

Two Kinds of Gardening at Cave Hill Cemetery



Native plants in Cave Hill pollinator garden. Courtesy Sarah Schaffner.

By Sarah Schaffner, Horticulture Manager

The challenges of gardening are endless. Where do I plant? What do I plant? How can I maintain an optimal growing environment? But, did you know there are actually two very different types of gardening- horticulture and permaculture?

Both of these major practices of gardening have become part of the landscape management plan at Cave Hill Cemetery. Only within the last several years have we found the true value of permaculture.

Horticulture vs. Permaculture

Horticulture, by definition, focuses on the commercial production of crops, using those fruits, vegetables, flowers, and marketing. Within this realm of gardening, you will find the most common areas of practice- olericulture, pomology, viticulture, ornamental horticulture, turf management, arboriculture, and postharvest physiology. Each of these branches are what most of us are engaged in on a daily basis through the harvesting of vegetables, management of our turf, harvesting of fruits and nuts, and even the care and delicate management of our plants and shrubs.

Permaculture is based on upon key principles that revolve around the development and practice of methods and techniques for accessing natural resources that are beneficial for us and the environment. By definition, permaculture is focused on the deliberate creation of agricultural ecosystems and exhibit all the differences and cohesion of natural ecosystems, i.e. incorporating philosophical practices of sustainability, agroforestry, ecology and organic gardening into the implementation of your garden space.

Guiding principles of the practice of permaculture include:

- Monitoring the land
- Managing the surplus that nature gives us
- Multi-functionality

Permaculture requires a multi-disciplinary approach. Within this practice, there is a greater focus on the utilization of resources that reduce waste, reduce soil, groundwater, and air pollution, and do not use fossil-fuel fertilizers. Most importantly, the built environment must be reliant on its own energy.

Cave Hill Cemetery's Introduction to Permaculture

Cave Hill Cemetery became more engaged in the permaculture philosophy through a relationship with Idlewild Butterfly Farm, and their owner Blair Leano-Helvey. From the opportunity to acquire and release butterflies for our annual Cocktails by the Lake event, we learned about the work that Idlewild is doing to maintain and diversify the environment.

Idlewild Butterfly Farm's mission is to promote the conservation of butterflies, insects, and pollinators. As a whole, they provide plants and resources for increasing sustainable native butterfly habitats and founded the Re-wilding Louisville initiative to provide butterfly gardens at no cost throughout Louisville. The plants that they sell are grown with the use of beneficial insects and are never touched by insecticides, which is critical for their safe inclusion in a butterfly garden. They are a fully certified USDA Containment Facility located on the periphery of the Smoketown neighborhood, with a variety of tours and engagement opportunities.



Monarch Butterfly. Sarah Schaffner.

The Idlewild team and Cave Hill Cemetery Horticultural Manager, Sarah Schaffner, have developed a tremendous partnership. The exchange of planting ideas, controlled releases of insects to sustainably maintain the landscape, and public engagement opportunities have been a thoughtful culmination of science and practice on the grounds of the Cemetery.

With the addition of beekeeping to Cave Hill Cemetery around 10 years ago, Cemetery staff became acutely aware of the need to mitigate the use of chemicals and find less invasive methods to manage portions of the landscape. Since this time, the Cemetery has acquired accreditation as a Level II Arboretum and is considered one of the largest single Monarch Waystations in the Commonwealth

of Kentucky. With focused attention on creating the setting for pollinators and other critical insects, the Cemetery has methodically embraced both forms of gardening, making a profound statement regarding its commitment to fostering a well-maintained green space in the urban setting.

Permaculture Philosophy in the Garden

Not unlike any other living creature, beneficial insects have basic needs for shelter, water, and food. A diversity of plants is assured to attract a diversity of insects that will benefit your garden. Here are just a few examples beneficial insects and plants that you may want to consider:

Plants that attract Lacewings:

- Dill
- Angelica
- Caraway
- Coriander

Plants to attract Ladybugs:

- Dill
- Butterfly weed
- Dandelion

Plants that attract Hoverflies:

- Lavender globe lily
- Dwarf Alpine aster
- Buckwheat

The next time you are in the Cemetery, we encourage you to carefully survey the landscape setting. See if you can find our pollinator gardens and engage with our teams regarding the many projects that are underway.

Sources

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