



Sign in | Register for free

Site Search Search Local Business Listings

Sign in with Facebook

Search for keywords, people, locations, obituaries, Web ID and more..

- Home
- News
- Weather
- Sports
- Entertainment
- Living
- Interact
- Jobs
- Autos
- Living
- Food & Recipes
- Health & Fitness
- Home & Garden
- Family & Parenting
- Pets
- Fashio

Top Stories



Photo Contest: 'All Things Green'



Recipe Swap Forum

Home > New Orleans Home and Garden > Inside/Out - Cover Story

Fred and Jennifer Heebe's alluring Uptown landscape is part of the 2011 Secret Gardens tour

Published: Saturday, March 19, 2011, 5:00 AM



By R. Stephanie Bruno
Follow

Like

6 likes. Sign Up to see what your friends like.

6

Share

Share

6

Email

3

Print

A morning stroll through the grounds of the grand home of Fred and Jennifer Heebe on St. Charles Avenue reveals an exquisitely renovated historic house at the center of a series of thoughtfully planned outdoor rooms, each with its own personality and function.

The gardens, originally configured by local landscape architect René Fransén for a previous owner, fell into neglect, but they were recently revitalized and rejuvenated by the current owners and Dargan Landscape Architects of Atlanta.

The home's gardens, next to Danneel Park, are one of 10 on the upcoming **Secret Gardens Tour**, which offers



[Enlarge](#)

[Chris Granger, The Times-Picayune](#)

Flowering materials in urns, planters and beds change color as the season changes or mood suits, all managed by Marianne Mumford of Landscape Images.

[The Uptown gardens of Fred and Jennifer Heebe gallery](#) (13 photos)



"The lawn had to be a place where the family's children can play and dogs can roam," said Mary Palmer Dargan. "At the same time, there had to be a little privacy. So the height of the boxwood hedge lining the paths is just high enough to limit visibility of the lawn

locals a peek behind the walls of some of New Orleans' most alluring gardens.

Now in its fifth year, the tour raises money to support brain injury recovery efforts. The 2011 event starts with guided tours Friday and continues March 26 with self-guided walk-throughs of the same natural beauties.

Visitors to the Heebes' garden, the fourth stop on the tour, will find a lot of sights competing for their attention. Here are some of the highlights.

Joseph Street entrance

Although the home has a St. Charles Avenue address, it becomes instantly clear that Joseph Street is the primary entry. A portico -- accented by flower-filled urns -- reaches out over a semicircular drive, paved with limestone. Cars are unobtrusively tucked into a parking court to the left of the portico.

St. Charles Avenue: the great lawn

If the front lawn looks like the perfect spot for an Easter egg hunt, that is because it is intended to accommodate just that kind of event.

THE SECRET GARDENS TOUR

WHAT: A walking tour of 10 gardens on and around St. Charles Avenue, between Nashville Avenue and Octavia Street.

PRIVATE GUIDED TOURS:

When: March 25, 9 a.m.-1 p.m. Private tours are led by participating landscape and design experts. Tours are at 9, 9:30, 10, 10:30 and 11 a.m.

from the sidewalk, but not too tall to block the view of the house."

A wide terrace stretches the full width of the home, providing a perfect vantage point for enjoying the view of the great lawn and passing parade of streetcars, joggers and cyclists on the avenue.

Outfitted with classically inspired furniture, it offers seating areas for enjoying the terrace. Along the sides of the lawn, where more privacy is desired, bed plantings are taller and include a mix of azaleas and sasanquas in the front with larger camellia japonicas and crape myrtles toward the back.

Flower-filled urns and box topiary are accent elements that Dargan inserted, whether flanking the entrance to a path or signaling the beginning of a flower bed.

Flowering materials in urns, planters and beds change color as the season changes or mood suits, all managed by Marianne Mumford of Landscape Images.

In general, the color palette of the plantings is intentionally limited, so that the garden complements rather than competes with the understated elegance of the house.

This spring, white is the predominant color theme for annuals, but the plantings are anything but monotonous. One bed features white snapdragons; an urn contains white nicotiana and green ivy. Fluffy white petunias fill other spots, and white pansies and violas appear elsewhere. Pale pink and darker red accents come from mature camellias distributed throughout the beds.

The private garden

Circle the east edge of the terrace, climb a few steps, and the private garden comes into view. Bounded on one side by the park fence and on the other by the house, the garden has two tiers: the upper one for outside dining, and the lower for a pool, pavilion and outdoor fireplace.

Where: Tour-goers meet at 5631 St. Charles Ave., at Arabella Street, 20 minutes before tour time.

Cost: \$60 in advance; purchase online by 5 p.m. Wednesday. Groups of 10 or more may purchase tickets in advance for \$50 each. Ticket holders are granted complimentary admission to the self-guided tour March 26.

Lagniappe: Mary Palmer Dargan of Dargan Landscape Architects of Atlanta will be signing "Timeless Landscape Design: The Four-Part Master Plan," co-authored by her husband, Hugh.

