

Prospect Prairie Gardens

Prospect Prairie Gardens are at the intersection of Prospect Avenue and the Southwest Path. Located in both the Dudgeon-Monroe and Regent neighborhoods and along the slopes of the Path, the Gardens cover about 1600 square feet. Both neighborhood associations provide financial support. Besides adding natural beauty, the Gardens provide habitat for wild life, feed the endangered Monarch Butterflies as they are migrating, reduce stormwater runoff, and promote connections among neighbors.

Jake Blasczyk, DMNA resident and Steve Arnold, Regent resident, first envisioned the Gardens. On behalf of the Regent Neighborhood Association, with the support of the Dudgeon-Monroe Neighborhood Association, they wrote and acquired a small Madison Neighborhood grant to start the Gardens. In the spring of 2010 volunteers, recruited and led by Jake, began transforming the neglected, ugly, and weed infested site. Prior to the restoration, tall weeds, invasive plants, creeping vines with large leaves covered the entire area with rocks barely visible. The rocks were meant to reduce erosion and were placed shortly after the Path opened. The rocks make the Gardens a unique and challenging site.

Now passersby and visitors enjoy the vibrant colors, textures and shades of prairie plants, native grasses, shrubs and perennials. Under the trees on the south side is the shade garden. Many terraced beds carved from the rocks are filled with prairie plants.

Colorful birdhouses, several mobiles, and a white marble sculpture entitled Ara are other pleasing features. A neighbor bordering the Gardens donated Ara and another neighbor and his son made the birdhouses. Yet another neighbor purchased and assembled the tool shed, located on their property, which borders the Gardens.

When in season, visitors enjoy the raspberries, savor the blackcurrants, and pick cherries from two trees. A neighbor near the Gardens picks the elderberries for jams and jellies. Near one cherry tree is a vibrant patch of purple poppy mallows that blooms well into September.



The need for volunteers is constant. Volunteering has many benefits. These include relief from the tensions of life, the joy of working with others, contributing to your neighborhood and maintaining a green space with many environmental benefits. For example, the deep rooted prairie plants filter and reduce stormwater runoff from ultimately entering nearby Lake Wingra.