

Lurie Garden – Fact Sheet

Quick Facts

Size	~3 acres
Lead Landscape Architect	Gustafson Guthrie Nichol Ltd. (Seattle, WA)
Perennial Planting Design	Piet Oudolf (Hummelo, The Netherlands)
Spring Bulb Design	Jacqueline van der Kloet (Weesp, Holland)
Civil Engineer	McDonough Associates (Chicago, IL)
Contractor	Walsh Construction (Chicago, IL)
Local Landscape Architect	Terry Guen Design Associates, Inc. (Chicago, IL)
Plantsman/Horticultural Consultant	Roy Diblik, Northwind Perennial Farm
Plant Diversity	~350 total species, cultivars, and selections

History

- International Design Competition held from August to October 2000
- Commissioned in October 2000
- Completed in June 2004
- Opened July 16, 2004
- Dedicated on July 24, 2004
- Created by the founders of Millennium Park, owned by the City of Chicago, managed by Millennium Park Foundation, and sustained by a generous endowment from the Ann and Robert H. Lurie Foundation, in memory of Bob Lurie
- Colleen Lockovitch hired as Head Horticulturist, 2005-2009; promoted to Director and Horticulturist in 2008
- Nichols Bridgeway to the Art Institute opened May 2009
- Jennifer Davit hired as Director and Head Horticulturist, 2010-2015
- Dr. Scott Stewart hired as Director, 2015-2016
- Laura Ekasetya hired as Director and Head Horticulturist, 2017-2021
- Kathryn Deery hired as Head Horticulturist, 2021-present

Design Highlights

Light Plate	Features perennial plants that thrive in full sun. Refers to Chicago’s modern and artistic impact on nature
Dark Plate	Features plants that thrive in the shade of flowering frees. References the site’s early landscape history of a wild shoreline and river delta
The Seam	Boundary between the two planting plates. Wooden boardwalk floats over a shallow water feature. Recalls Chicago’s first step to building itself out of the marsh by raising wooden boardwalks over muddy streets and sidewalks
Shoulder Hedge	15-foot-high, dramatically lit hedge that encloses Lurie Garden on two sides. Evokes the “City of Big Shoulders”

Ecology

- No synthetic pesticides or fertilizers are used on perennial planting beds, which exemplifies sustainable and responsible garden management in an ultra-urban setting.
- A combination of cultural and biological controls are
- Haven for numerous animal species, including birds, butterflies, rabbits, and bees. In the last five years almost 100 bird species have been spotted in the garden and park.
- A vast number of the plants support the local insect and bird population.
- One beehive installed in 2011, second beehive installed in 2012. The honey harvest varies each year. In 2018, approximately 80 lbs. of honey was harvested from both hives. Enough honey remained to feed the bees through winter.

Sustainability

- Urban rooftop garden – built over the Lakefront Millennium Parking Garage; located in the 24.5 acre Millennium Park, one of the world’s largest green roofs.
- The plantings are designed to minimize the need for water.
- The Garden is designed to absorb storm water runoff.

Plantings

- Piet Oudolf’s first commission in North America
- One of the first examples in the United States of New Wave Planting Style – a relaxed and natural style that aims to make plant design less controlled and geometric than traditional gardens
- The first matrix plantings in a public garden in the United States
- The garden design emphasizes form, texture, and the natural harmony of plants that constantly change through all four seasons.
- More than 40,000 perennial plants representing over 300 species and varieties can be found in the garden.
- Approximately 1300 trees make up the Shoulder Hedge
- Over 30 species of bird-friendly, regionally native shrubs comprise the Bird Border

Bulbs

- Dutch bulb and landscape designer, Jacqueline van der Kloet, in consultation with Piet Oudolf, created a bulb design specifically for Lurie Garden using eleven combinations of perennializing bulbs.
- Spring bulbs were introduced in 2006 with 60,000 bulbs planted.
- In 2019 another 61,000 bulbs and 6000 non-bulbs (Anemone rhizomes/rootlets) were added to the garden as a design refresh.
- Over the years, over 100,000 bulbs have been added since 2006
- Due to naturalizing characteristics of the bulbs, close to 200,000 bulbs bloom each spring.

Bird Border

- The planted border shared with the garden and Monroe and Columbus Avenues is planted and cared for by Lurie Garden.
- The Bird Border was designed by former Director and Head Horticulturist, Laura Ekasetya.
- The Bird Border mainly consists of over 30 species of bird-friendly, regionally native shrubs.
- The Monroe side of the border was installed in 2017 and contains 15 bird-friendly native shrubs.
- The Columbus side of the border was installed in 2018 and has 20 bird-friendly native shrubs.
- The north-most section of the Columbus Bird Border has been planted with groundcover species to avoid erosion.

Shoulder Hedge (Screen Hedge, Living Wall)

- Exemplifies the unusual boldness, strength and structure of the Garden and protects the unique perennials within
- There are two deciduous trees among the Arborvitae (Thuja). The European Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) holds leaves until spring, and the Hornbeam (*Carpinus betulus*), provides color and texture throughout the year.
- Arborvitaes (Thuja) are robust and opaque year round.
- 14 ft. tall frame is called The Armature – it is made of powdered steel, which evokes the steel industry and the city's first skyscrapers.

Meadow

- Stylized prairie planted on a matrix; is the most prairie-like feature of the garden
- The design evokes nature but does not copy it.
- Stretches across the south end of the garden and narrows as it reaches the Shoulder Hedge to symbolize the disappearing prairies due to urban sprawl

Plant Labels

- Individual signs near plants interfere with unique and natural vistas the Garden offers.
- Windmaster signs and plant identification apps can help visitors ID plants.
- Lurie Garden website has a Plant Life section to help identify plants at www.lurigarden.org/plantlife

Pathways

- In 2011, Earth Stone Midwest supplied a post-consumer, 100% recycled granite to use in the pathways throughout the garden.
- In 2013, the blue rayon granite walkways were replaced with concrete pavers with a crushed granite aggregate finish.

Financing the Garden

- The Garden is fully endowed by the Ann and Robert H. Lurie Foundation in memory of Bob Lurie.

- The gift is used for the care and maintenance of the garden.
- It reflects the family's commitment to Chicago as well as a desire to provide a tranquil and serene space for visitors to Millennium Park.
- Lurie Garden's Landscape Architecture firm, GGN, helps support a position every year, the GGN Public Garden Apprenticeship

Public Support

- Although Lurie Garden has accepted public support in the form of membership fees and donations from the public in the past, this is not a current practice.

Awards

- Best Continued Use Award, Friends of Downtown, 2017
- Certified Wildlife Habitat, National Wildlife Federation
- Certified Butterfly Garden, North American Butterfly Association
- Certified Monarch Waystation, Monarch Watch
- Illinois Landscape Contractors Association Gold Award for Excellence, 2009
- Award of Excellence in General Design, American Society of Landscape Architects, Oct. 6, 2008
- Institute Honor Awards for Regional & Urban Design, American Institute of Architects, 2006
- Best Public Space Award, Travel & Leisure magazine, 200
- Intensive Industrial Award, Green Roofs for Healthy Cities, 2005
- Award of Honor, WASLA Professional Awards, 2005