VICTORIA EDUCATIONAL GARDENS
A MULTI-DEMONSTRATION GARDEN

Victoria County Master Gardeners, Cooperators (2000 - 2007)
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Victoria County

SUMMARY:

An eight year project to establish Victoria Educational Gardens (VEG) has proven successful with 37 demonstration gardens plus 13 other garden features all within one acre size. 700 – 1000 youth plus several hundred adults tour the demonstration gardens annually. As a result, area residents learn sound ecological techniques, proper landscape management and can see from direct visual appraisal how recommended landscape plant varieties survive and/or flourish in the Victoria County environment.

OBJECTIVES:

To demonstrate sound, environmental and economical horticultural practices and to provide a resource for the general public to see first hand how recommended plant varieties perform in the Victoria area so these techniques and varieties can be adapted in local private and commercial landscapes.

MATERIALS and METHODS:

In the spring of 2000, three master gardeners working on a small landscape project to beautify the old Foster Field Officer's Club at Victoria Regional Airport let their imaginations run wild and came up with the idea to create a complex of gardens in the open field that surrounded the club.

The wheels started turning, design plans were drawn up and by the end of the year the Victoria Regional Airport Commission granted permission for the Victoria County Master Gardeners Association to use the land surrounding the Officer's Club for an educational garden.

Thus, Victoria Educational Gardens (affectionately called VEG) was designed and divided into 6 phases - the first one being the children's garden, vegetable garden, storage shed and greenhouse – built all on the west side of the Officer's Club. Phases 2 through 5 include 16 mini-gardens, a large water garden and several demonstration areas on the property to the south and east of the Officer's Club. Phase 6 is planned to be a large pavilion with restrooms on an existing slab adjacent to the vegetable garden on the west side.

RESULTS and DISCUSSIONS:

Initial groundbreaking took place May 10, 2001 with about 50 active Victoria County Master Gardeners. After many months of fundraising, and with determination, enthusiasm, love of gardening and hard work, the first phase was completed and presented to the community on May 18, 2003. For the next two years, the Master Gardener took a break from hard labor and concentrated on spreading the word about the gardens and encouraging the community and schools to tour the educational facility.

With five more phases to complete, Master Gardeners conducted fundraising efforts by writing grants, sending out letters for community support, conducting plant sales twice a year, holding garden symposiums and co-sponsored annual garden tours. By 2005 enough funds were raised to continue garden plans for phase 2 – 5 on the east side of the Officer's Club which was started and completed in late 2006 and early 2007. (See Table 1 for a list of gardens) Pavers were sold at cost for the Military Honor Garden and as a fundraiser for the Path of Family and Friends.

After six years in the making with the help of now 129 Master Gardeners and more than 10,000 volunteer hours (see Table 2 listing VEG chairs), the vision is now a reality with 37 demonstration gardens plus 13 other garden features bringing the investment in this educational project to over $250,000.

VEG is open free to the public from dawn until dusk for individual viewing and is located at the Victoria Regional Airport at 333 Bachelor Drive. Victoria Educational Garden tours are conducted by VCMGA Members and Interns. Public tours can be arranged for groups by calling the Extension Office at 361-575-4581 or email: moni31@suddenlink.net or nancyk@vcmga.org.

Table 1. A list of 37 Educational Demonstration Gardens and 13 other Garden Features constructed at Victoria Educational Gardens (VEG), 333 Bachelor Dr., Victoria County Master Gardeners, Cooperators, Victoria County TX, (2000 - 2007).

Educational Demonstration Gardens

Entrance Garden
Children's Garden
- Concrete Pond
- Rainbow Circle
- Animal Alphabet Circle
- Sensory Area
  - Gravel water feature
- Native Area
- Birding Area
  - Birdhouse classroom
- Butterfly Area
  - Secret Garden with butterfly house

Vegetable Garden
- Compost Area

Patriotic Garden
Heirloom Garden
Earthkind™ Rose Trial
Meditation Garden
Ornamental Grass Garden
- Large wind chimes

Antique Rose Garden
Xeriscape
- Bubble Urn Fountain

Iris Garden
International Garden
Perennial Garden
Turf Grass Demonstration
Annual / Seasonal Garden
Ground Cover Demonstration
Pocket Herb Garden
Shade Garden
Water Garden with waterfall, bog and land bridges
Tropical Garden
Patio Container Garden
- Original Fountain

