

The Gardens at the St. Anthony Park Library

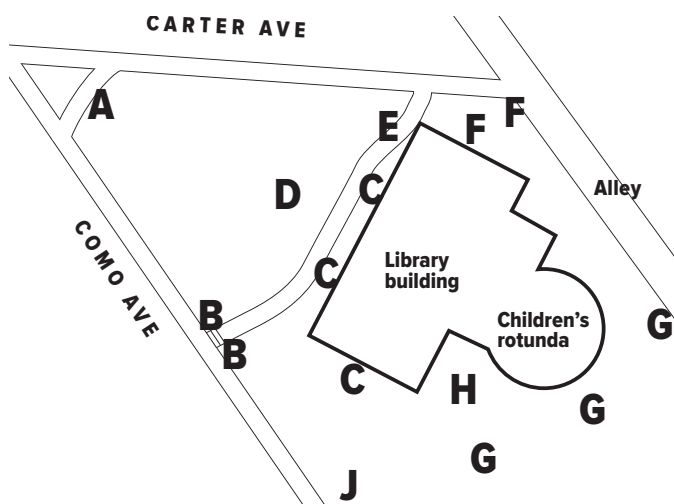
The St. Anthony Park Garden Club was formed in 1997. One of its original members, Warren Gore, our gardener of blessed memory, was a library volunteer who had been planting the window boxes with funds from the St. Anthony Park Library Association. He encouraged the Garden Club to adopt the planting of the window boxes as a project. This is how the Garden Club began its now 22-year relationship with our Carnegie Library.

Over the years, additional gardens sprouted. Let's start with the triangle garden at Como and Carter Avenues. This is the **A Incredible Edible herb garden** where each summer we harvest herbs for library patrons. Check out basil African Blue basil. Its lavender flowers are edible. Lavender 'Cynthia Johnson' edges the sidewalk and generally survives Minnesota's winters. Parsley, sage, rosemary, thyme, oregano, chives and *Allium* 'Summer Beauty' are featured in this year's garden. Beans and squash grow in tripods.

Continue southeast along the Como sidewalk and you will encounter **B twin oval beds** straddling the short staircase. Featured are two *Hydrangea paniculata* cultivars, 'Little Quick Fire' and 'Bobo', both early-flowering and short. The ground cover planted beneath these shrubs is self-heal, *Prunella grandiflora* 'Bella Blue', but thrives only away from the stairs because it was killed by winter salt use. We also added woodland iris (*Iris cristata*) and ground covers like string stonecrop and bugleweed.

The **C window boxes** feature *Solenostemon* (Coleus) 'Heartbreaker', four kinds of petunia (Itsy White, Big Deal Flamenco Dancer, Crazytunia Cosmic Purple, and Supercal Sunray Pink), and Marengo ivy.

Fronting the library's **D grand staircase**, we feature two powdery-mildew-resistant perennials: *Phlox paniculata* 'Jeana' and *Phlox* 'Daughter of Pearl'. Jeana was rated with excellent disease resistance at the Mt. Cuba Phlox Research study and is also known to be a butterfly magnet. Daughter of Pearl has a U.S. patent because of its mildew resistance. These are interplanted with annual *Nicotiana* 'Perfume Deep Rose', *Salvia* 'Mystic Spires Blue' and 'Bodacious Smokey Jazz'. Along the front of the bed, you'll find many *Helleborus* 'Frostkiss Molly's White' with their variegated foliage, first trialed



in the Twin Cities in this garden, and the pollinator-favorites *Calamintha* 'Montrose White' and *Nepeta* 'Neptune' near annual alyssum 'Snow Crystals'. In the center of the bed, between the yews, sweet woodruff surrounds a recently planted *Hydrangea paniculata*.

In 2017 we planted a perennial **E rock garden** along the Carter Avenue staircase/ramp. In spring 2018, everything was dead from winter salt use. Since then, this rockery features seasonal succulents that are carefully potted each fall and overwintered under grow lights.

The two parts of the book return garden—now referred to as the **F upper and lower crescents**—have distinctly different plantings. The **lower crescent** features many new varieties of *Petunia*, along with *Isotoma* 'Fizz n Pop Glowing Violet', *Impatiens* 'Wild Romance Lavender', and alyssum 'Easy Breezy Pink'.

The **upper crescent** features many native plants and nativars, which are selections of native plants, along with additional perennials that prefer well-drained soils. Natives include rattlesnake master and purple prairie clover. Included in the planting are *Sedum* 'Autumn Joy', dwarf bearded iris, lamb's ears, and crested iris. Nativars include switchgrass (*Panicum* 'Hot Rod'), *Asclepias tuberosa* 'Hello Yellow' and *Achillea millefolium* 'Cerise Queen' and 'Summer Pastels'.

Walk up the alley to enter the **G pollinator garden** by the boulders. Work began on this garden in spring 2015 following the removal of buckthorn, mulberry, honeysuckle and boxelder in late 2014. You can follow the path along the fence and

connect to a switchback that brings you down to the rotunda patio off Como Avenue. This garden was designed to attract pollinators: bees, butterflies and hummingbirds. Imagine the dome of the children's library addition as the sun and the rows of perennial and annual flowers as the rays of the sun. That is the very simple design for this garden. Once you reach the **H lower**

lawn and patio via the switchback, enjoy the blooms of bumblebee magnet black cohosh (*Actaea racemosa*) that follow the curve of the rotunda, flanked by the rosy hummingbird magnet *Salvia* 'Wendy's Wish'.

Then take the brick path to Como Avenue. To your left is the **I crabapple border** featuring *Malus* 'Candymint', underplanted with spring ephemerals, pink-flowering *Anemone*, yellow *Corydalis*, Korean goatsbeard (*Aruncus aesthusifolius*), prairie smoke (*Geum triflorum*), miniature dwarf bearded iris and annual *Talinum* 'Kingswood Gold', and *Impatiens* 'Bounce White'.

Why do our library gardens glow? Two reasons. First, it's the result of thousands of dedicated volunteer hours by the gardeners, the Weekly Weeders. The weeders meet each winter to discuss the garden designs and place plant orders. They also help plant, weed, and mulch the gardens and assist with potting divisions each spring for our club's annual plant sale (the first Saturday in June). Funds from this sale provide for the purchase of plants for the library gardens and two scholarships that are annually awarded at the University of Minnesota Department of Horticultural Science. Second, the gardens glow because we exclusively use Kern Landscape Resources Organic Growers Mulch, fondly referred to as the OMG-OGM, as both a soil amendment and mulch. 🌿