

KENSINGTON COMMUNITY GARDEN



*Funding, technical assistance and training provided by
The Parks & People Foundation*

Located along the historic alignment of the Catonsville Short Line Railroad, which operated from 1884 until 1973, the Kensington Community Garden is a lush oasis in a quiet city neighborhood that abuts the Baltimore County line. When the idea to transform this property into a neighborhood park and ornamental garden was first conceived in 1993, the land was a favorite dumping spot for landscapers and contractors. A fifty-person community clean-up team removed debris and fallen trees from the two block area nearly ten years ago and thus began a decade of restoration efforts.

Edith Robinson, a long-time resident of the Kensington neighborhood and gardening enthusiast, has long shouldered much of the responsibility for the maintenance of the garden since its inception in 1993. Her commitment and dedication have transformed this property into a tremendous neighborhood asset. Robinson, now retired, explains, "It is my time to give back to my neighborhood." Considering the garden as "part of [her] family," it is no wonder that anyone coming into the neighborhood, either passers-by or prospective homebuyers, gets a "caring impression" from the garden.

With an established annual cleanup and several funding sources that have contributed to the project in the past ten years, Mrs. Robinson sees no real challenges to the success and sustainability of the garden. By exchanging advertising in the community newsletter for free landscaping services and by securing support from organizations such as the Baltimore Community Foundation, Chesapeake Bay Foundation, National Tree Trust, the Parks & People Foundation and others, Kensington gardeners have been ingenious in securing a place for the garden within the community.

Increasing home values and a scarcity of open land in the area have started to cause feelings of trepidation for Edith Robinson and other gardeners. Although the topography of the property is greatly varied and the removal of train tracks would need to precede any construction, the thought of development is not a completely outlandish threat. Robinson and others have proven themselves as good stewards of this land and are obviously invested in its success. Pursuing community ownership of this land could further ensure this neighborhood treasure remains a community controlled green space in the City of Baltimore.

WHO

Edith Robinson, Kensington Resident

WHAT

Kensington Community Garden

WHERE

4200-4300 blocks of South College Road

WHEN

Since 1993

WHY

To improve a blighted area that had been used for dumping and drug activity

