WPA Memorial Garden

The Works Progress Administration (WPA) was a depression era program that provided funds to build Norfolk's Azalea Garden Project. Working under difficult conditions of cold and heat, insects and snakes, 200 African American women and 20 African American men cleared dense underbrush, trees and stumps from this land during the late 1930s. They planted thousands of azaleas, rhodendrons, daffodils and other plants. Today, visitors still walk the trails and enjoy the beauty these women and men created. This Memorial Garden stands as a testament to their enduring legacy, honoring them as the first landscape curators of Norfolk Botanical Garden.

WPA records for the project are incomplete. We are still searching for names to honor their contribution and complete the list of 220.
Names of the known workers are listed below:

Sally Tucker Anthony Austin
Berline Banks
Narcissus Bond
Marie Freeman Davis Boyd
Gertrude Virginia Brooks
Hattie B. Brown
Oreatha Brown
Lena Bunch
Vernell Isaac Burrus
Sadie Buxton
Virginia Chavis
Elnora Collins
Irene Cousins
Elnora Cowell
Ellis Crumpler
Susie Diggs Curney
Clara Davis
Moses Eley
Miss Elizabeth
Cornellia Epperson

Fanny Waterfield Fentress
Mary Elizabeth Ferguson
Evora Flowers
Robert Duncan Ford
Jenny Garris
Annie Garrison
Ethel Graham
Marie Woodhouse Harris
Maria Parker Haskins
Caroline Hill
Winnie Holland
John Holley
Ruth Howell Holmes
Josephine Hopkins
Nannie Mae Ingram
Mary Ellen Jackson
Gladys D. James
Mary Jarvis
Bessie M. Johnson
Ethel Burford Johnson

Margaret Johnson
Annie Mae Jones
Daniel Jones
Margaret Jones
Ruth Jones
Edna Joyce
Thelma Amanda Wollard Mabery
Henrietta Martin
Mitt Mason
Josephine Massey
Wyatt Mason
Ida F. Mays
Carrie Melton
Mary Mitchell
Mary Nash
Elizabeth Newby
Addie Newsome
Ethel Scott Peoples
Mildred Perry
Mary Peterson

Josephine Rollins
Miss Sawyer
Martha E. Sharpe
Nellie Simms
Essie Sneed
Rebecca Sweeney
Mattie Taylor
Rosa L. Taylor
Nep Thomas
Essie L. Torrence
Pearl Turner
Albert Urquhart
Lola Tolliver Walton
Luvinia White
Mary H. White
Montgomery Wills, Jr.
Martha Webb Wilson
Blanche Worrell

Join us in preserving the WPA Memorial Garden and celebrate the legacy of the 220 original WPA gardeners.