Daylily Garden
Weed Demonstration

Other Garden Features

Donor Wall
Gazebo (x2)
Greenhouse
Storage Shed
Rainwater Harvesting System
Cathedral Arbor
Rose covered Arbor
Pergola
Labyrinth
Military Honor Garden
Path of Family and Friends
French Drain
Dry Creek Bed

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS:

Appreciation is expressed to Pat Plowman, Chairman of VEG, all Victoria County Master Gardener volunteers and their spouses and the following numerous donors to Victoria County Master Gardeners and Victoria County Extension making VEG possible:

Golden Raintree $20,000 and more
Crossroads Foundation

Texas Redbud $10,000
Victoria County
Victoria Regional Airport

Live Oak $5,000
Dr. and Mrs. Charles Borchers
Charla Borchers Leon
Formosa Plastics Environmental Endowment Fund Trust
Sparkman Industries, Inc.

Southern Magnolia $2,500
Atzenhoffer - Milton Greeson Family
Easley Roofing
First Victoria
Four Seasons Garden Center-John Fossati
H-E-B
Junior League of Victoria, Texas, Inc.
O'Connor and Hewitt Foundation
Dr. and Mrs. Donald Plowman
Wells Fargo Bank

Silver Maple $1,000
A. E. & Myrtle Gunn York Trust
Alpine Aquascapes—Steve Parker
BP Chemicals
Brannan Paving Company, Inc.
Citizens Medical Center
Devereux Foundation
Double D Ranchwear
Lowe's
Margie McMullen
Mrs. Dorothy Ploeger
Regional Steel, Inc.
Texas Ponds and Water Gardens—Matt Boring
The Pond Crew—John Cenicola
The Trull Foundation
The Victoria Advocate
Morris Underground Construction-John Morris
Bobby and Janie Varley
Victoria Air Conditioning, Inc.
Victoria Rotary Club
Mr. and Mrs. Michael Walshak
Buddy Zaplac

Hummingbird $500
Diane and Brent Alexander
Aqua-Zyme Services, Inc.- J. W. Massey
George and Debbie Boozalis
Mr. and Mrs. O.R. Borchers
Bette-jo Buhler
Chesnick Furniture Company-Robert B. Leon
Fordyce, Ltd.
Leonard and Penni Gietz
Dr. and Mrs. Leon Gilner
Mrs. Milton Greeson
Mrs. Irene Harbus
Victoria Heart and Vascular Center, Inc.
Insight Advertising, Design and Marketing
J. S. Landscaping
Dr. and Mrs. Stephen Janecek
Cliff Knezek Family
Lack's Furniture
Northside Rotary Club
The Honorable and Mrs. T. Michael O'Connor
Dr. and Mrs. Harvey Renger
Superior Gutters—Gordon Wendel
Chris and Tenna Thompson
Triple D Security – Jay Lack
Victoria Garden Club
Wendt Electric

Butterfly $250
Antique Rose Emporium
Mrs. Olivia Blanchard
Mrs. Helen Boatman
Cole, Cole & Easley, P.C.
Custom Fence
Dr. and Mrs. Fred Fry
Mrs. Mary Greeson
Home Depot
Buddy and Gormeen Kamin
Ken and Sandy Knief
Mr. and Mrs. Don Krueger
Katie, Connally and Mason Krueger
Dr. Buddy Lee, III
Richard and Mary Logan
Gaye Gilster Lee
Jean Herman
Matt and Lisa Lively
Dr. and Mrs. Robert McMahon
Memorial for Barbara Sanford Copenhaver
Nelson's Water Gardens
Mr. and Mrs. Robert Partain
Dr. and Mrs. Charles Rader
Mrs. Mary L. Sawyers
Mrs. Grace Sullivan
Anne P. Wagner, M.D.
The Walrod Family
Mr. and Mrs. Patrick H. Welder, Jr.

