

Garden at the Creekside Education Building Parks of Chehaw

The SOWEGA Master Gardeners are currently implementing a landscape design at the site of the Creekside Education Building at the Parks of Chehaw. The project has been made possible by a monetary grant from the Georgia Master Gardeners Association and with donations of various materials given by local businesses. The hands on work are a joint effort of the local Master Gardeners, Chehaw employees, students of Albany Tech and county inmate trustees.

This project was begun because of the lack of any vegetation on site due to the death of two large Live Oak trees, a moderate to severe drainage problem and the continuous threat of nightly visits of the deer population. Therefore, the design incorporates a dry creek bed to serve as drainage when needed and plantings that will be beautiful, have low-water demands or maintenance requirements, and above all deer resistant. These requirements can be best met by using native or indigenous plants to this region. Once natives are established they require little needed supplement water, chemicals, fertilizer or pesticides. Plus native plants just seemed to be the logical choice for a nature park.

Upon completion, this garden will not only be a thing of beauty, but will be used for educational purposes. Chehaw management has agreed to allow Master Gardeners to teach the public various subjects using the garden as examples. With this in mind the mission statement of Master Gardeners is fulfilled “to stimulate the interest in and increase the knowledge of gardening and to voluntarily, enthusiastically, and responsibly share this knowledge with others.”

As of now:

- the site has been graded
- the dry creek bed has been dug
- all soil has been covered with landscape fabric
- several large boulders have been added for interest and to restrict parking
- large rocks and creek rock have been added to dry creek bed
- woody shrubs and trees have been planted
- automatic drip irrigation has been installed
- rain garden has been installed at base of dry creek bed
- the entire site has been mulch

Later plans:

- perennials added as needed for more seasonal color
- a path and two bridges to cross dry creek bed
- interpretative signage for identification of plants

It is our plan for this garden to be a continuing project – especially where we, Master Gardeners, can share knowledge, the love of gardening, and nature with the public.