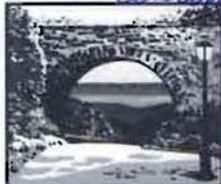


Chas Collins archit.

Forest Hill / Gray Bernard - architect of clusters

(margin notes from a lecture... pfh)



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F O R T T R Y O N P A R K ' S 7 5 T H Y E A R

Painting with Plants in the Heather Garden

Jennifer M. Hoppa, Administrator of Northern Manhattan Parks

"Being a trained artist has been very important to my work," says Lynden B. Miller, an acclaimed public garden designer and champion of public parks. This year, Miller is helping develop a Framework Plan for enhancing and sustaining Fort Tryon Park's 75-year-old Heather Garden.

"Gardening is an art form using many of the same elements as painting," says Miller, adding, "I paint with plants using line, form, color and texture." Miller also used to make large abstract landscape collages. "When I began to design gardens," she says, "I realized that a garden is also a collage — a group of disparate elements brought together to form a composition made of living plants."

Miller's associate designer, Ronda Brands, comments that in the historic Heather Garden, many collage elements are already in place: the rocky topography, the extensive heaths and heathers and the unique collections of perennials. Brands says, "One of the challenges of improving the garden is that it is already established. We want to reinvigorate it through the Framework Plan, but make it true to the history of the park's design and ensure strong structure and form."

In addition to numerous horticultural awards, Miller may be best known for reclaiming the historic Conservatory Garden in Central Park in the early 1980s and for helping revitalize Bryant Park. The *Wall Street Journal* summarized Miller's

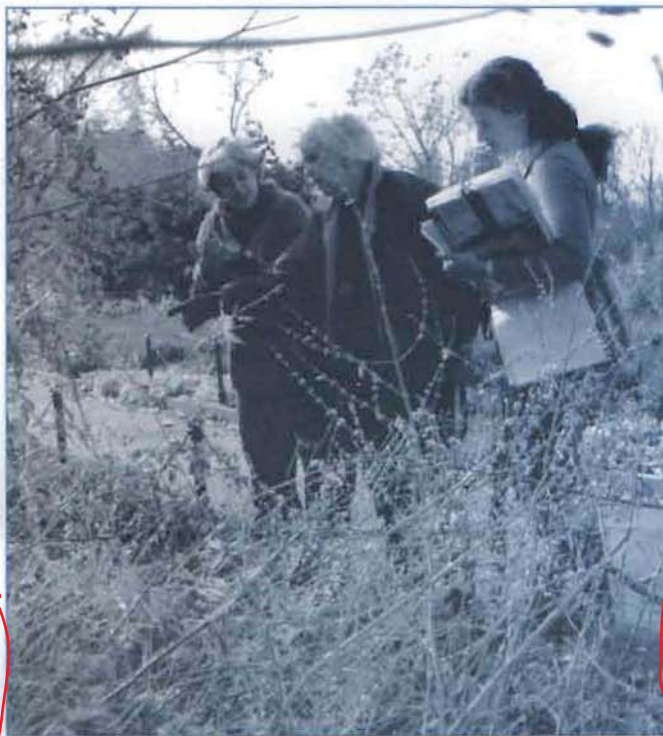


Photo by Marechal Brown

Experts assess soil issues, from left, Fort Tryon Park Gardener Marcia Garibaldi with Lynden Miller and Ronda Brands.

message in her new book, *Parks, Plants and People: Beautifying the Urban Landscape*: "Good parks make good cities." Miller and Brands are currently working on projects at the Museum of Modern Art, Columbia University, Princeton University, Stony Brook University, Hudson River Park, Hanover Square, and the US Supreme Court.

Despite their collective wealth of experience, Miller and Brands recognize the expertise of the Fort Tryon gardeners and are working closely with them on all plant selections and developing maintenance and operations plans for the garden's long-term needs. "So much knowledge and material already existed," says Brands, "Now we can document it, strengthen it, and make it more cohe-

sive, as well as give a blueprint to those who will be tending the garden daily to help guide the ongoing maintenance."

Both Miller and Brands appreciate the uniqueness of Fort Tryon Park with its views of the Hudson River, the Rockefeller family connection, and its expansive gardens. "Ronda's 1/4 scale drawing of the perennial bed hung over my ten foot long drafting table," Miller exclaimed. The Heather Garden's perennial bed is 600 feet long.

Both designers see the need for large swaths of plants and repetition as keys to making the long perennial bed successful. "We want to create a consistent and congenial relationship between the perennial bed and the heather bed, while ensuring they read

as individual pieces of a larger whole," says Miller.

In conjunction with the Fort Tryon Park gardeners, Miller and Brands have mapped the garden's existing conditions, helped tackle soil remediation in problem areas, and identified ways to ensure year round interest throughout the garden. With the support of the Fort Tryon Park Trust and the collaboration between Miller, Brands and the Fort Tryon Park gardeners, the largest heath and heather collection in the Northeast will be enjoyed for generations to come.

Come see the garden collage unfold this spring.

If you would like to help support the Heather Garden Framework Plan, please contact Jennifer.Hoppa@parks.nyc.gov. ■

Boreas - the god of the north winds - Boreal forest