HISTORY
Mount Desert Island is unique for its beauty and for glacial accidents that left it with flora from both the cold north and the warmer south. In the early 1900s, Charles W. Eliot and George B. Dorr recognized these special qualities and began to acquire land to be preserved for public enjoyment and for "educational and scientific purposes." Dorr bought the Sieur de Monts Spring area in 1909, named it the Wild Gardens of Acadia, and in 1916 presented it to the United States government as part of Lafayette National Park, which subsequently became Acadia National Park.

In 1961, Acadia's superintendent, Harold Hubler, offered a three-quarter acre plot to grow and display wildflowers grown by participants in a propagation program sponsored initially by the Bar Harbor Garden Club. Although the plot was covered with blackberry bushes and mature red maples damaged by the 1947 fire, its assets included a wealth of large ferns and a winding brook fed by Sieur de Monts Spring. The Wild Gardens of Acadia committee began laying out paths and divided the Gardens into areas simulating natural plant communities. The decision to include only those species indigenous to Acadia precluded planting daisy, yarrow, lupine, rugosa rose, purple loosestrife, and clover, which are abundant on Mount Desert Island but not native.

Guided by Edgar T. Wherry's Wild Flowers of Mt. Desert Island, published in 1920 under the aegis of the Garden Club of Mount Desert, volunteers established more than 400 indigenous plant species. These efforts have been recognized by awards from the Garden Club of America, the New England Wild Flower Society, the Garden Club Federation of Maine, the National Council of State Garden Clubs, the Massachusetts Horticultural Society, and a Certificate of Appreciation to the Wild Gardens of Acadia committee from the National Park Service.

In 2010, the Wild Gardens of Acadia became an official committee of Friends of Acadia and formalized this new standing through a partnership with Friends of Acadia and Acadia National Park. The Gardens not only enhance understanding of Acadia and formalized this new standing through a partnership with Friends of Acadia and Acadia National Park.

On Bird Identification
Alderson, C. and E. Growing Woodland Plants
Newcomb, Lawrence. Newcomb's Wildflower Guide
Peterson, R.T. A Field Guide to Birds
Sibley, David A. The Sibley Guide to Birds

On Plant Identification
Haines, A and T. Vining, Flora of Maine
Newcombs, Lawrence. Newcombs Wildflower Guide
Peterson, R.T. and M. McKenney. A Field Guide to Wildflowers

On Cultivation
Birdseye, C. and E. Growing Woodland Plants
Haines, A and T. Vining, Flora of Maine
Newcombs, Lawrence. Newcombs Wildflower Guide
Peterson, R.T. and M. McKenney. A Field Guide to Wildflowers

HELPFUL BOOKS
Sibley, C. and E. Growing Woodland Plants
Haines, A and T. Vining, Flora of Maine
Newcombs, Lawrence. Newcombs Wildflower Guide
Peterson, R.T. A Field Guide to Birds
Sibley, David A. The Sibley Guide to Birds

On Bird Identification
Birdseye, C. and E. Growing Woodland Plants
Haines, A and T. Vining, Flora of Maine
Newcombs, Lawrence. Newcombs Wildflower Guide
Peterson, R.T. A Field Guide to Birds
Sibley, David A. The Sibley Guide to Birds

On Plant Identification
Haines, A and T. Vining, Flora of Maine
Newcombs, Lawrence. Newcombs Wildflower Guide
Peterson, R.T. and M. McKenney. A Field Guide to Wildflowers

On Cultivation
Birdseye, C. and E. Growing Woodland Plants
Haines, A and T. Vining, Flora of Maine
Newcombs, Lawrence. Newcombs Wildflower Guide
Peterson, R.T. and M. McKenney. A Field Guide to Wildflowers

The Wild Gardens of Acadia
A project to display, preserve, and propagate in typical habitats the native flora of Mount Desert Island

At
Sieur de Monts Spring
Acadia National Park

Illustrated by Ruth Soper
Printed 2010

THE WILD GARDENS OF ACADIA
A project to display, preserve, and propagate in typical habitats the native flora of Mount Desert Island

