



U CITY IN BLOOM

FALL 2025

OUR MISSION is to enhance University City through artfully designed public gardens, community involvement, partnerships, and environmental education.

Visit gardens in the historic neighborhoods of U Heights #3, The Theodore Link Historic District, West Portland, and Phoenix Heights.



...YOU'RE INVITED...

2025 Garden Tour & *Plein Air Art Festival*

...Sunday, September 28...

Garden Tour 1–5 PM

Reception & Art Display 5–7 PM

*Heman Park Community Center
975 Pennsylvania*



This is a special fundraiser for U City in Bloom. Tickets are \$25 and can be bought in advance online at ucityinbloom.org, by calling 314.725.8243, in person on September 28, between 8am–1pm at the Heman Park Community Center, 975 Pennsylvania, or by returning the ticket order form on page 3, by Tuesday, September 23.

U City in Bloom Garden Tour and *Plein Air* Festival



The 9th Biennial U City in Bloom Garden Tour and 10th Annual *Plein Air* Festival takes place on Sunday, September 28, from 1–5 pm. Stroll through historic neighborhoods near Washington University while visiting the beautiful gardens featured on the 2025 Garden Tour. Observe *Plein Air* artists

at work during the day and view their finished creations at the evening reception afterwards. The reception at the Heman Park Community Center (975 Pennsylvania) from 5–7 pm includes beverages and light refreshments. Meet the artists, visit with fellow gardening enthusiasts, and browse the gallery of paintings, which will be for sale. It's a unique opportunity to own an original work of art depicting our beautiful city.

This event is the finale of the year U City in Bloom celebrated its 40th anniversary of service to our community. It has been filled with meaningful community engagement beginning with the successful Spring Plant Sale the



last weekend in April. Virtually every pot of the hundreds of perennials, annuals, veggies, herbs, trees, and shrubs had been sold by closing time on Sunday. With an emphasis on native plants, the sale help spread the word to “grow native” to promote biodiversity and be good stewards of our environment.

On May 25, the 51st annual Memorial Day Run, which benefits U City in Bloom and its partners, the Green Center, and University City Public Library, enjoyed perfect weather for the races. But it also recognized the plight of those affected by the EF3 tornado that devastated areas of St. Louis just 10 days earlier by asking participants to bring tornado relief supplies when they checked in to run. Two pickup truck loads of needed items were collected and delivered.



For further information on the Garden Tour and *Plein Air* Art Festival, and to purchase tickets, visit ucityinbloom.org. U City in Bloom uses the profits from the Garden Tour and earlier events to keep University City blooming in the coming years.

'Tis the Season for Winter Interest

Tracy Koehler, Staff Horticulturist

During winter, there is still so much to see and appreciate in U City in Bloom's gardens and University City Parks. Explore on warm days, bundle up on cold ones, and get out when it snows to discover characteristics of plants or gardens that you may not have noticed before.

Seedheads and spent flowers: The Bird Garden on the east side of Centennial Commons has a variety of plants with attractive seedheads. Hydrangeas in several UCB gardens have wonderful dry flowers that hold up through winter. Next season's flower buds can also be attractive in winter.

Native or ornamental grasses and grass-like plants: Many UCB gardens include at least one grass or grass-like plant. The Bird Garden has a variety of grasses and sedges. I love the mass plantings of little bluestem in the parking lot islands of Barbara Jordan and Pershing schools. The color is beautiful, they usually perk up after snow, and they offer movement and texture that really softens the look of the surrounding pavement.

Bark: Red twig dogwoods, at the Community Center and City Hall's east side, are valued for their winter color. Other beautiful

examples are the peeling cinnamon colored bark on oak leaf hydrangeas, at the Library and Flynn Park School; paperbark maple in Metcalfe Park; the multi-colored, peeling birch tree bark in Heman Park, and the patterns of white, green, and brown bark of sycamore trees in many locations. One tree I really love in winter is *Quercus stellata*, the post oaks in Flynn Park which have such curvy, interesting branches.

Fruit: The red berries of hollies really pop against spiky evergreen leaves at City Hall and Centennial Commons. Some crab apples at the Community Center have attractive fruit. The unique purple fruit of beautyberry can be seen in the Bird Garden.

Evergreen trees and shrubs: Evergreens anchor gardens, create beautiful backdrops for other plants, and soften the look of buildings and hardscape, but winter is their time to be the stars of a garden. The silvery-blue junipers by Centennial Commons always look wonderful in this season.

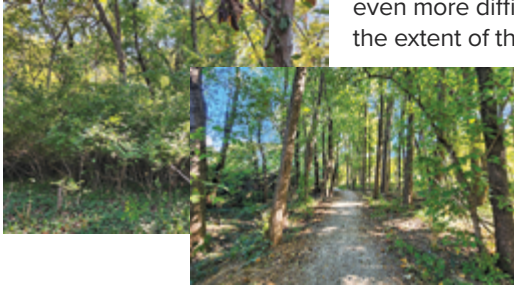


NatureScapers

News From the Woods
 Barbara Brain and Kathy Freese

Ruth Woods Progress Continues

It's hard to believe that U City in Bloom's NatureScapers group has been working in Ruth Park Woods for four years and it's even more difficult to remember the extent of the invasive plant



infestation when we first began our restoration project. We have certainly seen some dramatic

improvements during that time as our efforts have uncovered beautiful trees from dense layers of wintercreeper vine, revealing open vistas that had been impenetrable walls of bush honeysuckle.

