Biennial Garden Tour
& 6th Annual Plein Air Art Festival

Sunday September 26, 2021, 1 – 5 PM

Featuring the gardens of the historic University Hills neighborhood

8 AM – Plein Air Artists check-in at tent located at Overhill and Kingsbury Drive in University Hills.

Noon – Garden Tour tickets may be purchased at check-in tent, Overhill and Kingsbury Drive.

1 PM – Tour begins.

3:30 PM – Artists turn in work at the Flynn Park School Playground.

4 PM – Art work judging begins, closed to the public.

5 PM – 7 PM – Reception - Flynn Park School Playground, with casual food and beverages, artist prizes will be awarded.
2021 UCB Garden Tour
“Amuse-Bouche”
Here’s a taste of the delights to come on this year’s tour of the Gardens of University Hills:

Some gardens have resident gnomes, others may host a fairy or two. But this enchanted garden contains a whole miniature world for model trains to travel through. All aboard! Next stop: The station next to an arched bridge over a stream filled with waterlilies.

One area of this secluded garden reflects an Asian influence. It has a gently dripping bamboo fountain near a Japanese maple, a stone lantern, and a statue of a seated Buddha. The broad flagstone patios and elevated pergola have a several seating areas in which to sit and enjoy the serenity.

This gracious stately home presents a traditional, formal face to the street, but the enclosed private backyard sports a lively personality. Relax on the patio to the sound of splashing water in the aquamarine plunge pool and delight in multi-hued borders of annuals and perennials which are echoed in artfully placed mirrors.

PLEIN AIR ART FESTIVAL WITH GARDEN TOUR, 2021

Watch artists from all over metropolitan St. Louis painting in University City September 1 – 25. Then on Garden Tour Day, September 26, they will be in and around the U. Hills neighborhood. Stay after the tour for the reception and see the winners and all the artwork displayed and for sale. This will be held at the Flynn School playground.

WINNING ART FROM THE PLEIN AIR VIRTUAL EVENT, 2020

Thanks to the late David Cornell for judging this virtual show.

First Place
“Sun Play All Day”
by Kathy Morrison

Second Place
“Green Center Condos”
by Margaret von Kaenel

Third Place
“Perfect Day on the Greenway”
by Michelle Streiff

Honorable Mention “Tower at Heman Park”, by Allen Kriegshauser
Honorable Mention “Pink Roses at the Green Center”, by Allen Kriegshauser
Honorable Mention “Sun-dappled”, by Elizabeth Moreland Kern

Youth Category

First Place
“Tranquility”
by Salena Roach

Second Place
“Hydrangea”
by Maxine Adams

Third Place
“Floppy the Fish Goes to University”, by John Roland

Honorable Mention “Hostas”, by Maxine Adams
You’re Invited!

U CITY IN BLOOM

Biennial Garden Tour & 6th Annual Plein Air Art Festival

Sunday, September 26, 2021

U City in Bloom’s Garden Tour will feature the historic University Hills neighborhood. Come be inspired by glorious gardens and gifted gardeners. Share the vision of talented Plein Air painters. Artists will be creating beautiful art during the Garden Tour and throughout U. City in the month of September.

This is a special fundraiser for U City In Bloom. Tickets $20
Purchase tickets online or on day of at the tent located at Overhill and Kingsbury
www.ucityinbloom.org, or call 314-725-8243

Reception and Art Display - 5 PM, Flynn Park School Playground
Located outside and walking distance from University Hills.
Treat yourself to casual food and beverages.
Master of Ceremonies, McGraw Milhaven, radio talk show host, The Big 550 KTRS.
Entertainment by U. City High School String Orchestra.
Plein Air artwork will be on display and available for purchase at the reception.
A group of UCB’s newest volunteers has been working diligently since early spring to tend the beautiful Bird Garden at Centennial Commons. Recently named the U City in Bloom NatureScapers, we all have a love of nature and a passion for native plants.

It wasn’t always that way. We grew up with and embraced traditional horticultural practices that emphasized the human view of what constitutes a lovely garden. But our gardening hearts and minds changed as we learned about ecological landscaping and the plight of many of the creatures that share our world. The sun gives energy to plants, but it is the native plants that feed native insects. Butterflies return as we provide native host and nectar plants - Milkweeds that Monarchs cannot survive without, Violets for Fritillary larvae to feed on, Golden Alexanders to support Black Swallowtail caterpillars and a diversity of native flowering plants to provide nectar for all pollinators. Native bees return when they have nectar and pollen to eat and bare soil or branches to make their homes. Birds are able to reproduce when there are enough caterpillars to feed their young and enough trees and shrubs to build their nests in.

