



Little Rock's award-winning Marjem Ward Jackson Historic Arkansas Gardens are located on the ground of the Little Rock Visitor Information Center at Historic Curran Hall, one of the city's oldest homes built in 1842. The center has a wide variety of information on city hotels, restaurants, and local and statewide attractions.

Hours:

Monday – Saturday 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Sunday 1:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

Closed:

New Year's Day, Thanksgiving and Christmas Day



MARJEM WARD JACKSON

Historic Arkansas Gardens



Location:



615 East Capitol Avenue

I-30 West, Exit 140B, Right on 6th Street
I-30 East, Exit 140 to 6th Street, Left on 6th Street



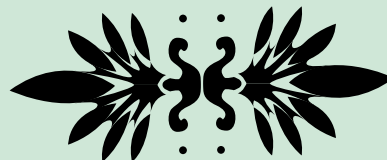
Little Rock
LittleRock.com

*The Little Rock Visitor Information Center
at Historic Curran Hall*

501-371-0076

qqa@quapaw.com

quapaw.com



The gardens at the Little Rock Visitor Information Center at Historic Curran Hall are designed specifically to showcase antebellum garden style and plants. The design intent was not to restore the original garden, nor to create a period landscape with a working kitchen garden and orchard. Instead, the intent was to use plants that were growing in this area when the house was constructed in 1842-1843 in order to create a landscape that would be attractive to Little Rock's present day visitors at all times of the year. This fits the description of a historic garden: some plants original to the site; all of the plants representative of the period - in this case mid-19th century Little Rock; and the layout typical of gardens of the era. A wide variety of native species include some with interesting stories like the Arkansas Black Apple, Amsonia, Baptisia, Bois d'Arc, Buckeye, Cherokee Rose, Confederate Rose, fig, Hyacinth Bean Vine and Vitex.

The Marjem Ward Jackson Historic Arkansas Gardens honor a dedicated gardener and civic leader. Mrs. Jackson was born in England, Arkansas, in 1912 and was raised with an appreciation of flowers and trees, which lasted throughout her lifetime. She was a past president of the Little Rock Garden Club and worked tirelessly in her own garden as long as she was able. She served her city and state in many ways, including being a long-time member of the Junior League of Little Rock and serving as president of three other civic organizations: the Colonial Dames of America in the State of Arkansas, the Aesthetic Club, and the Edelweiss Study Club.



These historic gardens, given to the City of Little Rock by Mrs. Jackson's family, comprise three areas. In the front lawn a clipped boxwood *parterre* lines the front walk. Mixed flowering shrubs define the outer boundaries of the front lawn and echo the symmetry of the Greek revival house. Bulbs and colorful seasonal flowers are added beneath the shrubs. Camellias mark the outside corners, with one being original to the site. (Foundation plantings did not become widely used until the 20th century.) Crepe myrtle *allees* define the east and west sides of the house and usher visitors to the rear area, defined by a white picket fence.

Historic crepe myrtles, original to the site, were moved to the rear near the original office building. The playhouse is surrounded by an extensive border garden, containing flowers for cutting as well as a variety of fragrant herbs and other plants that attract butterflies and bees. Antique roses, salvaged from the original plantings, are arranged on the east fence, with heirloom iris, donated by the Central Arkansas Iris Society. Heirloom roses are located in the playground garden. Others line the brick walk along the side of the new two-story brick building that is constructed on the footprint of the original kitchen. Both brick and flagstone continue to be used for paths, some edged with boxwood. Flowering vines accent the picket fence. Flowers fill the oval bed in the visitor parking area, echoing the historic circular carriage drive, and flowering shrubs, including Vitex and hollies, line both sides of the lot.

Many old-fashioned plants brighten Curran Hall's gardens—althea, amsonia, baptisia, beautyberry, beauty bush, buckeye, coleus, columbine, coneflower, coreopsis, daisy, dianthus, ferns, fig, forsythia, four o'clock, foxglove, gardenia, giant snowflake, globe amaranth, hellebores, hyacinth bean vine, hydrangea, iris, lantana, peonies, rose campion, salvia, seasonal bulbs, snapdragon, spiderwort, surprise lilies, tuberose, verbenas, veronica and zinnias. Fragrant herbs intermingle with flowers.

Gardening has long been popular with Little Rock residents. As early as 1849, visitors commented on roses, native flowers,



boxwoods clipped in ornamental shapes, and arbors with vines, fruits and berries. Travelers brought plants back with them and nurseries shipped dry-root plants in until local nurseries were established in the 1850s. The sharing of cutting and seeds was popular at this early time, and still is. Fragrance and utility seem to have guided choices of plants, but all owners loved roses – so much so that in the nineteenth century Little Rock was known as the “City of Roses.”

Curran Hall's landscape has been documented several times. Before the restoration of Curran Hall began, Pulaski County Master Gardeners helped survey the overgrown site, identifying plants worthy of saving and even taking home roses and iris to keep them in “foster care” during construction. Master Gardeners also researched plantings that would be appropriate to the period and provided the designer with a list of these plants and those that were originally on the site. In developing a landscape plan to fit both the antebellum house and its twenty-first century adaptive use as Little Rock's Visitor Information Center, the designer, Becky Thompson, included styles and plant stock which were appropriate to Little Rock in the 1840s.

Today, members of the Pulaski County Master Gardeners maintain the restored gardens and add seasonal color, retaining the spirit of a historic garden in a public setting. Although the gardens were just established in 2002, they are surprisingly mature.