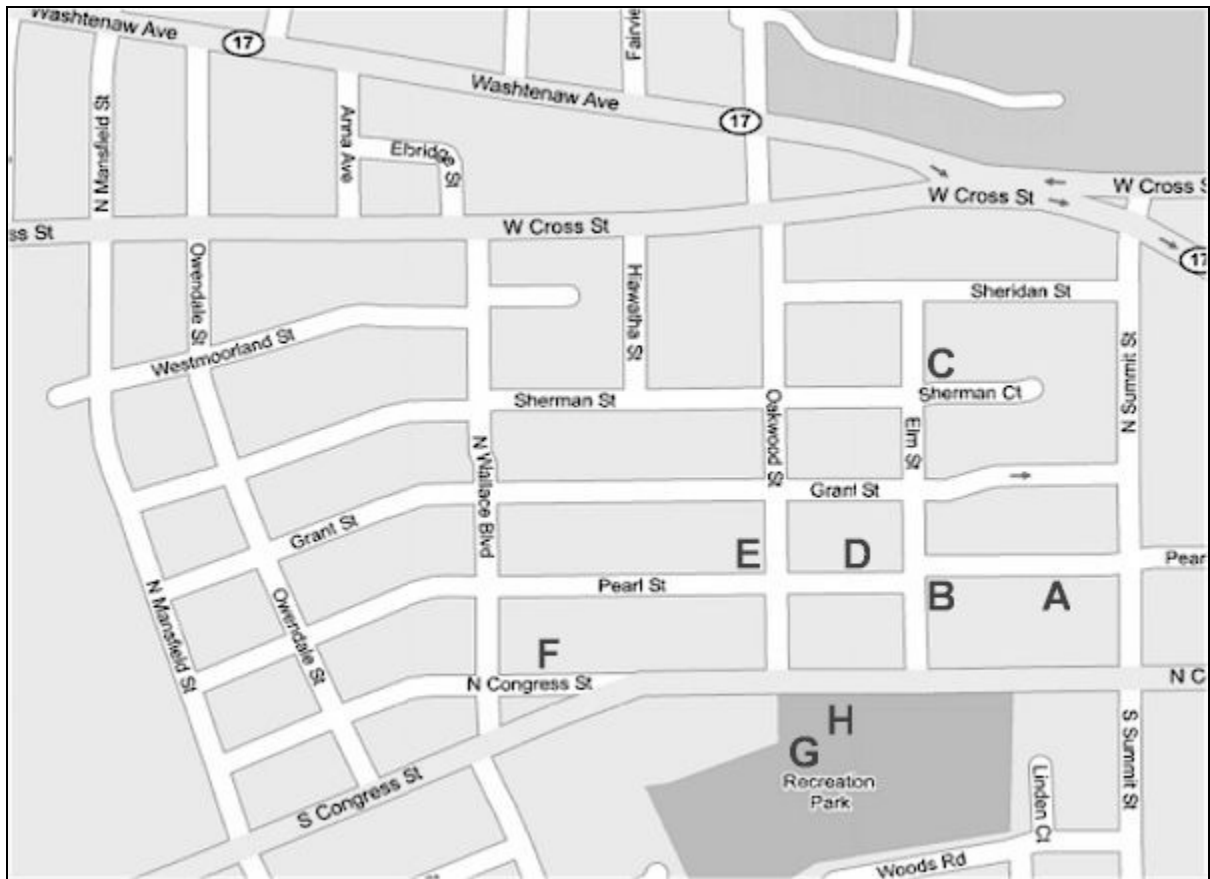
Conditions varied over the following years, with different levels of senior involvement. Then, approximately 15 years ago, the city received a grant to refurbish the garden, although ornamental gardens typically require extensive maintenance and regular care was limited.

Neighbors adjacent to the park began caring for the beds as time allowed and with the big push about a dozen years ago to revitalize Recreation Park, Rick and Carol Leyshock and Diane Willis established a more organized maintenance routine.

With the help of a handful of volunteers, different beds were adopted and annual care scheduled. This year the neighborhood gardeners will have the welcome assistance of the Ypsilanti Garden Club beyond the initial efforts during Ypsi Pride.

The design of the garden is organized around a horseshoe loop in the center that features a range of pastel colors, arranged within a border of lavender. Each of the other beds that radiate around the edges feature roses of a specific color and the long bed closest to Congress Street highlights a mix of perennials. Take a rest on one of the benches and enjoy the display of color and fragrance in this beautiful community-run garden.





Notes: