



## “PLANTING INFO ...”

Environmental Edition, Mary Lovings, Editor  
Horticulture Edition, Gail Berthe, Editor  
Landscape Design Edition, Jackie Fulmer, Editor  
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Beautification...Conservation...Education

*(Editor's Note – It is the intention of this editor to introduce GCG members to a new discovery or perhaps to view that location in a new way. These sites have been chosen for being a reasonable drive from all parts of Georgia)*

### **A Rare Jewel Found in Memphis, Tennessee**

Give yourself some time to discover Memphis. It is a wonderful music and cultural city and has a splendid location along the mighty Mississippi River. Memphis is full of parks, but has one that most visitors are not aware. Take some time to drive to the northeast corner, just outside the city limits, and enjoy one of the twenty largest parks in the United States in an urban setting – **Shelby Farms Park**. Its size is 4,500 acres – more than five times the size of Central Park!

**History of the Park:** *In 1825*, a portion of the park was formed as Nashoba Commune to educate and train slaves. By the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, many privately owned farms were part of what is now the park. *Between 1928 and 1940*, Shelby County had acquired a total of 4,500 acres. *From 1929 to 1964*, the property was operated as Shelby County Penal Farm. The farm was

known for its inmate rehabilitation and success in soil conservation. The farm fed the inmates and the patients at the nearby county hospital. (During WWII, the farm production helped in the war effort.) *By 1965*, the farm was operating at a loss. *In 1970*, the county ordered that the property be developed or sold. *In 1973*, the farm was one vote away from being sold. After several meetings and suggestions, the county government endorsed the proposal that the land would be held for public use. Landscape architect Garret Eckbo's "Shelby Farms Public Use Program" was adopted. *Finally in 1994*, Shelby Farms Board was created. *In July 2007*, Shelby Farms Park Conservancy and Shelby County Government sign a management agreement.

#### **Master Plan and Park Enhancements:**

- \*A buffalo pasture with shade, a well and benches for buffalo watching

- \*Tree planting to make the roadway invisible from within the park and to reduce noise

- \*Landscaping around Patriot Lake including thousands of native trees, shrubs and other vegetation

  - \*A water play area and improved boating facilities

  - \*Farm-to-table restaurant

  - \*Retreat center (This and restaurant completed in August 2016.)

  - \*First Tennessee Visitor Center

  - \*Music/events pavilion (completed 2016)

#### **Ecological Enhancements:**

- \*Four thousand plus new native trees

- \*Native grasses and meadows restored

- \*Improved watershed

- \*Education features: forest and wetland walk
- \*New wetlands filtration

**How is park financed?** Shelby County owns the land and contributes \$575,000 per year. The Conservancy raises the remainder of the 2.5 million dollars for yearly operations.

**Heart of the Park Financing:** The State of Tennessee, Shelby County, City of Memphis and private donors (Hyde Family Foundation, AutoZone, First Tennessee Foundation and FedEx)



Plan of Shelby Farm Park  
*(Photo used by permission of Rebecca Dailey, Communications Coordinator)*

## A Photo Tour of the Park



## *Lake Views with Thousands of New Trees*



## Around the Park



*The park has excellent directional signs to guide visitors through the park.*

*Just imagine what the park will be like when all of these trees have reached maturity! It will surely be worth a trip.*



*Many thanks to the staff of Shelby Farms Park for the informational background for this article. SFP is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. It would be worth a special trip to Memphis to visit. All photographs, other than the map, belong to the editor of this newsletter.*

## **In Conclusion**

It would not be possible to publish a landscape newsletter without some mention of the father of this field.

*“Labor is the creator of wealth. There can be no honest wealth, no true prosperity without it,” stated Olmsted.* Those who work in the fields of horticulture, agriculture, and similar fields understand this and find joy in this labor.

\*An excellent reference for Olmsted’s writings on landscape, culture and society can be found in Frederick Law Olmsted published by The Library of America, Charles E. Beveridge, *editor*.