At
Sieur de Monts Spring
Acadia National Park

Illustrated by Ruth Soper
Printed 2010

THE WILD GARDENS OF ACADIA
A project to display, preserve, and propagate in typical habitats the native flora of Mount Desert Island

At
Sieur de Monts Spring
Acadia National Park

Illustrated by Ruth Soper
Printed 2010

THE WILD GARDENS OF ACADIA
A project to display, preserve, and propagate in typical habitats the native flora of Mount Desert Island

At
Sieur de Monts Spring
Acadia National Park

Illustrated by Ruth Soper
Printed 2010

THE WILD GARDENS OF ACADIA
A project to display, preserve, and propagate in typical habitats the native flora of Mount Desert Island

At
Sieur de Monts Spring
Acadia National Park

Illustrated by Ruth Soper
Printed 2010

THE WILD GARDENS OF ACADIA
A project to display, preserve, and propagate in typical habitats the native flora of Mount Desert Island

At
Sieur de Monts Spring
Acadia National Park

Illustrated by Ruth Soper
Printed 2010

THE WILD GARDENS OF ACADIA
A project to display, preserve, and propagate in typical habitats the native flora of Mount Desert Island

At
Sieur de Monts Spring
Acadia National Park

Illustrated by Ruth Soper
Printed 2010

THE WILD GARDENS OF ACADIA
A project to display, preserve, and propagate in typical habitats the native flora of Mount Desert Island

At
Sieur de Monts Spring
Acadia National Park

Illustrated by Ruth Soper
Printed 2010

THE WILD GARDENS OF ACADIA
A project to display, preserve, and propagate in typical habitats the native flora of Mount Desert Island

At
Sieur de Monts Spring
Acadia National Park

Illustrated by Ruth Soper
Printed 2010

THE WILD GARDENS OF ACADIA
A project to display, preserve, and propagate in typical habitats the native flora of Mount Desert Island

At
Sieur de Monts Spring
Acadia National Park

Illustrated by Ruth Soper
Printed 2010

THE WILD GARDENS OF ACADIA
A project to display, preserve, and propagate in typical habitats the native flora of Mount Desert Island

At
Sieur de Monts Spring
Acadia National Park

Illustrated by Ruth Soper
Printed 2010

THE WILD GARDENS OF ACADIA
A project to display, preserve, and propagate in typical habitats the native flora of Mount Desert Island

At
Sieur de Monts Spring
Acadia National Park

Illustrated by Ruth Soper
Printed 2010
The 12 sections of the Wild Gardens of Acadia reflect typical habitats found on Mount Desert Island. Plant species are labeled in their most characteristic habitats.

In the MIXED WOODS, to the left of the parking lot entrance, are the variations of shade, moisture, and acidity found in a predominantly deciduous forest. Under sugar maple, hawthorn, and beechnut trees are baneberry, Solomon plume, foamflower, wintergreen, pyrola, sundrops, and violets. Across the path is a small cedar swamp. Among the trees near the swamp are viburnum, horsetail, large ferns, and a stand of showy lady's slipper. The FERN PATH displays an extensive fern collection. A dry brook, shaded by hop-hornbeam and conifers, is edged with dillibarada and wood sorrel. On a small moist island are Jack-in-the-pulpit and goldthread, and on a larger island are shade and birch trees shading yellow lady's slipper, trillium, and mayflower. Opposite the moist island grow red, black, and white ash trees. A bench beside twinflower and prtridgeberry affords a view of Dorr Mountain and the bird thicket.

Along the ROADSIDE are sumac and a hawthorn, as well as many species typically growing in full sun. Growing in front of the remains of an old stone wall are asters, goldenrods, flowering raspberry, and juniper. In addition, there are edible berries: blackberry, huckleberry, raspberry, and blueberry. Beside the brook are hog peanut and ferns (interrupted, cinnamon, and royal).

