

## Today's event has the following stations you can move through as you please.

1. Welty House – walk through Welty's living room and learn about her life, travels, and writing from her niece, Mary Alice Welty White.
2. Education and Visitors Center (the Tudor revival-style house next to the Welty House) – browse the gift shop and look at exhibits. There is also a 20 minute film available about Welty's life.
3. Front yard
4. Side Porch – learn about the Night-Blooming Cereus and enjoy some light refreshments.
5. Camellia room
6. Upper garden
7. Cutting Garden
8. Lower & Rose Garden
9. Clubhouse

Flowers currently in bloom are:

- Black-eyed Susan (*Rudbeckia hirta*)
- Butterfly lily (*Hedychium coronarium*)
- Canna (*Canna x generalis*)
- Cosmos (*Cosmos sulphureus*)
- Four o'clocks (*Mirabilis jalapa*)
- Gaillardia (*Gaillardia* sp.)
- Golden Glow (*Rudbeckia laciniata* 'Hortensia')
- Marigold (*Tagetes patula* 'Legion of Honor' or 'Little Brownie')
- Mexican bush sage (*Salvia leucantha*)
- Morning glory (*Ipomoea purpurea* 'Grandpa Ott')
- Oxblood lily (*Rhodophiala bifida*)
- Philippine lily – (*Lilium philippinense*)
- Roses (Cecile Brunner, Lafter, Lady Hillingdon, Maman Cochet)
- Spider lily (*Lycorus radiata*)
- Zinnia (*Zinnia elegans* 'Miss Wilmott')



## **A letter from Susan Haltom, the Welty garden restoration consultant to the Mississippi Department of Archives and History since 1994**

Greetings GCA visitors!

I regret that I cannot be there to greet you in person, as I am out of state lecturing, but many of our Cereus Weeder volunteers are on hand to show you Eudora's special home place. In April 2015 I accepted the Zone IX Historic Preservation Award for work here, and I have just concluded my term as president of the Southern Garden History Society, a group that many of you already support.

For over sixty years, Eudora wrote stories and novels and worked in the garden, but as her mobility became more limited, the garden declined. Beginning in 1994 I interviewed Eudora extensively about the garden's history. She was able to recall many details, including Latin names for various flowers and plants she and her mother had planted. During one of our interviews, Eudora cautioned me, "Don't make the garden something it wasn't."

The interviews with Eudora provided an important piece of the puzzle for the Welty garden restoration, but I relied on three other sources of information for accuracy on the project. Both Chestina and Eudora documented changes to the garden throughout the years. Chestina kept a garden journal in which she noted the weather, the layout of the beds and borders, bloom schedules, and the success or failure of different varieties of flowers.

As a young photographer, Eudora climbed out the window of a second-floor room and took photographs of the garden from the roof, developing them in the kitchen sink. Her correspondence with other garden enthusiasts and friends overflowed with descriptions of the world outside her windows. The writings and photographs provide an impressive record of the garden's development over time and served as primary documentation. The chosen period of significance is 1925 - 1945.

The long restoration process began with an extensive assessment of the existing garden, which included a small but hardy sampling of the great diversity of flora that had once grown here. Camellias, azaleas, spireas, climbing roses, and, in their seasons, narcissus, summer snowflakes, bearded irises, daylilies, montbretia, oxblood lilies, and red spider lilies still grew. From these plants and the documentation previously gathered, we were able to identify the location of many of the original beds and borders.

The next task was to replace long-gone arbors and trellises and to find the original varieties of historic flowers and plants. Since many of these varieties were no longer available in the commercial trade, I turned to specialized heirloom nurseries, old homesteads, or gardening experts with a passion for one particular type of plant to find these unusual specimens.

I hope you will enjoy the garden as Eudora and Chestina intended it. Not as a show garden, but as a work of love. Constant effort and attention to the garden meant there would always be flowers for the dining table, bouquets to cheer friends, and cuttings to pass along for propagation. This small domestic garden is restored today as a model of historic garden preservation with Southern heirloom plants, and it remains a Southern family garden, a living picture, always changing.



Susan Haltom