Science Fiction’s Safe Haven
Take a look inside Texas A&M’s “out-of-this-world” sci-fi collection

Luke’s Legacy
Family and friends honor fallen sophomore with a gift for MSC FISH

The “Bonfire Effect”
Aggies keep the fire burning through generations of scholarship giving
I remember the first time I planted something and what it felt like to watch it grow. I was 5 years old, and I brought home a bean seedling in a Dixie cup from Bible school.

My mother and I planted the seedling in the flower garden. The plant produced eight beans, which my mother lovingly cooked and served to the family. I knew at that young age I had done something good by helping feed the family, plus I had discovered my passion.

Tucked away on West Campus is an undeveloped, 45-acre plot that will become a place for Texas A&M students to plant their first seed and find their passion in life. It’s the future home of the Texas A&M Gardens and Greenway, an outdoor classroom for all agricultural disciplines as well as for many fields of study across the university, from performing arts to architecture to education. In time, it will also become a peaceful sanctuary on campus, a place where everyone at Texas A&M and in the surrounding community can relax and learn.

**The Vision**

For years, faculty and university administrators have hoped for such an oasis on campus, but only recently did the stars align. In 1998, the Board of Regents designated the area the West Campus Greenway. In 2012, Mark Hussey, our vice chancellor and dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, openly committed to creating a public garden and nature preserve on the land that follows White Creek behind the AgriLife Complex to the Bush Presidential Library and Museum.

Dr. Hussey sees this as an opportunity for the university to showcase and enhance its worldwide impact. It will allow us to engage children, train future science teachers, educate the public in the natural sciences and provide a green space on campus for all to enjoy. It also will lead to collaboration with other campus entities as we involve students, faculty and staff in the generation of ideas.

With his graduate students, Professor Jon Rodiek, coordinator of Texas A&M’s landscape architecture and urban planning program, created a comprehensive master plan. They investigated various elements of the project, analyzing how the area will be shaded during different times of year and designing renderings of potential attractions.

While creating the master plan, graduate students honed skills in comprehensive master planning, spatial configuration design and environmental surveying. Rodiek and his students integrated many concepts and conducted case studies that included interviews with the campus community, students, faculty, staff, landscape architecture and horticulture experts.
Texas A&M’s Backyard

The Memorial Student Center serves as Texas A&M’s living room; the Gardens and Greenway will become the university’s backyard. We envision school buses full of youngsters unloading at the entrance; agriculture students digging in the soil; music majors practicing in the open areas; and recreation, parks and tourism students hosting events and nature tours. We hope that families will stop in for an afternoon stroll and that birders will visit to watch the more than 50 avian species in the area.

Arboreta and botanical gardens are valuable assets to universities for several reasons. The first is teaching. The Gardens and Greenway will highlight the university’s commitment to research on how to feed a growing global population and how to deal with the depletion of natural resources.

With a third focus on outreach, this teaching garden will reach past the Texas A&M borders into the greater Bryan/College Station area and beyond. It will be a cultural asset for the community and will encourage tourism. For students at a K–12 level, the gardens may be their first encounter with Texas A&M and their introduction to agriculture and the natural sciences. Visitors from all over Texas will be able to explore the heritage vegetable garden and fruit orchard, a rose garden full of Texas-tough species, an outdoor living area, an arboretum and more.

Finally, the Gardens and Greenway will provide students, faculty and staff an off-campus experience on campus in which they can relax in a tranquil environment in the midst of a hectic university day.

Help Us Plant the First Seed

Now that the project is in full swing, the next phase involves donor support. Students, faculty and staff have created an initial plan for the Gardens and Greenway, but only through support from former students, corporations and other friends can we create and manage a garden of this size.

The open-access Gardens and Greenway will not be supported by attendance revenue; private donors will fund 100 percent of its construction and maintenance. Establishing a maintenance endowment is essential to sustain its life and beauty in perpetuity.

We’ve created a working list of gardens, recreational spaces and other attractions within the space that you can reserve in your family’s name or in honor of a loved one by committing to a gift. The staff at the Texas A&M Foundation can assist you with payment plans and after-lifetime giving options that make it easy for anyone to participate.

I hope you will consider sowing your legacy at the Texas A&M Gardens and Greenway.

—by Doug Welsh ’79
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To learn how you can support the Texas A&M Gardens and Greenway, contact:

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To contribute online, visit give.am/TAMUGardens.

To see a video about the gardens, scan this code with your smartphone or visit give.am/TAMUGardensVideo.