

# B'fld gardens may be closed to public

By CARMINA BROOKS

A state garden treasury located in Bloomfield Township may be lost to the public soon, if no steps are taken to preserve the site and leave it open to visitors.

Inglehill Gardens, 725 E. Square Lake Road, is on a five-acre portion of what was once the Beardslee 18-acre homestead. After Aurilla Higby Beardslee died 20 years ago, her two daughters declared her beloved gardens open to the public. Since then, the gardens have been maintained by the two sisters and co-owners of the property as a memorial to their mother.

This year the owners of the gardens, Mrs. Donald Brownlee of Bloomfield Township and Mrs. John S. Malcolm of Grosse Pointe Park have announced that the entire acre is optioned to a real estate developer and there is no guarantee the house and gardens will be preserved.

Robertson Brothers, Bloomfield Township developers, hope the owners and their firm's land planners are working now on a preliminary site analysis.

"It is conceivable that we might work around the gardens," Paul Robertson said. "But the house is relatively old and would not be saved."

Floyd Beardslee married Aurilla Higby in 1906. They were married three years when the tract of farm land was purchased. It is east of Bloomfield Hills and now bordered by the I-75 expressway.

Aurilla Higby grew up on an 80-acre farm called Ingleside, just north of Franklin Village. The couple's home where they would raise their children, Floydene and Evelene, was built on a hill. Aurilla named her new homestead "Inglehill."

INGLEHILL GARDENS are open daily to visitors "from dawn to dusk and from tulip time to frost," Mrs. Brownlee said.

Now tea roses, dahlias and wax begonias are in bloom. Peonies, irises and day lilies have passed their peak, but pink and burgundy cleome are preparing to sprout seeds in their spider-like tentacles.

Mrs. Brownlee said the "showy" time of the year is the first three weeks in June, when hundreds of peonies of all colors bloom. This summer, with excessive rain following a mild winter that did not kill many buds, the flowers bloomed so fast and full, they did not last as long as usual.

Nothing is sold and there is no charge for visiting Inglehill. Visitors may phone 644-6214 to make appointments for tours and group picnics. Tables can be set up for about 40 persons. Anyone is welcome to stop in to see the grounds as they drive by without calling first, Mrs. Brownlee said.

The front of the property is noticeable by a concrete retaining wall on the north side of Square Lake Road about two-thirds of a mile beyond the I-75 turn off. It was built when Oakland County black-topped and dropped the level of the road.

Senior citizen groups, garden clubs and church circles visit the gardens annually. They bring potluck dinners and sit on the outdoor west patio, surrounded by flowers, and listen to the chattering of wrens whose birdhouses are poled high above the gardens and bird baths below.

Aurilla Beardslee joined the Better Home and Garden Club of Pontiac as a young woman and acted as host to it in her gardens. This group has been visiting the garden every June for 50 years. It is this club which was instrumental in getting Inglehill Gardens registered with the State of Michigan Horticulture Department and designated as a state memorial garden in the name of Aurilla Higby Beardslee.

The Franklin Cemetery Ladies Auxiliary have been annual visitors to Inglehill for 45 years.

THE CENTER CORE of the Beardslee farmhouse was built in 1909. It has been enlarged and remodeled several times. The home now has 11 rooms and a large wrap-around stone porch, added in 1925, that features an overhanging entrance supported by hand-hewn face stone columns and stone masonry ledges along a front driveway.

Two school teachers now lease the home and get a special reduced rent for acting as caretakers.

Across the driveway from the curvilinear enclosed porch is the east garden, the first one planted by Aurilla. There are raised circles for special beds of flowers. All the beds are stoned at the edges and separated by gravel walkways. Varieties of hybrid lilies, poppies, fox glove, gloriosa daisies are planted here. Most plants here are the original perennials planted by Aurilla, some a half-century ago, and only annuals are added each spring.

East of the east garden are rows of Concord grape vines planted in 1909. This month, when the grapes are ripe and luscious, they will be given away free to friends and visitors.

The west garden features 12 flower beds laid out in a rather formal English fashion with lanes of grass separating the beds. In the 1930s under the supervision of Aurilla, the west garden beds were edged with cement blocks, hand cut by a Latvian gardener who worked for two years to haul the thousands of rocks with a horse and stone boat from the Beardslee acreage to the garden site.

The site holds some unusual plants and plant structures, causing excited questions from curious visitors. An aged slow-growing climbing hydrangea

as big as a tree, sprouts clusters of seeds decorated with tiny stems from which a four-leaf cluster grows. Winter bouquets are made from the dried branch ends of this plant.

A morning glory vine grows 30 feet

toward the sky on a hand-welded iron frame built by Floyd Beardslee in the 40s and covered with wire fencing. Four large concrete sectioned receptacles sunken into an embankment are now empty, but once were glass-topped

cold frames filled with yough plants to replenish the gardens. Stock is now purchased from nurseries.

Will it all be crushed and bulldozed into eternity? Mrs. Brownlee hopes the buyer will maintain the property in the

same manner that it has been cared for in the past. "But you must face reality," she said raising her palms outward in resignation and showing the pain in her eyes. "I don't want to drive by here and see a lot of weeds."

## Garden moves to dormant state

By MARGE ALPERN

Mid-August is a rather stand-still time in the garden. Everything is nicely laid back and we gardeners can smile upon our efforts.

Unfortunately the turn in the growing season year has come and although I hate to say it, most trees, shrubs and perennials are beginning to gird themselves for winter.

Gardeners are reduced to removing dead flowers, keeping a watch on water demands and guarding against insects. From now on, all the flowering plants and especially the annuals are in a desperate race against time and are working at top speed to go to seed and close the season early. By constantly snipping the dead blossoms, however, one can prolong blossoming right up until frost.

Although gardeners are busy picking tomatoes, arranging zinnias and cutting the grass, many plants have stopped growing. By late August it is possible to transplant or divide many perennials and even to move evergreens without any damage, for they are already moving into the dormancy period.

At this time some perennials such as trillium and oriental poppy tend to become dormant and then disappear into the ground. It is advisable to transplant or divide them prior to their retirement.

TRILLIUM ROOTS grow deeper than most wild flowers and so it is necessary to dig deep and lift them carefully. Iris can also be moved now. Cut their leaves back to about three inches above the crown after you move them. Water the divisions well and cover both trillium and iris with a light acid mulch.

In fact, never let any perennials suffer from water stress. Although we've had very heavy summer rains, keep the canvas soil soaker handy during late August and September, when we usually get a prolonged dry spell. The soil soaker has the advantage of keeping the foliage dry and thus lessening the danger of fungus disease so often seen not only on perennials but also on many annuals.

A beautiful bed of zinnias, marigolds or geraniums can become an ugly black mess if a fungus disease attacks during these late summer days.

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