SELF-GUIDED TOURS:

When: March 26, 9 a.m.-4 p.m.

Where: 5631 St. Charles Ave.; bring ID to pick up will-call tickets.

Cost: \$25 in advance; purchase online by 5 p.m. Wednesday. Groups of 10 or more may purchase tickets in advance for \$20 each. Day-of tickets: \$30. Children younger than 5, free.

Information: www.secretgardenstour.org or 504.838.3098. Proceeds from the tour are used for educational and charitable purposes to benefit brain injury recovery.



[View full size](#)

Chris Granger / The Times-Picayune

Although white is the predominant color theme for this spring's annuals, pale pink and darker red accents come from mature camellias distributed throughout the beds.

The upper dining terrace features a handsome cast-metal table and chairs custom-designed for the space. Looking toward St. Charles, it faces the home's glass-walled solarium, where birds can be glimpsed flitting in giant cages.

In the opposite direction, the vista centers on the pool and the statuary at its end. When the pool sprinklers are turned on, the effect is less that of a pool and more like a reflecting basin and fountain.

In keeping with the theme established for the Joseph Street entrance and great lawn, huge urns flank the steps that lead down from the dining terrace to the pool, where they mark the pool's corners. Pool furniture -- custom-made like the dining table and chairs -- complement the home's warm stone exterior with taupe-colored cushions and darkened metal frames.

Dargan said the urns and planters aren't ancient, but look that way thanks to a "secret solution" she and her husband, Hugh, developed when

working on historic courtyard restorations in Charleston, S.C.

"The secret is out," she laughed. "You mix native moss -- scrape a little from the bricks -- with buttermilk or yogurt in a bucket, add dark Karo corn syrup and a little cow or horse manure, then some cheap olive oil and brewer's yeast.

"You dab it all over the planter, wrap it in old sheets and keep it moist -- you have to cover it with plastic after that. After a few weeks, you take it all off, and the planters have instantly aged."

.....

R. Stephanie Bruno can be reached at housewatcher@hotmail.com.

Related topics: [fred heebe](#), [home tours](#), [jennifer heebe](#), [new orleans gardens](#), [outdoor living](#), [secret gardens tour](#)

Sponsored Links

[Woman's Epilepsy Memoir.](#)

Taking control over seizures and her experience with brain surgery.
www.amazon.com

[SHOCKING\\$25 Car Insurance](#)

Auto Insurers are SCARED you will learn this secret.
www.News7BreakingNews.com

[Garden](#)

Top varieties of vegetable & flower seeds. Buy online or get catalog!
www.harriseseeds.com

Share this story

Story tools

[Email](#)

[Print](#)

More stories in New Orleans Home and Garden

Previous story

[Festive spirit abounds on the Irish Channel's Fourth Street](#)

Next story

[Sound effects: Cool Stuff](#)

3

Comments

[Feed](#)

View: [Oldest first](#) | [Newest first](#)



lafno

March 19, 2011 at 7:43AM

[Follow](#)

i don't think this guy should be glorified.

[Reply](#)

[Post new](#)

Inappropriate? [Alert us.](#)



Grrlyfern

March 19, 2011 at 11:11AM

[Follow](#)

Too bad there are not more pix of the actual gardens and grounds--too many of the hardscape and house. Be nice to know what plants are in the photos (other than the camellia and other regulars).

Nonetheless, it is very good to know that the gardens are being cared for again. So many of these super-huge homes and giant grounds are a pleasure to look at--even for us lower-middle class folks! I learn a lot from studying them, like what can grow in what kind of sun, and so on. They're like demonstration gardens at nurseries, in a way.

[Reply](#) [Post new](#)

Inappropriate? [Alert us.](#)



sompitbruner

March 20, 2011 at 5:47AM

[Follow](#)

The TP ran this story in spite of the Federal investigation concerning the Heebes, which would indicate that this mansion was bought with dirty money from dirty Jefferson Parish business deals. Each and every comment alluding to this was pulled down yesterday. Let's see how early the "comment yanker" wakes up on Sundays. As you delete this comment, please feel the shame of glorifying people who are crooks and who, in due time, will be in the Federal penitentiary . . . at least one of them anyway.

[Reply](#) [Post new](#)

Inappropriate? [Alert us.](#)

Post a comment

Sign in to NOLA.com

Username

Password

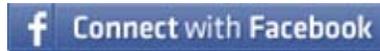
Remember me?

[Submit Query](#)

[I forgot my username or password »](#)

Don't have an account?

[Register now for free](#), or sign in with any of these services:



[AIM](#)

[Google](#)

[OpenID](#)

[Site Search](#)

[Search Local Business Listings](#)

[Submit C](#)

- [Post a Job](#)
- [Post a free classified](#)
- [Sell your car](#)
- [Sell/Rent your Home](#)
- [Apartments & Rentals](#)
- [Claim your Business I](#)