



A gentle roll of land ending in a glacial depression in front of Wisner House figured in Susie Graham Reeves' horticultural pursuits. In 1916, she and her husband, Richard, purchased John Horner Wisner's estate, "The Clearing." During the early part of the 20th century, Mrs. Reeves consulted with leading NY landscape architects and was devoted to her showplace gardens, still evident at the Arboretum today.

The Wisners planted daffodils on the property before 1916, but it was Mrs. Reeves who expanded the collection. She planted them in the "bowl" or kettle, a formation left when ice melted as the Wisconsin glacier retreated some 17,000 years ago.

The present-day serpentine garden, or border, was Mrs. Reeves' trial area for daffodils and other flowers. If bulbs and plants performed well enough, Mrs. Reeves selected them from this garden for her other beds. Since its founding in 1974, the Arboretum has expanded Mrs. Reeves' plantings into a complete garden. Terraced with a fieldstone wall, the serpentine border represents the cottage garden style popularized by landscape architects and gardeners at the turn of the 20th century.

NOTES

REEVES-REED ARBORETUM

THE SERPENTINE BORDER AND DAFFODIL BOWL

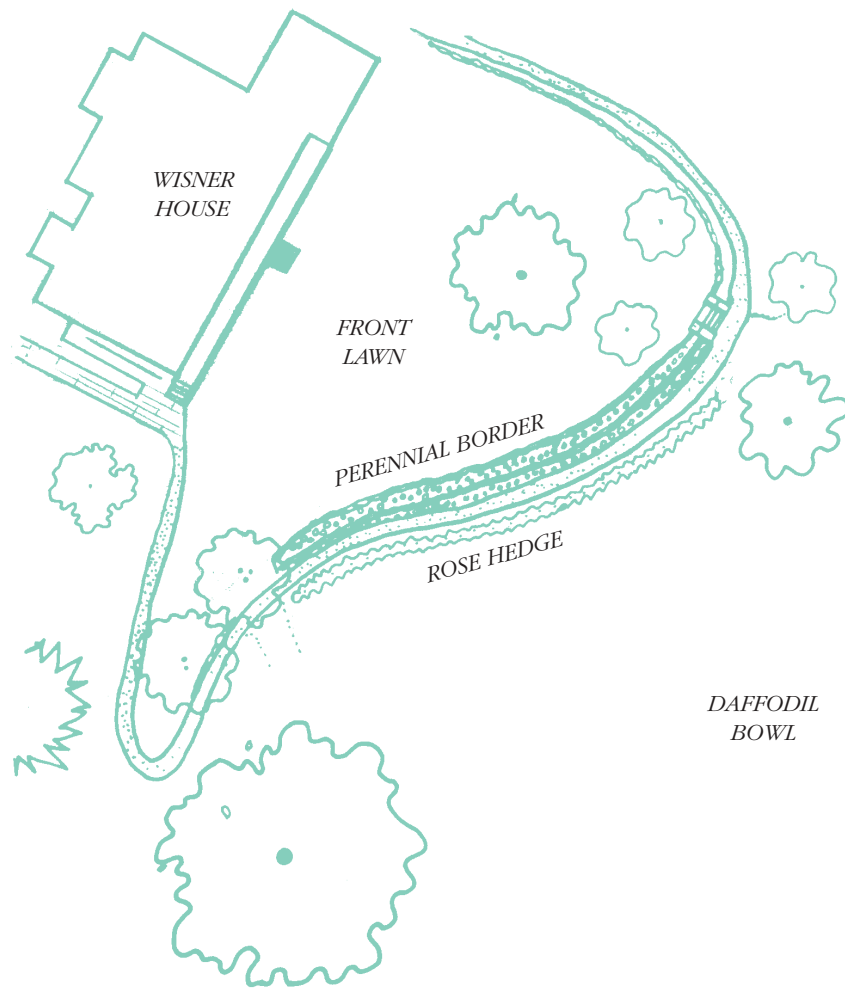


165 Hobart Avenue
Summit, NJ 07901
(908) 273-8787

www.reeves-reedarboretum.org

Funding has been made possible in part by the New Jersey Historical Commission, a division of Cultural Affairs in the Department of State, through a grant administered by the Union County Division of Cultural and Heritage Affairs.

Reeves-Reed Arboretum is owned by the City of Summit, which does not fund it. The Arboretum is supported solely by memberships, grants and contributions.



The serpentine border's cottage garden style is characterized by a succession of bloom during the growing season, staged heights of plants from the front to the rock-walled back of the border, impressionistic blends of flower colors and a curving, paved walk.

From March through October, something is always in bloom in the serpentine border. A combination of

plant types makes this happen. Perennials come back year after year with proper care. They are called "herbaceous," meaning they die to the ground each winter and reemerge from the base each spring. Annuals endure only one season, but bloom during the heat of late summer when the perennials fade. Some annuals "self-sow," dropping seeds one year that germinate the next.



Small plants spill onto the walk and over the edge of the wall. Mid-sized plants occupy the center of the border, with the tallest plants in the back. From the path, the terraced design emphasizes the various heights

for the viewer. Color in this garden accentuates cool shades: pink, blue, white and purple, with highlights of yellow.

The garden is remarkable for its diversity. Labeled plants located in shade or sun give visitors examples of what grows best in this region and under what conditions.

The paved serpentine walk edged by 'Simplicity' roses overlooks the glacial bowl. The bowl is a major Arboretum attraction in April as more than 30,000 daffodils bloom



sequentially in this naturalized setting. As needed each fall, Arboretum gardeners and dedicated volunteers replenish the bulbs in the bowl.