The natural cycle continues as we leave the leaves and spent stalks over fall and winter as this is the insect nursery for so many creatures.

It was a cultural shift to welcome all of those fall leaves! But seeing the wildlife multiply rapidly in our gardens gives us more pleasure than a tidy lawn ever could. Watching all those bees and butterflies at the Monarda and Swamp Milkweed made it easier to give up most of the Daylilies and Peonies. Join us at the Bird Garden as we work, chat and learn. The photos below are just a sampling of the variety of bees we have observed. As gardeners, we have the power to help nature and reverse some of the huge bird and insect losses we are experiencing. Reducing the loss of biodiversity really does start in our own backyard!

To Volunteer, please go to www.ucityinbloom.org to sign up on our volunteer page.
Director Jesse Gilbertson is responsible for hiring these talented and dedicated professionals to work with him creating the University City beautiful gardens. It is Jesse’s ability to design, create, and present the gardens so colorfully and artistically.

Nathan grew up in the small town of New Glarus, Wisconsin. He has a Bachelor’s Degree in Horticulture from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. Upon graduation, Nathan worked as the propagation intern at Chicago Botanic Garden for one year. He then worked for nearly 10 years in the horticulture division at Missouri Botanical Garden before starting his job with U City in Bloom in this last May. At MBG, he was responsible for the maintenance of nearly four acres which included the President’s Garden and the area around the Administration building. During his tenure at MBG, Nathan designed and installed the Stumpery and the Know Maintenance Gardens. He is passionate about plants, their ecological role in the environment, as well as resilient garden design. Outside of work, Nathan has many things he enjoys doing to help him unwind. He and his partner, Phil, enjoy developing and maintaining their home garden, which is brimming with a diversity of ornamental plants. Nathan also really enjoys baking. He is an avid follower of the Great British Baking Show, which inspires him to take on new challenges and learn new baking skills and techniques. Some other favorite pastimes are traveling, going for long walks at Shaw Nature Reserve, and watching movies and TV shows.

Tracy designs and takes care of the gardens in our beautiful downtown and some of the other gardens on the eastern side of town. These include our roundabout and city hall and library, as well as the Loop planters. She grew up in Wisconsin where she Bachelor of Fine Arts in Painting from the Milwaukee Institute of Art and Design. Upon moving to Saint Louis her artistic side was complimented when she decided to develop her green thumb and earned her Associate of Horticulture degree from St. Louis Community College. While in school she worked on the Meramec Campus as a student worker with the wonderful staff and faculty there. In 2013 she enjoyed the opportunity of working as a horticulture intern at Forest Park Forever. This is where she met and built a friendship with U City in Bloom’s Director of Horticulture, Jesse Gilbertson. After a year of working at Tower Grove Park Tracy started her job with U City in Bloom in spring 2015. A few of Tracy’s favorite plants are Salvias, Zinnias. Ornamental grasses, and Magnolias. In her free time, she enjoys spending time with her boyfriend and their two cats and being outdoors, camping, bicycling, hiking, and roller skating.

“THE IMPORTANCE OF U CITY IN BLOOM”

U City in Bloom is a great asset for the city. It is one of the strongest and most innovative community garden organizations in the region. With over 200 public gardens, U City in Bloom is critical in enhancing the visitor experience.

The need for enhancing areas throughout the City can often exceed the existing capacity of existing organizations. Future planning of new or additional gardens should balance capacity, equitable distribution, and visibility. Continue to utilize U City in Bloom as a resource in beautification and thoughtful landscaping.

Quote from: University City Economic Development Strategy, March 2021
2021 University City Memorial Day Run

organize the event, UCB, the Green Center, and the even so were delighted that the three non-profits that people safely apart. We had hoped to just break and windless -- and had a wonderful time. Participants signed up for a perfect day to run a 5K-- overcast, cool, As some COVID restrictions were relaxed, the Memorial Day Run was back on track May 31. Over 650 runners participated, and the Run will return in full force next year we hope!

Excited buyers were lined up and waiting for the Plant Sale opening.

People carefully selecting plants creatively displayed and ready.

Plant Sale, 2021, Outside at the Mary Fahey Pavilion, on Vernon and in the Hoop House.

With careful planning and creative layout design and direction by Linda Fried, and the many volunteers who spent hours potting, pruning, and prepping the sale came together. And Mother Nature blessed us with a beautiful day for the sale.

Having both skipped a year’s sale and finding it necessary to hold the event outdoors for the first time, we had no idea what to expect. YET, we had a fabulous assortment of plant donations, a phenomenal effort made by a huge number of volunteers (potting, watering, hauling, arranging, educating and, of course, manicuring and labelling, thank you Dalene and Jerold Tiers, this all came together to make this one of the most successful U City in Bloom plant sales ever! Thanks to Linda Fried.