Ladybug $100
Dr. and Mrs. Richard C. Allen
Tom and Nancy Ashy
Associated Engineers & Surveyors--Billy Settles
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Bruce and Vicki Bauknight
Bernie's Boats and Motors, Inc
John and Sandra Billups
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Pat Blanchard
Dr. and Mrs. Gary Branfman
Dr. and Mrs. Donald Breech
Mr. and Mrs. John Brimberry
John Welder Cliburn
Colonial Funeral Home
Come One Come All- Methodist Sunday School Class
Gary F. Cox, M.D.
Crossroads Abstract & Title Co., Inc.
Dierlam Hay and Feed
Mr. and Mrs. W.T. Donoghue
Mr. and Mrs. David Drost
Earthworks
First Capital Bank
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Goldman, Hunt and Notz, LLP
Jimmy and Michelle Goodson
Edwin Gregurek
The Honorable Philip Guittard
Gulf Coast Stabilized Materials
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Kitchen & Bath Showcase-Service Supply of Victoria
Kiwanis Club of Victoria, Texas Foundation
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Terry Ware
Frances Wedemeier
Mrs. Leo J. Welder
Drs. Frank and Linda Wilson
Oscar Zuniga, M.D.

Dragonfly $50
Mrs. Dorothy Alcorn
Grace Margaret Anderson
Dr. Dan and Margaret Beekler
Mr. and Mrs. Gerald Bludau
Mr. and Mrs. Cliff Brock
Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Buckert
Margie Burditt
Carpet Masters
Crossroads Physical Therapy
Mr. and Mrs. Russell Donohue
Dobie Kay and Travis Hunter Drost
Mary Drost
Cecil and Lonnie Greer
Foster Creek Station

Mr. and Mrs. Travis Fromme
Dr. and Mrs. Pablo Garza
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Bob and Stormy Harvey
Mr. and Mrs. Paul Holm
Mr. and Mrs. Ronnie Hyak
Ingram Ready Mix, Inc.
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Loretta Villafranca, Luke and Lynzee
The Honorable and Mrs. Wayne Watkins
Dr. and Mrs. Terry Whitehouse
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Mark and Melita Zafereo

Caterpillar $25
Dr. and Mrs. Eugene Bigelow
Dr. Lawrence R. Breitkreutz
Debbie Busby
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Mr. and Mrs. Robert Coffey
Mrs. Beverly Connally
Drs. George and Ruth Constant
Jorge Armando Diaz, M.D.
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Barbara Schmidt
Mrs. Laura Shirley
Mrs. Evelyn Smith
Pat and Ruby Tagliabue
Dr. and Mrs. Bob Westbrook,Jr., Haley and Kyle Oliver

Garden Friends
Bill Blanchard
Duane Breeden
Jack Brown
Employees of Sparkman Industries, Inc.
Donald Janis
Sammy Klelar
Michael Milam
Bob Partain
Don Plowman
George Sartor
Jack Smith
Bobby Varley
Buddy Zaplac

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Aerial View of Victoria Educational Gardens (VEG)

