



Kenilworth Park and Aquatic Gardens



Welcome to Kenilworth Park and Aquatic Gardens

This is the only National Park Service unit cultivating water-loving plants. The aquatic gardens is over 45 ponds with a variety of tropical and hardy waterlilies, lotus and other plant species. Kenilworth marsh surrounds the ponds, and includes 70 acres of tidal marsh. The park provides scenic access to the Anacostia River and recreation space for the public. The park serve as an outdoor classroom for the study of hydrology, ecology and zoology.

A Park's Story

Welcome to the only national park cultivating water-loving plants, a 12-acre sanctuary featuring exotic water lilies. Created on the east bank of the Anacostia River, this mosaic of shallow ponds and lakes, bordered by tidal marsh, forms an island of green next to the busy neighborhoods of Washington's far northeast corner.

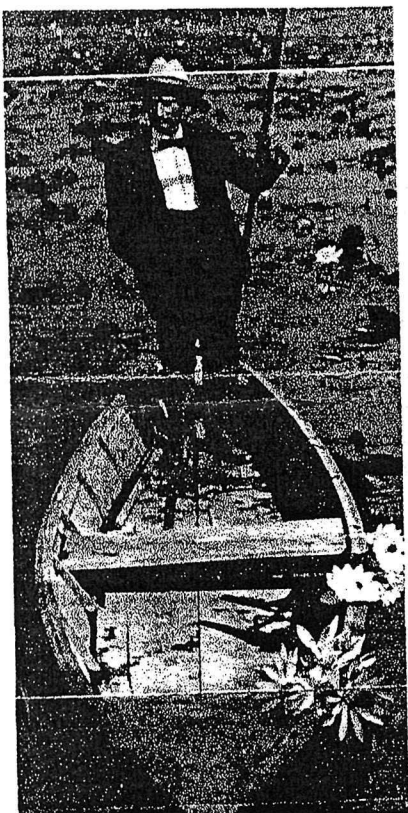
After the Civil War Walter B. Shaw, located a job as a clerk in the U.S. Treasury Department. He married, and later bought 30 acres along the Anacostia from his mother-in-law in the 1880s. His fondness for water lilies led him to plant a few native species from his home state of Maine in an unused ice pond. In time, his hobby became his business and life's work as he dredged more ponds, collected exotic waterlilies, developed varieties, and sold plants and blooms far and wide.

With the help of his daughter, Helen Fowler, Shaw created a unique habitat, combining the gleam of water with the starlike blooms of the lilies. Mrs. Fowler succeeded her father as manager of W.B. Shaw Lily Ponds. She imported lotuses from the Orient, Nile, and South America. Her pastel studies of lilies are displayed at the visitor's center.

The Interior Department stepped in and purchased the gardens in 1938 for \$15,000 to preserve them for the American people. The National Park Service renamed the gardens Kenilworth for the community that had grown up at the turn of the century on the neighboring farmlands.

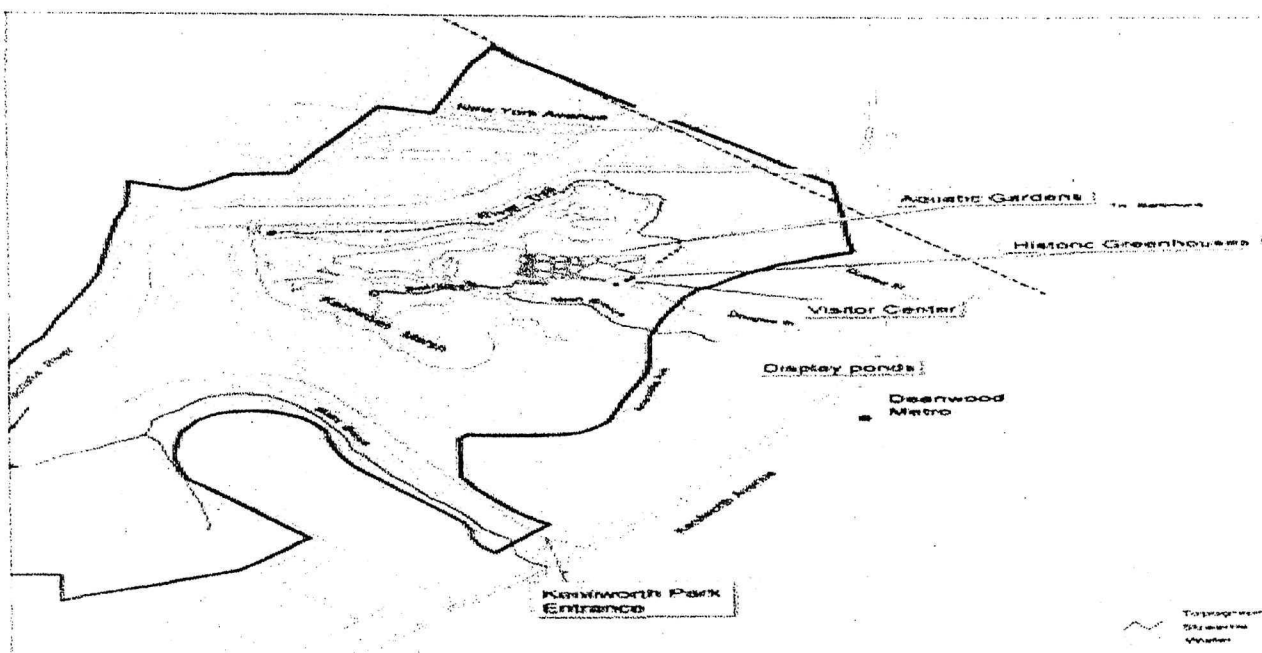
These acres remain home to a variety of wetland plants and animals in wetland habitat of the early Washington, DC. Migratory birds pause to rest here. Many wetland mammals are returning with habitat repair. The annual Christmas bird count of the local Audubon Naturalist Society finds over 40 species in the area.

