

Suburban Life

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5 Senses Garden

The gardeners call it their labor of love

By Mary Rodrigue
staff writer

Preschoolers from a nearby day-care center were frolicking in the North Farmington Garden Club's five-senses garden on the first morning of autumn.

Tucked away from the hubbub of the Tackle Mile and Farmington Road intersection nearby, club members were bemoaning the fact that despite five years at the same location (the southwest area of the YMCA grounds) the garden remains somewhat anonymous.

"We planted it for the community, not for the benefit of the 'Y,'" said Lute Moore, club president.

The kids were an appreciative audience. They touched the lamb's ear,

a soft, fuzzy looking plant; longly eyed the raspberries and cherry tomatoes, still clinging to vines, and snuffled the roses.

Each of the five mini gardens is coordinated to one of the five senses: sight, touch, taste, sound and smell.

Moore plants and maintains the sound garden with a half dozen fellow garden club members. She easily identified several plants there — the weeping candied crabapple tree that attracts birds, the tall and willowy pink pompous grass rustling in the morning breeze, and baptista, witch hazel and Japanese lanterns with their rattling pods.

Each of the 33 club members is assigned to one of the gardens. The land, nearly an acre, was donated by the YMCA, which also provides wa-

ter. Club members provide the plants and maintenance.

"Our budget is \$3,400 a year," Moore said. "But last year, we put in \$3,500 at O.E. Dunkel (middle school) alone."

The club was created in January 1977 for the purpose of maintaining the Dunkel school grounds with landscaping and flower beds, and that remains the primary community project. The five senses garden

was added in 1982, patterned after a similar project in Kalamazoo.

"We decided to broaden our work load," Moore said. Cement walks circle each garden and a tall elm tree is at the center. Members also planted pear, pine, crabapple, juniper and myrtle trees on the perimeter and added park benches. The cement walks are wide

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Youngsters from First Step are well acquainted with the 5 Senses Garden on the YMCA grounds. Employees from nearby offices use the picnic tables at lunch hours from early spring to late fall. School teachers bring their classes on occasion to the oasis of plantings that stimulate sight, smell, taste, touch and hearing.

Staff photos by Randy Borst



Dana Lyons studies the petal of a snap dragon during an out-of-doors time from classes in First Step, adjacent to the 5 Senses Garden.

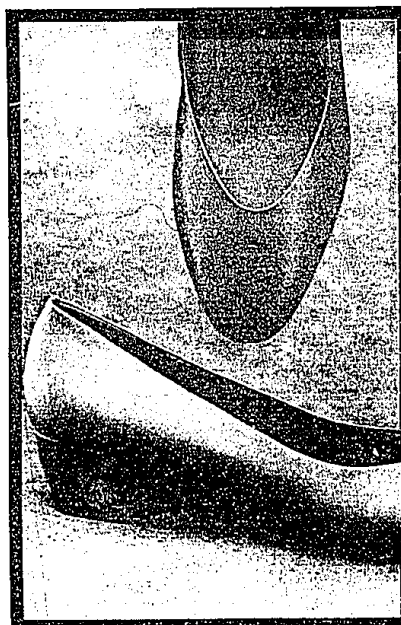


Donna Rickert, vice president for North Farmington Garden Club, asks 4-year old Jeff Lantz to smell a sprig of mint.



Lilac, bayberry, roses and bee balm each give off their distinct aromas for Emily Doretto (at left) and Jennifer Stanton in the Smell Garden.

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