



**Master Gardener
Volunteers
of Cobb County
Smith-Gilbert
Arboretum
Project**



Project Location: 2382 Pine Mountain Road, Kennesaw, GA 30152

Project Workday: Thursday, 8:30 a.m. (Time may vary during winter months.)

Project Chair: Jack Driskell (770-428-1317)

Co-chair: Jan Dahling (770-419-9716)

Co-chair: Cheryle Kerr (770-977-2176)

In the fall of 2004 the citizens of Kennesaw had the opportunity to purchase and preserve a unique private property owned by Dr. Robert Gilbert. It includes a restored historic home, a collection of notable contemporary sculptures and a vast variety of trees, shrubs, and herbaceous plants.

Currently under development as a public garden, the Smith-Gilbert Arboretum's mission is "To provide the community a resource for appreciation, conservation, education and enjoyment of diverse horticultural collections, the fine arts and historic preservation."

The 13-acre site features an extensive plant collection, 30 contemporary sculptures by nationally known artists and a restored c. 1840s plantation house. The naturalistic woodland setting provides a sanctuary for birds and other wildlife.

Dr. Gilbert has donated 30 pieces of his extensive collection of both representational and contemporary art that are installed throughout the gardens. MGVOCC Jo-Evelyn Morris says, "The sculpture is not the main focus of the SGA but it enhances the garden." The pieces are site-specific. She adds that the art provides "little focal points that grab you." The KSU art department is also involved with the SGA with hopes of doing events that will feature "Art in the Garden".

Initially trees and shrubs were planted to attract migratory birds, leading to an outstanding collection of berry-producing plants. The owners' interest in plants, including some exotic varieties from Japan and China, continued over the years. Today the SGA includes a perennial flower border, a woodland walk, a water garden, a rock garden, a conifer garden, a rose garden and a Plant a Row for the Hungry vegetable garden. The SGA is divided into zones with careful records kept for each.

Currently the garden is open on the first Friday of each month for docent-led tours. Certain Saturdays are set aside for the public to enjoy the gardens, while garden clubs generally visit on Mondays, Tuesdays or Wednesdays. The SGA provides a great educational opportunity.

No one minds the physical labor to maintain and improve the SGA. They exchange gardening tips and ideas while working. The mini-class that begins each workday is popular as is the potluck lunch the last Thursday of each month. Jack Driskell, MGVOCC and the City of Kennesaw's part-time gardener, says, "It is a joy to be a part of this magical place." He says there is always room for additional volunteers and with seven acres planted, there is always more than enough to do!



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