

61st and Eberhart - Greenline Coffee Parkway Flowerbed Construction - Week of June 15, 2015

Many thanks to Sunshine Gospel Ministries volunteers for their team efforts! Below is what they did this week. See [Snapfish](#) for more pictures.

1. Existing Space

At the beginning of this week, we looked at the existing space for the garden on 61st and Eberhart, southeast corner. There is a nice long strip that runs north to south, west of Green Line Coffee. The strip was all grass when we began.



Sunlight:

When you are planning a garden, it is important to consider the sunlight your garden will get throughout the day. Because the sun rises in the east, we figured

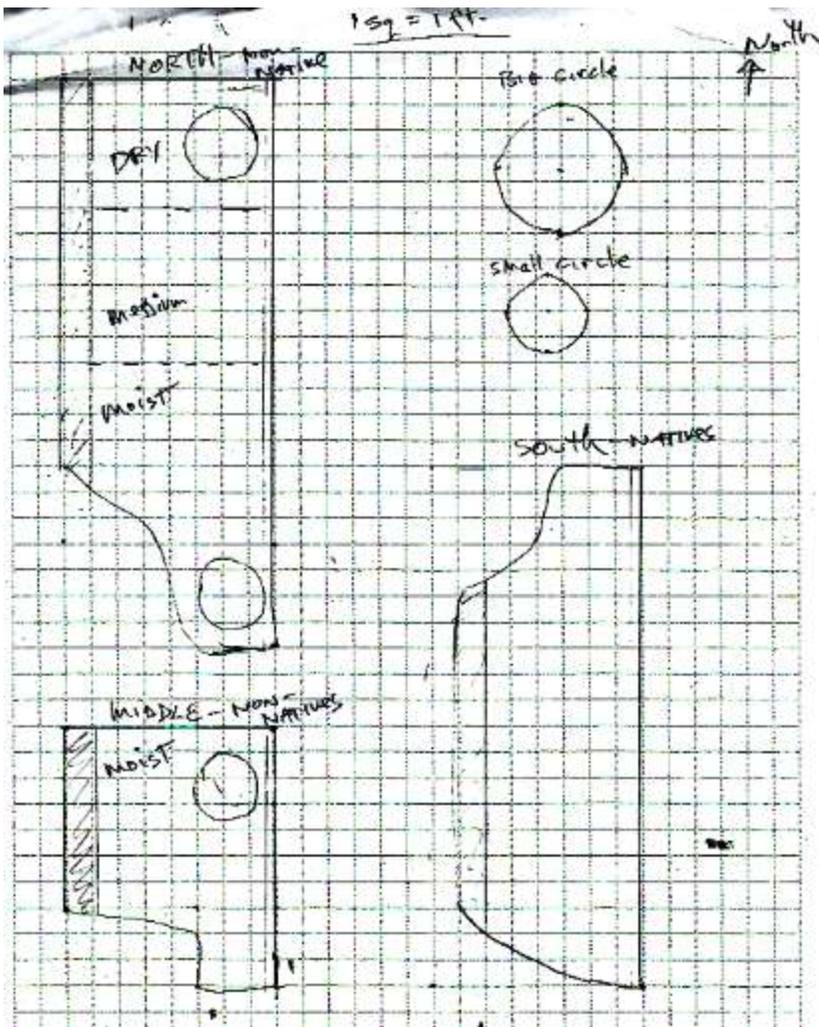
out that the garden would be shaded by Greenline Coffee until about eleven. From then on, it would receive direct sun until about 4 or 5:00 PM. However, not all of the plants in the garden should receive that much sunlight. In order to accommodate for that, we created shade using an existing tree in the space, as well as other taller plants and planters. The plants that don't need direct sunlight were planted near those so they could be protected.

Soil:

The soil in our space was pretty good and we were able to use a lot of it. The first 5-6 inches of the soil mostly a sandy loam, but as it got deeper, the soil was mostly sandy and there were some large chunks of clay that we needed to remove for the health of the plants, so they would be able to grow. We found rocks and pieces of glass that needed to be removed as well.

2. Plans for the New Flowerbeds

We planned three main planting sections for the space. The north and middle sections are dedicated to high-impact and mostly low-maintenance annuals and perennials. The plants in these sections were also grouped by drought tolerance. The most drought tolerant plants are in the north end of the north section. The south section is dedicated to native plants, all of which are drought tolerant.



