

Kenan Gardens



GARDENS & GROUNDS HOURS

9:00 a.m. to dusk, daily, from May through October. Call (716) 433-2617 to inquire about rentals for weddings, meetings and special occasions.

GENERAL HOURS

The Kenan House and Gift Shop are open from 9:00 am-5:00 pm, daily and during gallery hours. The Gallery is open Monday-Friday, noon to 5:00 pm, and Saturdays and Sundays, 2:00-5:00 p.m., from Labor Day to Memorial Day; after Memorial Day, the gallery is closed Saturdays. The campus is closed on major holidays. Because of private events, the gallery and/or gardens may sometimes be closed to the public. Please call ahead to confirm before your visit.

GROUP TOURS

The Kenan Center welcomes groups to visit the House Gallery and Gardens with advance notice. Please call, (716) 433-2617 at least one week ahead.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Taren LaGamba, certified master gardener and Kenan Center head gardener, for her valuable assistance in preparing the botanical identifications for this brochure.

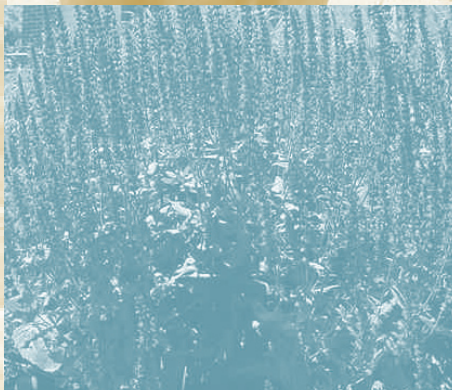
Map painting produced by Lockport artist Manning McCandlish. Prints of her work are available for purchase in the Kenan Center Gift Shop.

Generous donations made by the Kenan Arts Council, Kenan Quilters Guild, Friends of the Kenan Herb Club William R. Kenan, Jr. Charitable Trust, Artistic Landscape and the WNY Landscape Association.

Dorothy Westhafer, for on-going support and care of the Perennial Garden.



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KENAN GARDENS

The Kenan Center gardens are a legacy of William R. Kenan, Jr. who owned the Lockport estate that now serves as the Kenan Center. Educated as a scientist and engineer, Mr. Kenan was also an avid horticulturist, and spent many enjoyable hours in his greenhouse, applying his scientist's eye for detail to his hobby. He was especially enamored with a rare Night Blooming Cereus and was known to leave the fragile blooms anonymously on neighbors' doorsteps. Mr. Kenan enjoyed keeping his grounds beautiful, as well, and invested thousands of dollars each year in bedding plants.

Today the Kenan House gardens are a feast for the senses all seasons of the year. Brick pathways lead visitors through a vine-covered trellis and under century-old trees to reveal a stone pond, a fragrant herb garden, and a secluded wood deck for sitting and reflecting. In the summer months, a lush perennial garden blooms in a painter's palette of colors.

Enhancing the gardens with original sculptural works began in 2003 with the acquisition of *Exploring Serendipity*, a sculpture created for the Art on Wheels project. Since then, five additional sculptures have been added—two of which serve as "thank you's" to contributors to the Center's Annual Appeal in 2004 and 2005. All works are identified on the map: see the key at the end of the gardens description for title of work and artist.



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GENERAL GROUNDS [A-C]

The design of the gardens complements the Victorian period of the Kenan house and reflects the garden style that was popular in Europe by wealthy estates and castles in the 1800's. The grounds are broken up into garden rooms with the extensive use of evergreen plants such as pines, hemlocks, firs, yews and ground covers. This material is generally arranged in rectilinear fashion of hedge and row formations. Near the main entrance is an old Japanese Maple tree [A] that has fantastic fall colors of red and orange. By the front walkway are katsura trees [B] that were planted in the 1960's. In the front, or north side, of the house is a triangle-shaped Victorian fern bed called the "Triangle Garden" [C] where two permanent sculptures are placed (see sculpture list).