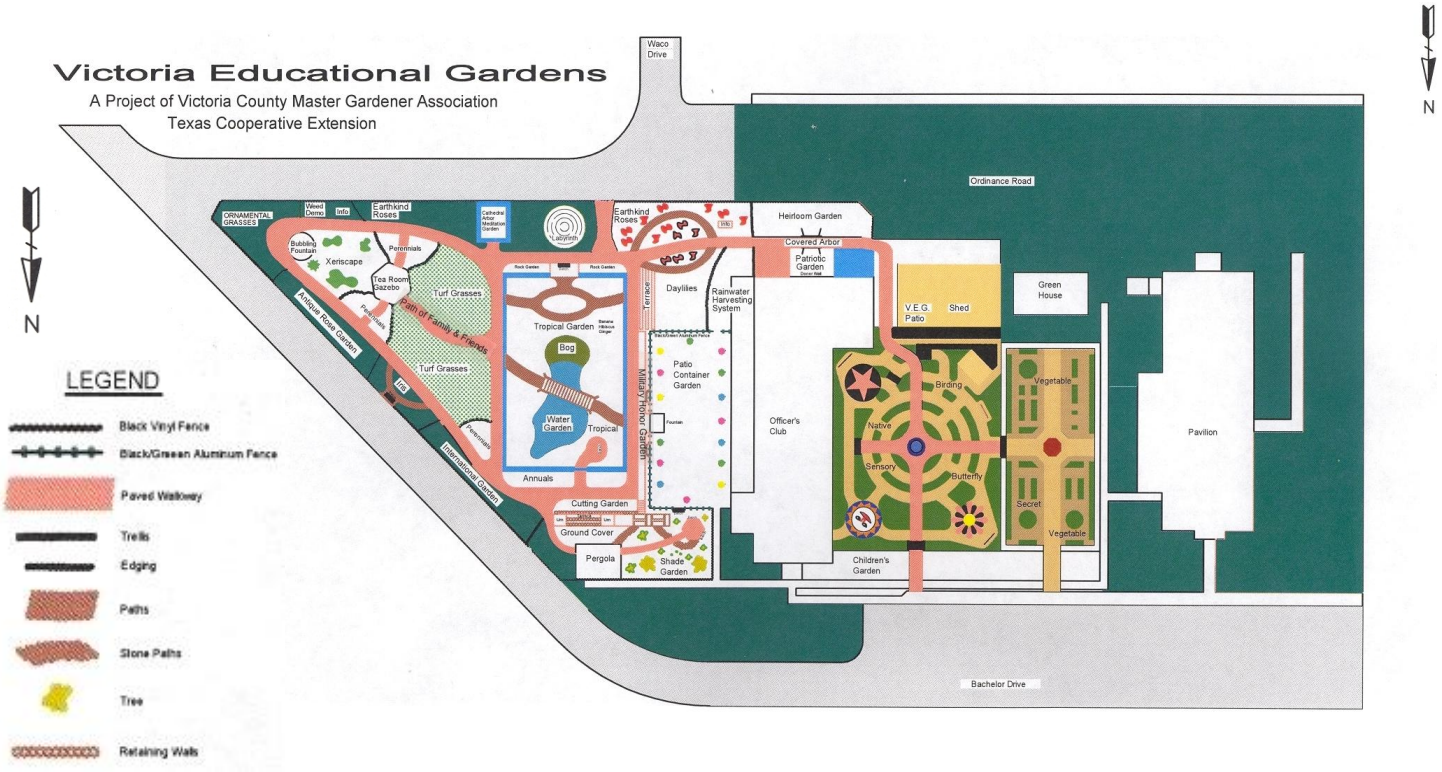

Table 2. Seven Main VEG Chairs, 29 Garden Areas and Sub-Chairs (for 37 Demonstration Gardens) at Victoria Educational Gardens (VEG), 333 Bachelor Dr., Victoria County Master Gardeners, Cooperators, Victoria County TX, (2000 - 2007).
(Each Sub-Chair has 3 – 13 Master Gardener volunteers assisting with the project.)

1. Fran Kanak
   - Butterfly - Barbara Buethe
   - Sensory - Maria Sobczak
   - Texas Native - Olivia Blanchard
   - Birding - Diana Maley

2. Ken Knief
   - Vegetable Garden - Gerald Bludau
   - Garden Entrance - Kim Green, Kathleen Musselman

3. Roy Cook
   - Greenhouse - Roy Cook
   - Airport Entrance - Cliff Knezek
   - Rainwater Harvesting - Glen Chilek
   - Compost - Susan Cohen

4. Nancy Zaplac
   - Patio Container - Martha Sawyers
   - Water Features - Pat Plowman
   - Tropical - Sandy Knief
   - Labyrinth/Meditation - Ann Parks Hedrick
   - Red/White/Blue - Mary Lauer

5. Pat Plowman
   - Shade - Gerrie Van Toledo
   - Terrace Herb/Groundcover - Mary Janak
   - Seasonal/Annuals - Barbara Schmidt
   - International - Kathy Chilek
   - Iris -
   - Antique Roses - Marie Graham
   - Ornamental Grasses -

6. Suzann Herricks
   - Xeriscape - Teresa Hulsey
   - Perennial -
   - Turf Grass - Charlie Neumeyer
   - EarthKind Roses - Jerome Janak
   - Day Lily - Doris Martinak
   - Patriotic - Nancy Kramer
   - Heirloom - Karen Renger

7. Ed Gregurek
   - Maintenance/Construction -
   - Clean signs and kiosks -
   - Train roses and vines -
   - Mailboxes and maintain office - Carmen Price
   - Prune privets and yaupons - Virginia Richter
   - Where ever needed –

View of children's garden on west side of Officers club.

View of gardens established in 2006 - 2007 on east side of Officers club.