



## Master Gardener Volunteers of Cobb County Root House Project



**Project Location:** The Root House Museum and Garden, 145 Denmead St. NE, Marietta, GA 30060

**Project Workday:** Monday, 9 a.m. (Time may vary during summer months.)

**Project Chair:** Sue Burgess (770-953-3309)

**Co-chair: Sue Heller (770-422-2044)**

**Co-chair: Electa Keil (770-919-8910)**

Hannah and William Root, early settlers of Marietta, built the Root House around 1845 at the corner of Church and Lemon Streets. Today the Greek revival style house stands just two blocks from its original location. Furnished with period furniture in the fashion of the 1850s, each room shows evidence of middle class life-style. Likewise the garden is designed to reflect the gardening practices of the mid-19th century. It features only those plants grown in the South between 1840-1860 including vegetables, culinary herbs, medicinal herbs, decorative plants and a wide selection of heirloom shrubs.

Every plant is researched to make sure it is time and geographically appropriate before it is added to the garden. Each winter seeds are distributed to the volunteers giving them the opportunity to learn about the plant and growing from seeds. The resulting seedlings are installed in the gardens at the appropriate time.

Mr. Root was a druggist who opened the first pharmacy in Marietta a decade or so before the Civil War. A large bed in the side yard is dedicated to healing plants that would have been grown at that time. A vigorous hops plant is growing up the porch. It would have been used for medicinal rather than brewing purposes. Pillows stuffed with the dry blossoms were used as a sleep aid.

A large apple tree is in corner of the yard. While too lemony and mushy to be eaten out of hand, when dried as done in the 1800s they're excellent for fried pies and cakes. This variety ripens early, so apple slices were threaded on strings to dry before the weather became too humid. Green beans from the garden were also dried on strings so the family had a source of both fruit and green vegetables in the winter.

The raised vegetable beds and the trellis that supports vining plants are located at the edge of the authentic swept yard that is used as a gathering place for tour groups. The vegetables are grown organically. The harvest is displayed for visitors on the kitchen building porch to show them what a family of the period would have grown and eaten.

In the perennial bed volunteers are constantly cutting back what has finished blooming to highlight what is coming into flower. This makes the entire landscape more appealing to the Root House visitors, especially the thousands of school children who tour the site in the spring and fall. While the MGVOCCs do not act as guides, they do supply the docents with information about the gardens.

The Root House volunteers work hard to plant and maintain the grounds of the historical site. As project chair Sue Burgess says, "It's unique in that it combines both history and horticulture. Plus it's interesting to see how many of the vintage plants are still grown today."



*The mission of the MGVOCC is to advance the horticultural education and practices of its members and to promote the knowledge of and interest in gardening to the members and to the public.*

For more information contact Carolyn Gentry, Master Gardener Coordinator at the Cobb Extension. Phone: 770-528-4070