

# Lauritzen Gardens Teacher's Guide with Pictures

This guide is designed to help you and your students learn about the various gardens within the 100-acre property. This guide is geared towards K-8<sup>th</sup> grade groups, but has helpful information for a wide variety of groups. Have fun discovering Lauritzen Gardens!

Please note, the garden may appear different from the guide depending on the time of year when the tour occurs, garden projects, and or, other variables such as weather. Some garden areas may be visited only during guided tours (see the school-youth tour web page for further details).



## **Arrival and Parking Gardens**

The arrival garden is the first visual experience visitors encounter when entering the garden. Guests are welcomed by displays of perennials and colorful annuals that lead to the visitor and education center as well as a hillside of wildflowers.

Did you know that the parking garden contains rain gardens that can be used to recycle rainwater? During the spring, summer and fall, keep your eyes and ears open for a variety of animals such as frogs and ducks.



## **Kenefick Park**

Near the Arrival and Parking Garden, you might also be interested in visiting Kenefick Park, which is located just west of the Visitor and Education Center. Climb the stairs and you will discover two of the largest locomotives ever built- The “Big Boy” steam locomotive and “Centennial” diesel locomotive. The park bears the name of former Union Pacific Chairman- John C. Kenefick. The black locomotive is Big Boy, No. 4023. Twenty-five of these steam locomotives were built from 1941 to 1944. The yellow locomotive is Centennial No. 6900. Centennials were the largest diesel-electric locomotives ever built and named in honor of the railroad’s centennial anniversary celebration in 1969. The Centennials were designed for high-speed freight.



**Visitor and Education Center** (not available for self-guided tours)

The 32,000-square-foot visitor and education center includes a 5,000-square-foot floral display hall. During much of the fall, winter and spring seasons, the floral display hall exhibits seasonal shows such as the Holiday Poinsettia Show (shown in the picture).



**Marjorie K. Daugherty Conservatory** (not available for self-guided tours)

A study in luxuriant flowers and foliage, unusual plant life, dramatic water features and panoramic views, the 17,500 square foot conservatory is a walk-able work of art for all four seasons. From tropical gardens with soaring palms and vibrant flowers to temperate gardens with moss-covered oak trees and blooming azaleas, to an ever-changing gallery space for magnificent floral displays and special events, guests can explore picturesque garden areas and experience creative horticultural designs throughout the year.



**Woodland Trail** (not available for self-guided tours)

Meandering through a century-old forest of bur oak, trail hikers enjoy the serenity of this wooded area while observing the native plant community that has long existed on our riverside Loess Hills. In addition to bur oak, the trail winds past American hop hornbeam, gooseberry, Kentucky coffee tree and shagbark hickory.



### **Festival Garden Sidewalk**

In this garden you will find annual and perennial flowering plants, trees and several art sculptures. Keep your eyes open for a sculpture that is called ‘Rolling Stones.’ What do you think it looks like? The Festival Garden is filled with annuals and perennials. Do you know the difference between an annual and perennial? Annuals are plants that live for one year and perennials live for many years.

#### **Plants to Discover:**

- Redbud - This tree provides a wonderful example of the plant life cycle (i.e. buds, flowers, seed pods) Point out the unique heart-shaped leaves.
- Bald Cypress - One of only a few conifers that loses its leaves in winter! Can you guess how it got its name?