The MEADOW, an area of continual change, is mowed yearly to prevent the return of the forest. Bluet, blue-eyed grass, strawberries, pyxiefoves, and violets bloom in the spring. They are succeeded in mid-summer by fireweed, dogbane, pearly everlasting, eyebright, sweetfern, steeple bush, meadowsweet, cinquefoils, meadow rue, Robbins ragwort, roses, evening primrose, and in autumn by goldenrod and asters.

The MOUNTAIN supports plants of higher elevations: mountain sandwort, black and broom cowberry, three-toothed cinquefoil, Bar Harbor juniper, rock polypody, mountain cranberry, bearbery, barberry, northern Jack pine, and the southern bear oak. Among the rocks are columbine, pale corydalis, spleenwort, and harebell.

The HEATH, dry and rocky, is dominated by plants of the heath family: rhodora (both the common rose and rare white), lambkill, blueberries, and huckleberry. The acid soil, low in nutrients, supports a variety of other plants including golden heather, pinweed, bush honeysuckle, chokeberry, sweetfern, and sweet gale.

The SEASIDE, constructed and maintained by the introduction of seaweed and beach gravel, supports roseroot (a rare sedum) and the more unusual arctic beachhead iris. Here also are skullcap, crach, blue flag iris, beach pea, sea lavender, seaside goldenrod, Scotch lovage, germander, spreading silver and gold potentilla, and beach grasses.

The BROOKSIDE/DAMP THICKET is an area of comparative plantings. On the moist bank of the brook are cardinal flower, hobblebush, dogwoods, and winterberry. Across the path in the DAMP THICKET are viburnums, maple-leaved viburnum, sumac, rose, shad, cranberry, bunchberry, blueberry, and the fall-blooming witch hazel and sweet pepperbush. Local birds are listed on a chart on the nearby bulletin board. The unique rectangular holes made by a Pileated Woodpecker are displayed in the stump of a tree. The THICKET also has many specimens of edible and medicinal plants, trees, and shrubs which are beneficial to humans.

In the CONIFEROUS WOODS, cone-bearing trees are planted close together for easy identification. The fallen needles of spruces, pines, hemlock, fir, and larch (tamarack) acidify the soil and their boughs provide year-round shade for Canada mayflower, goldthread, pisipeswah, pyrolas, blue-bead lily, wintergreen, prtridgeberry, twinner, bunchberry dogwood, starflower, whorted loosestrife, clubmosses, and orchids. Mayflower grows in the more-open areas. Not yet excluded by the heavy shade of a mature coniferous forest are various young trees and shrubs: birch, yew, honeysuckle, hobblebush, witherod, and the locally infrequent mountain laurel. The fence by the parking lot supports clematis and potato bean. To the right of the entrance is a damp area where mosses, ferns, and skunk cabbage thrive.

As a result of beaver activity in ponds that are linked to the gardens by streams, the path around the bog is often flooded early in the season. The path to the BOG begins on the far side of the bridge. The moist and highly acidic sphagnum bog supports several rare plant species: bailed-apple berry, crowberry, the bog Solomonplume, two varieties of cranberry, cotton grasses, Labrador tea, bog laurel, bog rosemary and a black spruce. Here also are several bog orchids and the insectivorous sundew, bladdernot, and pitcher plant.

The MARSH supports calsia, Joe Pye weed, marsh cinquefoil, buckbean, meadow beauty, yellow loosestrife, skull cap, and skunk cabbage. Leatherleaf, rhodora, Labrador tea, and members of the heath family are also found here. Unlike a bog, where there is standing water, the Marsh has a natural outlet to the brook.

The POND is highlighted in early spring by marsh marigolds and in summer by waterlilies and their attendant frogs. Found among the lilies are horsetail, arrowhead, and Ack erweed, and along the bank are blue flag, cattail, sweet gale, steeplebush, buckbean, cardinal flower, turtlehead, and sedges. Near the bench are trillium and sweet flag. On the far side a larch shades mosses and wild calla.