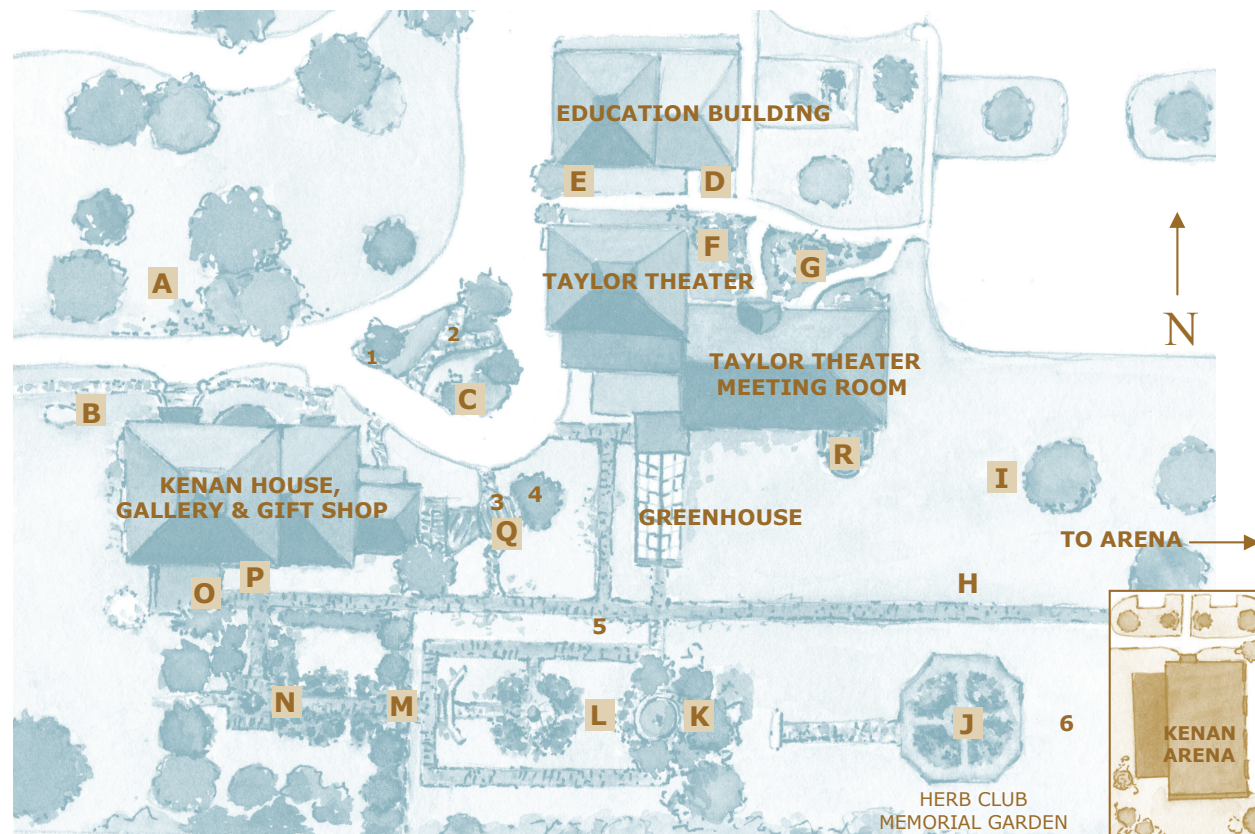
EDUCATION BUILDING [D-E]

This area serves mainly as a transitional space between the formal gardens and the Taylor Theater. The plantings here consist of a double border of shrubs that take light shade. They are dogwoods, golden privet, rhododendrons, spirea, rose of Sharon, flowering plum, arborvitae and junipers. Of special note are the 150-year-old locust tree [D] and honeysuckle [E].

PERENNIAL GARDEN [F-G]

Mr. Kenan's original brick carriage house was converted into a 153-seat theater in the early 1970s and was named the Taylor Theater after Lockport sisters Nan and Dora Taylor. On the north side of the theater and flanking the entrance is a garden that was planted and dedicated to Dr. James Westhafer, pastor of the First Presbyterian Church which received Mr. Kenan's estate in exchange for committing the property to serve the community. The garden incorporates extensive use of perennials that give a succession of blossoms from mid-spring to late summer. One third of the flowers are attractive and beneficial to birds and butterflies.

The shady section [F] consists of rhododendrons, yews, hostas, astilbe, pulmonaria, bleeding hearts, lamium, ginger and heucheras. The bones of the garden are a backdrop of river birches, hemlocks and crabapples. The sunny part of the garden [G] boasts daylilies, filipendula, artemisia, black-eyed susans, purple cone flowers, salvia, geranium, coreopsis, lupines, yuccas, iris, foxglove, columbine, echinops and sedums. Mixed in with these plants are kousa dogwood, river birches, white pines, yews, boxwood and junipers. Across the pathway is an old butternut tree.