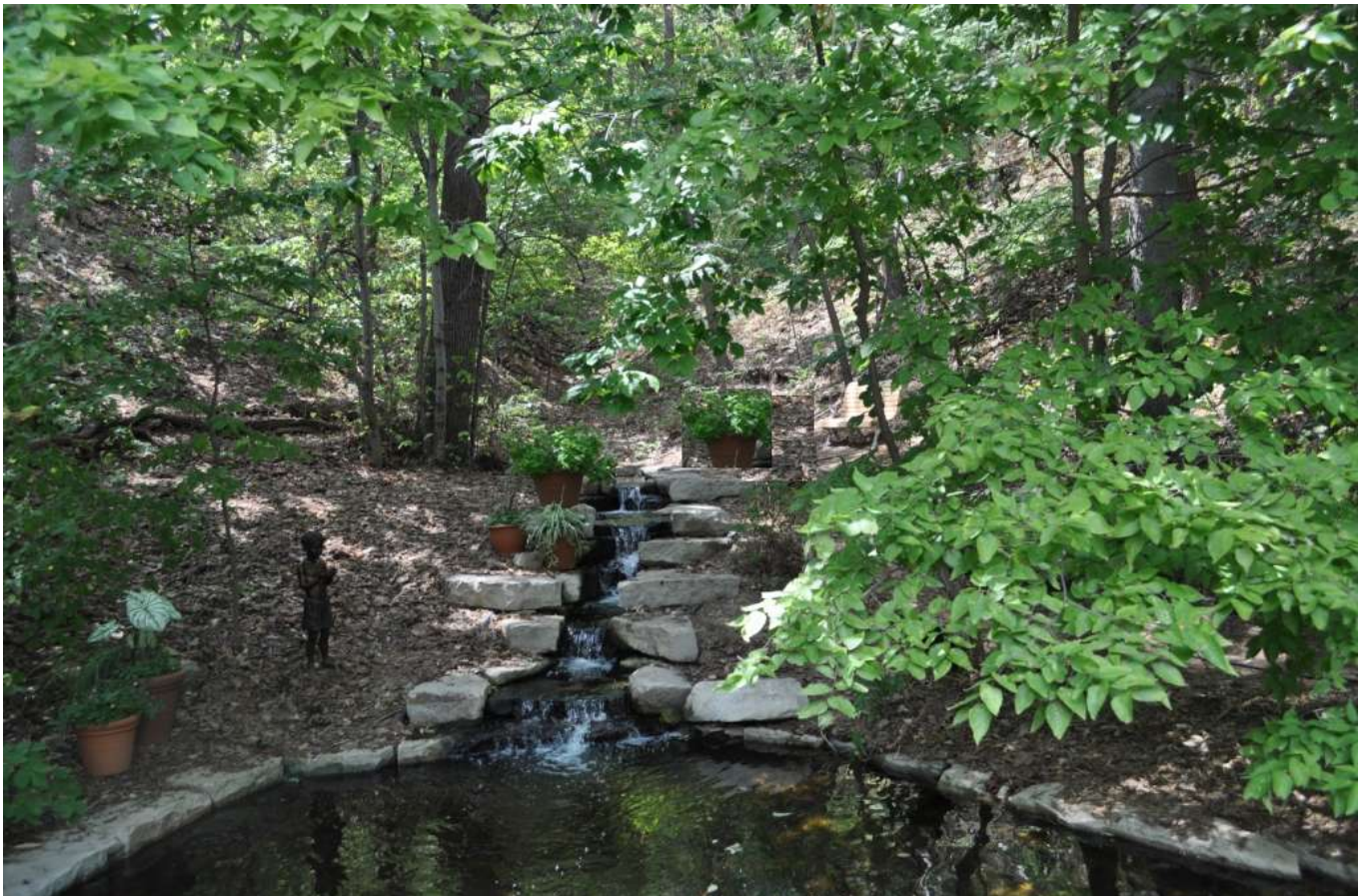


### **Woodland Waterfall**

Notice the natural valley between the hills that was created by water erosion. What is the importance of the trees planted on the hillside? (Tree roots help prevent erosion). The statue at the base of the Woodland Waterfall is called 'New Friends'. Why do you think this statue is called 'New Friends'?

Across from the Woodland Waterfall is a 10-foot tall fence that surrounds the garden. Why do we have this fence? (To keep deer out) Why would we want to keep deer out? (They eat plants and flowers)

What types of wildlife call the garden their home? How many can you name? (foxes, rabbits, frogs, turtles, squirrels, birds, wild turkeys- just to name a few!)



## Victorian Garden

This garden is filled with different textures and shapes. When the designer planned the spaces in this garden, did they use a lot of straight lines or curvy lines? What is the shape of the reflecting pond in the middle? The middle rectangular beds are planted in symmetry. What does this mean?

The flowers planted in this pattern are called annuals. Do you remember how long an annual lives? The plants around the edge or perimeter of the garden are called perennials. How long does a perennial live? The perennials on the west side are different than the perennials on the east side because the plants on the west side need the morning sun and the plants on the east side need the afternoon sun. Do you recycle, reduce and re-use? The statues and architectural elements in this garden were saved from historical buildings in Omaha and Council Bluffs and serve as an example of how we reuse things in our garden.

### Plants to discover:

- Bleeding Hearts - In late spring, find the plant with flowers shaped like pink hearts. Bleeding Hearts are considered to be a perennial.
- Bergenia - In the back of the garden under the stone arbor, you will find Bergenia. Have your students GENTLY rub the leaves together until they start to squeak. What does it sound like? Pigs! The scientific name is *Bergenia* and the common name is Pig Squeak. Scientific names never change, common names do. During your visit, notice the silver plant labels that have both common and scientific names listed. (Please note: This plant can also be discovered in the Garden in the Glen and the Children's Garden.)





### **English Perennial Border**

More than 300 different plant species and cultivars are displayed amongst the thousands of individual sun and shade-loving perennials. English gardens are known for their masses of colorful plants and informal design style.



### **Peony Garden**

With many different varieties featured, the garden has an extended blooming period from late April through early June. This serves as a beautiful segue between the early spring blooms of bulbs and flowering shrubs and the perennials of summer.



### **Garden in the Glen**

This garden was established in 2003. A glen is defined as a valley between two hills. As you look up, you will see that the garden is lined with Black Locust Trees. Notice the leaf- is it simple or compound? You may also notice that this garden is more shady than our typical sunny garden spaces. Some plants in a garden prefer full sun while others prefer growing in a shady area.

### **Suggested Activity:** “Deer Ears”

Gather your students around the waterfall. Please stay on the grass or the path. Have your students make cups with their hands and then place their cupped hands behind their ears. Now have them face the waterfall. Have the kids experiment with the ears by having them take their hands down and putting them back up. What is the difference? The waterfall should sound louder with the deer ears on. Show the kids how deer and other animals can turn their ears to hear in different directions.