Executive Director..............Judy Prange

Volunteer Coordinator...........Jane Keating

Board....................James Bartley

Treasurer..................Eric Karch

Secretary..................Jo Seltzer

Board....................Linda Ballard

Board.....................Eric Karch

Board......................Charlotte Jackson

Handsomely planted, this all came together to make this one of the most successful U City in Bloom plant sales ever! Thanks to Linda Fried.

U CITY IN BLOOM BOARD MEMBERS

U City in Bloom is a 501(c)(3) organization
A WOODLAND IN YOUR BACKYARD

Jesse Gilbertson, Director of Horticulture, U City in Bloom

I bet many of you didn’t know that University City has a 26 acre woodland. Have you ever heard of Ruth Woods? Located in the northwest corner of U City adjacent to the Ruth Park Golf Course, Ruth Woods is host to wildlife and many types of native trees and shrubs and it is just waiting to be explored. The Ruth Woods trail is a lovely walk that is shaded and quiet except for the birdsong, just the right place for relief from the hectic activity we all live with here in the city.

Technically, the Ruth Park Nature Trail starts on McKnight just north of the golf course right before you run into Olive Blvd. If you look closely you will see a log that our forestry department has carved to mark the trailhead and you can park right there. The gravel trail runs over bridges and rises past benches to a loop with a hidden pavilion under the trees. Along the 1.2 mile loop trail there is a connector trail that continues east where you will emerge for a brief view of the first tee of Ruth Park Golf Course. Just a hop skip and a jump later the trees reach over again, and you find yourself in the Urban Bird Corridor managed by the Green Center. Continuing you will discover a wetland spanned by a lovely boardwalk that ends with the prairie at Brittany Woods Middle School. Another option to start the hike is to park at the golf course parking lot and walk down the drive just east of the lot to the wetland.

Ever since I discovered Ruth Woods I have been intrigued and attracted to its quiet corner of our city. The first memories for most people are of trees and I have early childhood memories of exploring the tall dark stands just outside of the village I lived in. These places are important for learning and inspiration and for fitness and reflection. More so, they are important and essential to the survival and proliferation of native plant species, pollinators, insects, birds, and wildlife.

Unfortunately, Ruth Woods has been invaded by exotic bush honeysuckle and wintercreeper. These plants take over and eliminate natural plant communities that are the engine for a thriving ecosystem. If you have visited the woods you have seen this, and just like me have felt like there is no way to ever take it back. Well, this spring UCB, the Green Center and the City of U City plan to start the good fight. In partnership we are going to bring conservation to your community work to bring this woodland back. Our plans include diversifying the species of woodland plants and trees, eliminating the invasive species, and restoring the eastern entrance path at the golf course parking lot for better trail access and parking. We are so lucky to have this place and want to make sure it thrives for the generations that follow to enjoy. Jump on-board and volunteer in this precious resource. Contact U City in Bloom to join in this restoration effort for Ruth Park Nature Trail.
WHAT’S GOING ON AT OAKBROOK AND DELMAR?

The Oakbrook Forest subdivision, located north of Delmar and west of McKnight, was developed in 1945. Its main entrance is Oakbrook Lane, a curving divided parkway off Delmar. Unlike many modern subdivisions’ fanciful names, Oakbrook Forest is descriptive of natural features that are still present. A tributary of Black Creek (a brook originating in Ladue) formed the sunken trough in the median of Oakbrook Lane, and the hundreds of now mature pin oaks planted when the subdivision was built seventy-five years ago form a leafy urban woodland.

The corner of Delmar and Oakland is a prime garden location near the western entrance to University City. Several trees were recently removed under the direction of City Forester Jacob Kaiser because they were dead, diseased, or had been damaged in accidents. Soon a beautiful new U City in Bloom garden will take shape there. Pictured is the plan designed by our gifted horticulturist, Jesse Gilbertson.

Larger trees, such as oak, maple, and evergreens, will shade understory redbuds, viburnum, and diverse plantings. Paths will wind towards a garden bench. Kaiser remarked, “Glad we could help. I believe the expansion of the garden is going to provide a greater benefit ecologically and aesthetically than the trees removed.”

Over the years, pleasant seating spots were put there by residents, and a tree that was cut down was carved into a whimsical squirrel sitting on the stump. Neighbors on both sides of the linear city park love this space. They look forward to this renovation, which will make the area even more inviting for quiet enjoyment, picnics, and larger events. In addition, the plan includes adding a “Little Free Art Gallery” – take some art, leave some art, enjoy some art. Children can collect natural objects to make an art project and display it. We’re excited to watch this transformation unfold.