

# Latin-American Ethnobotanical Garden

## Mission

Create a garden that educates visitors about Latin American culture by showing the historical and contemporary uses of various plants found in Latin American countries of the western hemisphere. The garden should include a greenhouse for holding tropicals that are not hardy to Georgia and an educational space where small groups can attend lectures or presentations. Along with the botanical knowledge, visitors should be able to take with them an unspoken sense of elements and style that are unique to the Latin-American heritage.

## Implementation

Since a greenhouse is not necessarily true to a typical Latin-American garden, we will be sacrificing a modicum of ethnic authenticity of space. In order to accommodate more visitors in a world of ADA compliance and other regulations, it may help to give the garden a more ordered sense of axis and rhythm. The greenhouse, bed stairs, central water feature and bridge are all on a near east-west axis. The path to the entry stairs near the north and south ends of the gardens are aligned perpendicular to the east-west axis. Beds are arranged radially, twelve feet apart. Stone seat walls punctuate the beds. Loosely tiled access paths along the walls serve a dual purpose, allowing for additional seating further from the stairs and easy work access to the backs of the beds. Paths are wide enough to accommodate several people abreast or a dump-equipped golf-cart for spreading mulch or hauling weeds. An alcove in the main plaza is large enough for a food-vending cart, increasing the usage of the garden as a space for lunch-time gatherings.

## Patterns & Tile

Inset ceramic border tiles will be a consistent theme that ties all the various parts of the garden together. Cartouch examples of Aztec, Mayan and Incan cultures could be mixed or matched to certain areas. Border tiles are muted earthtones. More important spaces such as the central pool will have bolder colored mosaic elements as accents where appropriate. Tiles could be commissioned and designed by Latin-American artisans for placement in our garden. Above are some contemporary interpretations of Aztec and Mayan examples.

## Staying on Mission

Because this is an educational garden, we will need to be clear about which plants are critical to the mission and which plants are merely

background or flavor. Any plant should be left out of the palette if it does not serve the purpose of the garden. Plants that are helpful in flavor but of dubious origin (not Latin-American) should have less noticeable labels or not be labeled at all. Extending the garden to include Cherokee, Souix or other indigenous nations will only dilute the focus of the garden and confuse visitors. Space limitations may have a great impact on what to plant. There may be a desire to plant as many varieties of the same species as possible, when perhaps room should be made for other less-well-known and equally interesting species.

## Rhythm & Space

Architectural elements like bedwalls and consistently spaced stairs give a sense of rhythm and order. At the same time, there is enough variation in the design to entice the visitor's interest.

## Suggested Plants

**Semi Hardy Tender:**  
*Brugmansia* spp. - Angel's Trumpet  
*Datura* spp. - Thorn Apple  
*Malvaviscus arboreus* - Sleeping Hibiscus  
*Salvia* spp. - Salvia  
*Oenothera* spp. - Primrose  
*Thalictrum guatemalensis* - Thalictrum  
*Teosinte* sp. - Perennial Maize

**Trees:**  
*Aronia arbutifolia* - Chokeberry  
*Alnus acuminata* - Mexican Alder  
*Sambucus mexicana* - Mexican Elderberry

**Shrubs:**  
*Heimia myrtifolia* - Heimia  
*Ilex paraguayensis* - Yerba Mate

**Vines & Groundcovers:**  
*Dolichos lab lab* - Hyacinth Bean  
*Cestrum nocturnum* - Night Jessamine

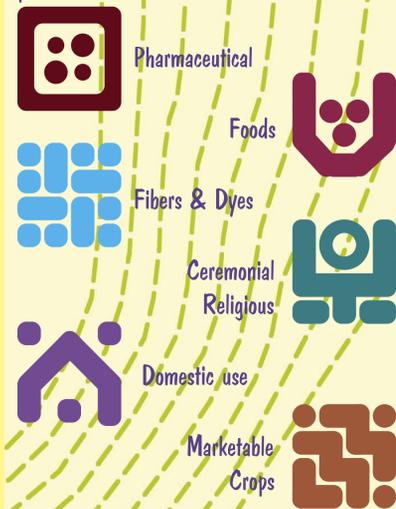
South Eastern North American plants will be used to fill in areas between display plants out of necessity.

## Botanical Elements

Plants that evoke the tropics yet are hardy to this area and perhaps even thrive in winter should be placed strategically for best winter and summer appeal. A palette of such plants is combined in an effort to tie various parts of the garden together. Plants that are less striking but botanically important are placed in beds that include brightly colored photometal signage.

## Plant Organization

Plants should be organized, where possible, by height, bloom order, texture, color and contrast as appropriate for best affect. Plant uses should be included on photometal labels.



## Gates & Signage

Large stucco-walled, tile-roofed gates will adorn each of three entrances, the bridge entrance being the only one without a gate, since the bridge would compete with it. Gates will have slightly different architecture, but be instructive of elements found in Latin-American public area construction. Signage in large, friendly letters will accompany the gates in Spanish and English. Gates will be adorned with artwork, but not lettering. Instead of brochures, large way-signs and educational displays will explain the plantings and usages.

## Amphitheatre

Not just for lunch gatherings and organized events, a licensed busking schedule could be set up with local performance artists, increasing the likelihood that passersby will stop and listen, if not go out of the way to stop by and see the latest spectacle. Buskers would pay a minimal fee for use of the space.

Baldwin Street

Select preferred Latin-American trees for screening

Select the best of existing trees

Amphitheatre

Greenhouse

Tools

Perennials & Annuals

Pool

Thomas Street

ADA Compliant Path

Existing Junipers  
to be replaced by tall trees for sound attenuation.

Existing Palms

Existing vegetation

Chris Sparnicht - LAND6020

April, 2005 Scale: 1/8"=1'