## **Arboretum and Bird Sanctuary**

An arboretum is a garden for trees. Why are trees important to our everyday lives? List items we get from trees. (i.e. air, syrup, fruit, root beer, shade, habitats, etc.).

In the middle of the small marsh pond at the entrance to the Arboretum is a bronze sculpture of the sand hill crane. 500,000 cranes gather along Nebraska's Platte River each March to rest and eat before they travel north to Canada. Sand Hill Cranes gather on the Platte River because the shallow river has several sandbars that are great for roosting. The cranes also stay on the sandbars for protection. When a predator touches the water, the water ripples signals to the cranes to find safety. Predators that the cranes have to watch out for are coyotes, bobcats, domestic dogs and eagles.

This garden also serves as a bird sanctuary. What is a sanctuary? (A place of safety). Keep your ears and eyes open for several species of birds including cardinals, chickadees, robins and finches.

### **Bird Fun Facts:**

- Junco: known as ground feeders
- Goldfinch: Known as the garden thief
- Chickadee: Sings it's name "Chick-dee-dee-dee"

Why is it important to have a place of safety for birds in the middle of the city? Bird homes (like trees) get torn down when new buildings and houses are made. They need some place to go if their homes are destroyed.

During your walk in the arboretum, look for Nebraska's state tree, the Cottonwood tree. Hint: Leaves are shaped like a Hershey's Kiss and sparkle in the sky. Their leaves are covered in wax, allowing the sunlight to reflect off their leaves, causing the leaves to sparkle.

Did you find the marsh pond? What is a marsh? A marsh is a low-lying wetland with mostly non-woody plants, such as grasses, rushes, cattails and sedges. There are several different types of animals that live in the marsh. Some animals live in the water (fish, tadpoles, insect larvae) and some animals live at the surface of the water (frogs, turtles). Other animals live in the spongy areas of land surrounding the swamp (raccoons, opossums, muskrats, snails, earthworms) and use the marsh for feeding, shelter, and/or nesting areas.



### **Model Railroad Garden**

The garden was meticulously handcrafted by landscape designer Paul Busse and his team at Kentucky-based Applied Imagination. This garden features several G-scale model trains, which travel past replicas of historically and culturally significant Omaha buildings. The buildings, bridges, and trestles are constructed using all-natural materials like seedpods, twigs, and whatever else nature has to offer.

Can you locate: pine cones, bamboo, acorns, bark, etc. The trains running through the garden are known as G-scale trains. Did you see the steam locomotive running on the tracks?



## Rose Garden

This formally designed garden is planted with nearly 2,000 rose plants.

Hybrid tea, grandiflora, floribunda, climbing and shrub roses are all planted in this garden. Two peak blooming seasons occur; the first around the end of May and the second beginning around the 15th of September and continuing through frost.

Name two important things about roses:

1. They have thorns.
2. They smell good.

Roses use their thorns as a form of protection. Are all roses the same? How are they different from each other? Do they all smell the same? Roses come in all true colors except one. Can you name it?

Roses are given very interesting names. Choose one name that you find beautiful, or funny, or curious. Look at the rose that was given that name. Why does the rose have that name? During your visit, you may see garden volunteers working in this garden. Volunteers help out a lot in this garden because it takes a lot of work to take care of roses. They plant, weed and deadhead the roses every week.



### **Children's Garden**

No other garden better illustrates Lauritzen Gardens' educational focus than the children's garden. It is the site of many of the garden's children's activities including school tours, youth organization projects, and garden children's programs.



### **Herb Garden**

A favorite place of both gardeners and cooks, the herb garden consists of nine different planting beds nestled under a prairie-style arbor that provides anchorage for many climbing plants. Each bed has its own theme such as: culinary, medicinal, natural dye and ethnic.



### **Founders' Garden**

This garden is made up of hundreds of beautiful hosta representing nearly 50 varieties. Other shade-loving perennials and ferns – representing more than 150 varieties - are joined with annual plantings to provide color throughout the season.



### **Japanese Garden**

Visitors may walk on a path, through a kabuki gate which signals “public space,” through the Sunpu castle gate to a red torii gate at the base of the scaled replica of Mt. Fuji.





### **Song of the Lark Meadow**

This area is full of wildflowers. What does it mean to be a wildflower? A wildflower is a flowering plant that survives in a given area with little care. It is a native plants prairie.

The Song of the Lark Meadow is filled with beautiful wildflowers and other native Nebraska flowers and grasses. This native wild flowering meadow is named after the short story of the same name by Willa Cather, a well-known Nebraska author.



### **Garden of Memories**

The Garden of Memories serves as a symbolic space for the celebration of life's milestones. A primary feature of the garden is a 40-foot-wide half-circle reflecting pool – the largest formal water feature at Lauritzen Gardens.



### **Spring Flowering Walk**

The David and Pamela Gross Family Spring Flowering Walk is made up of thousands of spring flowering bulbs and accented with beautiful spring flowering trees and shrubs. Flowers begin blooming in March and last into May.