Of course, as with any long term project, it hasn't all been smooth sailing. There have been times when it has felt like one step forward, two steps back. Although the devastating May 16th tornado didn't impact the woods, a storm a few days later felled



trees, blocked trails and left debris behind that we are still cleaning up months later.

This photo shows one of the areas affected by the storm. Half of a huge cottonwood tree blew down in that storm, landing close to the entrance to the newest trail by the river and blocking the path. Jesse used a



chain saw to cut up large chunks of woody debris and we added a lot of the smaller pieces to the dead hedges. The leftovers went into the creation of the huge brush pile. We're rerouting the trail around the large section of trunk which will remain in place to decompose and provide habitat for wildlife.

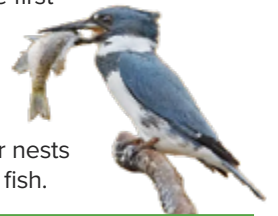
In spite of these setbacks, I still find it so satisfying to work in the woods alongside UCB staff and volunteers, several of whom have been involved with this project since it began. We're a friendly, industrious group that cares about the woods. We have interesting and fun discussions while we work and sometimes we have treats!

Seeing the woods transformed by our invasive removal/tree planting efforts is very rewarding as is seeing a greater number of people walking the trails and expressing their appreciation for the transformation of the woods.



We're seeing more birds, too. In a bird survey this spring, one of our volunteers noted fifty species of birds. Early this year, a pair of Belted Kingfishers took up residence on the riverbank for the first time since we began this

project. We saw them flying up and down the river and heard their distinctive rattling call. They're beautiful little birds that dig their nests into the banks of the river and hunt for small fish. I hope they will return next spring.



We are fortunate to have twenty-six acres of woodland habitat in such an urban area and the experience of joining with other like-minded people to take care of it has been a tremendous experience. Join us!

• • • Garden Tour and *Plein Air Art Festival* Tickets • • •

Clip and mail in by Tuesday, September 23rd.

Reservations are also available online: ucityinbloom.org, or call: 314.725.8243.

Name _____

Address _____

City, State, Zip _____

Email _____

Number of Tickets _____ @ \$25 each Total Amount Enclosed \$ _____

I am unable to attend but would like to donate \$ _____

Make checks payable to U City in Bloom. Mail to U City in Bloom, PO Box 50283, St. Louis, MO 63105-5283

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U CITY IN BLOOM

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Leaving a Legacy

Designating University City in Bloom under your traditional IRA is a tax efficient way to steer monies to UCB. Naming UCB as a designated beneficiary under your IRA may also be advantageous to your individual beneficiaries.*

Easy to do, merely ask your IRA financial custodian for a change of beneficiary designation form and you can update your wishes. Here is the information you will need:

UCB tax id: 43-1540073

Address: PO Box 50283

St. Louis, MO 63105-5283

***UCB does not provide tax nor legal advice.
Please consult your own advisor.**



With a Little Help From Our Friends

Although U City in Bloom has a dedicated corps of volunteers, we can always use more help. If you are looking for a short-term project for your service club, or your workplace or school regularly gives back to the community on a special workday, UCB welcomes your assistance. Working with our knowledgeable staff and experienced volunteers not only helps us out, but participants learn new skills and find out more about the environment while enjoying the camaraderie and meeting new friends.



For example, this summer University City School District's administrators held its day of service on July 23. They chose to add three U City in Bloom projects to their list. On a sweltering day, Tracy Koehler supervised workers at the outdoor learning area at Pershing School as they added mulch around the stumps and young trees; Christopher Gibbons helped them weed and plant new trees to provide shade for students at the bus stop at the High School; and Kristen Soifer's group met in Ruth Woods where young native trees were planted to help increase the tree population and diversity of our beloved woodland.



In June, members of the Academia Society, one of the oldest non-Greek lettered societies established by African American college-trained men, added four new bald cypress trees to Lewis Park. Jesse Gilbertson,

our Horticulture Director, gave them a quick course on removing turf, loosening and enhancing the soil, digging the correct size and depth of the holes, and mulching afterwards.



John Burroughs School's eight graders, as well as students in Washington University's Law School, have regularly contributed time and effort, often in the fall in Ruth Woods. As many as 100 middle schoolers at a time have descended on the Woods to move piles of cut

brush to the mulch pile, pick up trash, and learn about reclaiming and restoring this native urban woodland from invasive species. Every spring, one or two Burroughs high schoolers complete their senior project working with our staff and volunteers.

Want to join in? Contact Judy Prange, 314.725.8243, to discuss how your group can contribute! We also love to add single volunteers to our regular weekly workdays and welcome anybody willing to come. Sign up today online, ucityinbloom.org.