OLD ORCHARD [H-I]

Much of the area east of the main residence was originally orchard, primarily of fruit and nut trees. A few old pear types and fruiting crabapples remain, as well as the cut stump of a spectacular Turkish Hazel with its "alligator hide" bark. [H]

New saplings, which include plum, crabapples, Japanese lilac and maple*, have been added in recent years in celebration of Arbor Day. [I]

*Donated by the WNY Landscape Association.

HERB GARDEN [J]

The first Herb Garden began as an fragrance garden for the blind and was built with the assistance of the Lion's Club in a slightly different location in 1983. The Friends of the Kenan Herb Club replaced this garden in the early 1990's, moving it to its present location, and continues to maintain the more than seventy varieties of herbal plants which include tea, dye, medicinal, culinary and repellent herbs. Directly behind the herb garden is a small section which is being developed by the Herb Club as a memorial garden to honor club members.

POND; EAST & WEST FORMAL GARDENS [K-P]

Heading west along the brick path and directly across from the greenhouse is a stone pond [K] circled with ferns. Two Dawn Redwoods stand opposite each other. Just past the pond is the West Formal Garden featuring a landscaped area and trellis* which is covered in several types of vines. [L] Just beyond the trellis, to the right and left of the small steps are a pair of very rare Golden Cypress, planted sometime in the 1960s, and several 150-year-old yews. [M] The East Formal Garden [N] is a highly stylized, artistic type of garden famous in Europe and somewhat in Canada, but is little used in Western New York, and reflects the Italianate-Victorian style of the house. Each year, it takes 55 flats of annuals to plant.

*Donated by Artistic Landscape Company

The Formal Gardens and Pond received special attention for many years by Barbara Moran, a Kenan Center volunteer and member of the Kenan Arts Council (KAC), who was devoted to their care and upkeep, especially the pond which was restored through her diligent efforts. A bench, which stands near the pond, was donated in her memory by the KAC in 2005. The quiet, shady area offers a wonderful respite for visitors to enjoy the natural surroundings.

Next to the house is one of the oldest living wisteria vines in Niagara County, planted when the house was first built in 1859. [O] Next to this vine is a plant known as "King Tut peas." This bush, with its distinctive purple pods, is a remnant of one grown from seeds Mr. Kenan received from a friend who claimed they had come from the tomb of King Tut during its excavation by Lord Canarvon in the 1920's. The plant appears to be Baptisia Australis [P].

DECK [Q]

The deck and handicapped ramp are recent additions to the east side of the Kenan house. The garden here consists of shade loving heurachers, rhododendrons and hostas transplanted from Lockport's John Henry Historic Millenium Grove in 2004. The major trees here are two concolor firs and a golden arborvitae, in addition to an old pear tree, lilac shrub, weeping mulberry and burning bush. At the corner of the house is an old butternut tree.

TERRACE [R]

Directly behind the Taylor Theater is a patio that was added in 2007 and dedicated to Peter Whitmore, a dedicated Kenan volunteer and Chair of Buildings and Grounds Committee who championed its installation. Funding for this project was provided by the Kenan Quilters' Guild and the William R. Kenan, Jr. Charitable Trust.

SCULPTURE LEGEND

Sculptures in the Kenan Gardens were produced by Western New York artists. The sculptures by Mark Carroll and Dave Stevens were commissioned as a way to recognize donors to the Kenan Center Annual Appeals in years 2004 and 2005. The remaining sculptures were donated.

1. *Echo*, steel and granite by Mark Carroll.
2. *Big, Big Bird*, welded steel with rust patina by Dave Stevens.
3. *Horn of Plenty*, marble by Roland Georger; donated by the Kenan Arts Council.
4. Anonymous iron sculpture.
5. *Arianrhod 1994* ceramic, by Deborah Stewart.
6. *Exploring Serendipity*, bridge sculpture, Seth and Paul Werner, donated in memory of Chester Grove.

KENAN GARDENS SUPPORT

The yearly costs of maintaining the Kenan gardens and grounds for the enjoyment of the whole community can be substantial. Individual and corporate support in the form of cash or in-kind donations and sponsorships are welcome and sincerely appreciated. For more information, contact the Kenan Center at (716) 433-2617.

