

The 2nd Annual, Capitol Hill, Great Garden Round Up

Five Great Gardens in the Capitol City

ARTICLE AND PICTURES BY DEREK THOMAS.



the charm and elegance of 600 6th St. SE

This year's climate has helped many Washington gardens grow like a set from Alice in Wonderland. Plants seemed to leap to gigantic proportions, as with temperatures and rainfall teamed up to release a garden utopia.

Starting in early spring through the summer daffodils, iris, hollyhocks, daylilies, roses and every other flower were in rare explosive form. In fact the scene was sometimes overwhelming with flowers that normally die in a few days lingering on to bloom with their later blooming neighbors.

We were able to experience plant partnerships that would never happen in Washington. The crape myrtles bloomed early and were flanked by flowers like Asiatic lilies that are normally long finished by the time the crapes take center stage.

In our Capitol Hill gardens the drought that our plants and trees endured last summer was but a distant memory. Thank goodness many of our ornamental plants are very forgiving and rose to this year's record rains with jubilant celebration.

So many great gardens, so little space.

This year narrowing down my choices for the five best gardens that the Hill had to offer was tougher than ever. In fact there were so many great ones that I have to take a moment to say thank you to everyone on the Hill who continues to rise to the challenge of bringing beauty into our world, one garden at a time. In fact the five gardens that follow are more a snapshot of the garden greatness that exists on the Hill.

The Gardens

600 6th Street, SE

This garden is a true tribute to blending the conservative contemporary with the charm of a formal old world garden. The flagstone paths add form, structure and flow. There are containers overflowing with standard Hibiscus. The trees are mulched with lavender Impatiens. The shrubs along the pathways are natural and flowing. The garden is well-kept with out being overworked. Begonias and iris erupt from the base of barberry. Nandina, feather grass, and abelia mix shape and texture in perfect harmony. A well-placed bench invites you to stop, sit and linger a bit, so relaxing.

100 4th Street, NE

This garden is surrounded by brick boundaries, but the spaces inside the gates are well used for drama, color and varied textures. The rear wall is covered with Boston ivy and is softened and awakened by the vines rambunctious vigor. There is a wonderful specimen Atlas cedar in the corner of the garden and bold tropical cannas in the foreground. The electric yellow lantana and royal deep purple petunias fill the ground with color and charm. In the front corner, a crape myrtle flowers and fills the space with vibrancy. Wonderful, natural wreaths accent the doors to the residence and rear garden and the overall flow of the garden is one of eclectic coordination. Nice.

101 4th Street, NE

Wow. This house deserves praise for its blending of Victorian and New Orleans charms



Drama in size shape and color at 100 4th St. NE



101 4th St. NE Traditional, immaculate, bold and elegant.



900 E St. NE, a great garden filled with color and lush tropicals.



517 8th St. NE has condensed yet well planned charm.

successfully and tastefully. The gardens are a tribute to times gone by when a well-tended garden was the best calling card anyone could have. Traditional, immaculate, bold. The magnolia and 30-foot Leyland cypress hedge, soften and illuminate the home on two sides. The flagstone path is precise and purposeful. The evergreens in many forms are mismatched, but perfectly grouped. The pink crape myrtle adds color in a tasteful manner. Even the tree box is perfect. The overall feel is one of understated elegance and charm. Very well done.

900 E Street, NE

This garden is on a corner lot and the homeowner has taken full advantage of this fact to create a wonderful public garden. The garden is filled with vinca and coleus, grasses and pots filled with lush bananas and hibiscus. Begonias overwhelm lilies and colors and textures collide. The patio area is privatized by the use of a privet hedge and the garden that joins them to the north has blended perfectly to create a wonderful shared public space.

517 8th Street, NE

This garden is a tribute to small spaces and the challenges therein. A brick wall and limited earth was no problem to these gardeners. They simply choose to fill the porch with big, flowing, color-filled hanging baskets. In the garden a lace leaf maple and vinca blend with marigolds, petunias, phlox and boxwoods. The porch swing brings everything together and provides a welcoming vantage point to enjoy the garden. This is a small garden that is full of great, green joy. Good job.

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