3. Preparing the Space for Planting

In order to create the most enriching environments for the plants, we created several different mixtures of soil amendments. For the north and middle sections we mixed perlite, peat moss, and compost which we then tilled into the existing soil in order to provide the most nutrition and consistent moisture mix for the plants. (We discussed non-renewable issues for [perlite](#) and [peat moss](#), and decided to use them.) In contrast, we broke the south section into two parts, leaving the farthest south section with only the existing sandy loam and adding only compost to the existing sandy loam in the other. One problem we encountered was an array of roots in the digging areas that had been left there from previously planted, now dead trees. To remove the roots we used loppers, hand tree saws, and pruning shears. It was impossible to work the soil without first removing the roots. Another problem was a dead small tree that we cut down and then cut the stump down below the ground level.



4. New Plants for the Space

We planted the largest plants first, and then smaller plants around, and located in the appropriate garden section, grouping the natives, and also grouping the drought tolerant plants.

Many of the plants we used were started from seed in April by an earlier volunteer group. This group includes both annuals and perennials. Plants from seeds includes all of these:

Alyssum, Aphrodite Mix, Alyssum -Sweet, Aster, Blue Fescue, Butterfly Weed, Calendula - Pot Marigold, Coleus, Columbine, Coreopsis - Early Sunr., Coreopsis - Mardi Gras, Hollyhock, Impatiens, Larkspur, Lupine - Russel, Lupine - Texas , Marigold, Marigold - Cottage Red, Milkweed, Nasturium, Oriental Poppy, Parsley, Purple Coneflower, Shasta Daisy, Snapdragon, Sweet William, Taragon - French, Wild Flax

On the left are some of the plants we started from seeds:



Some larger plants (Miscanthus Porcupine, Miscanthus Giganteaus, Phlox, Lyme Grass, and Ribbon Grass) were donated by the [GROW](#) organization and these plants had been propagated from divisions or cuttings. Many of the plants in the natives section came from the [Prairie Nursery dry soils collection](#), donated by [Prairie Nursery](#). Plants in this group are: Lavender Hyssop, Butterflyweed, Cream False Indigo, Harebell, Prairie Smoke, Rough Blazingstar, Wild Petunia, Showy Goldenrod, and Prairie Dropseed.

5. Wrapping up for the Week

To finish up for the week we groomed the space to make it more presentable and easier to maintain. We began by using a hoe to dig up the dirt by the side walk. After digging 4" deep and about 4" wide, we then laid cardboard around the base

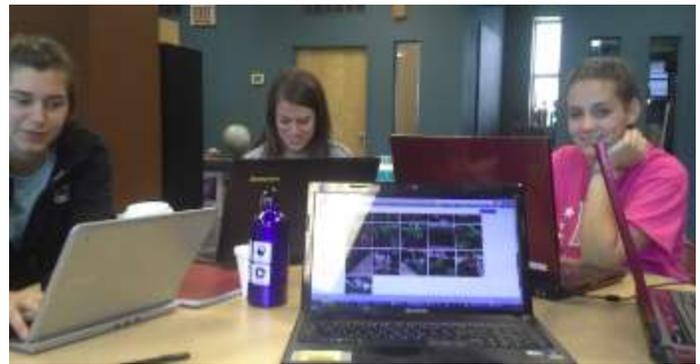
to prevent grass and other weeds from growing up through the mulch. We then placed the mulch in the ditches, making sure to cover all of the cardboard and making it level with the curb. By the street side of the garden we dug 4" deep and 14" wide, allowing people who parked on the street to get out of their cars without disturbing the plants. The same process of laying cardboard down first and mulch over that was also done on the street side after the ditches were dug.

Along the borders of the gardens that were connected to the grass and not the sidewalk or the street, we created edged ditching about 4" deep with a 15 degree cut. This will cause the growth and spreading of the grass to slow due to the air, so the grass won't go into the garden. Along the side of the ditch connected to the garden, we made a slope so when it rains, the water won't wash away the soil.

We also kept in mind to leave space throughout the garden for the lawn mower so it could effectively cut the grass without disturbing the garden.

We finished the week by getting together and making this document.





6. What's Next?

Next week volunteers will mulch the area. Also, this project is part of the [Chicago Demonstration Gardens](#) program, and we will create [signage](#) about the plants, with more information on the web.