



PHOTO BY ALANA MOEHRING MALLARD

Volunteers with Austin Green Energy Group, including Paul Frias, Clara McGee, Bernie Johnson, Voitech Yaroshevich and Elana Kopel, spent Saturday morning in Mayfield Park's cottage gardens.

Mayfield volunteers tend garden plots

By Alana Moehring Mallard

Mayfield Park and Nature Preserve buzzed with volunteer gardeners last Saturday, the second Saturday of the month and one that is especially set aside for working in the park's rock-lined cottage gardens.

"Austin Green Energy is here," said Nadene Morning, a Friends of Mayfield Park volunteer, "and we had LASA (Liberal Arts and Sciences Academy at LBJ High School) and Lamar Middle School."

Six volunteers from Austin Green Energy Group — Bernie Johnson, Elana Kopel, Clara McGee, Duffy Thompson, Voitech Yaroshevich, and Paul Frias — were mulching and weeding gardens, layering trails, and trimming plants.

"Mayfield is a new venture for us," said Johnson. "We're involved with One House at a Time, Treefolk and the Trail Foundation."

Mayfield's cottage gardens, across the fish and turtle ponds from the 1870s bungalow where Mary Mayfield Gutsch lived until 1971, reflect the style of Mrs. Gutsch's gardening said Morning, with oxblood lilies, irises, ground orchids and every kind of flowering bulb plant. Many of the garden plots have lots of Texas natives: American beauty berry, skullcap, flame acanthus, damianita, purple coneflower.

And those cottage gardens are adopted and cared for by Central Texans, such as Paula Estes, who has gardened in her plot under the elms and palms for 20 years. "When my husband and I were courting, we would

sneak off here," said Estes. And her kids grew up coming to Mayfield Park and doing a little flower gardening in their shady plot.

Cottage garden plots are available now for adoption, and Morning and her co-committee members Janice Brown, Blake Tollett, Barbara Watt and Rick Chance can guide new adopters as they begin their gardening. For information on adopting a cottage garden e-mail Brown at janicehillbrown@gmail.com or call her at 371-0876.

"You can be in this place and forget you're in the middle of the city," said Estes, as she looked around the peaceful, estate-like grounds of Mayfield Park. Mayfield Park welcomes volunteers every second Saturday of the month, from 8 a.m. till noon. Mayfield Park is open every day as are trails in the nature preserve.