The park opens early to accommodate birders and photographers. In summer the waterlilies begin blooming in late May with a changing show until mid September. Wildflowers in the marsh begin blooming earlier.



In the 1920's visitors by the thousands came to see the waxy flowers open in the summer sun. President Calvin Coolidge and his wife Grace liked to stroll under the willows.

Then in the 1930's the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, with a mission to dredge the river and reclaim the marshes, moved to take the land by condemnation.



About Water Lilies and Lotus

The water lily family takes its name, *Nymphaea*, from the graceful female spirits of ancient myth who lived in lakes and streams. Many species of lilies live in different parts of the world, varying in form and color, but they are broadly grouped into hardy and tropical. All grow in shallow, slow-moving water. Leaves form underwater and grow to reach the surface and the sun. Flowers bloom for 3 to 14 days, opening and closing with the change of light. The seeds dip underwater to ripen.

The ponds at Kenilworth harbor many types of hardy lilies recognized by the round pads with smooth edges. Their flowers peak in late May to mid July.

Tropical waterlilies are distinguished by serrated or rippled edges of their leaf pads and more open flowers in intense pink, blue, purple, yellow and white. When the ponds warm up, the tropical tubers are moved outdoors in containers. Their peak is July and August. Some bloom at night; many are fragrant. The extraordinary *Victoria sp.* from South America displays leaves like platters with upturned edges, some up to five feet across.

The lotus (genus *Nelumbo*) has waxy leaves that rise above the water and shed rain. Its showy flowers drop petals to reveal seedpods that look like shower-heads. Its seeds ripen above water. In a pool near the visitor center cluster pink-tinged East Indian lotus, descended from ancient plants whose seeds were recovered in 1951 from a dry Manchurian lakebed. A recent estimate placed their age at 575 years.

The apparent ancestor of the waterlilies and lotus of the world, the *Nuphar*, grows in ponds and the wetlands that surround them on three sides. Its bright yellow flowers begin blooming in April, and can be seen in their native habitat at low tide.

Other tropical plants in the ponds create a sensual garden that delights the eye, nose and ears of visitors.

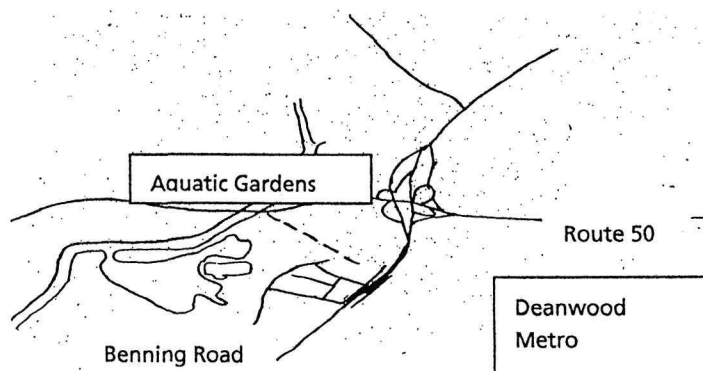
Park Entrances:

1. The entrance to Kenilworth Park is located at the intersection of Kenilworth and Nannie Helen Borroughs Avenues.
2. The entrance to the Aquatic Gardens is between the intersections of Anacostia Avenue and Douglas Street and Quarles Street.

Access by Metrorail/bus

There are a number of ways to enter Kenilworth Park and Aquatic Gardens utilizing the Metro rail and Metro bus system. These directions provide details for travel from the Deanwood Metro Station on the Orange line and the Benning Road Metro Station on the Blue line.

1. From the Deanwood Metro Station take the V7 Bureau of Engraving bus to Kenilworth Ave. and Douglas St. then walk to the end of Douglas to Anacostia Avenue. Other alternatives include the R12 Deanwood or the W4 Capital Plaza buses which can be taken to the intersection of Eastern Ave. and Olive St. Walk 0.6 mi Northwest on Eastern to Kenilworth, then take Douglas to Anacostia Avenue.
2. From the Benning Road Metro Station walk 0.1 mi southeast to East Capitol St. and Benning Rd. board the W4 Capital Plaza bus and ride to the intersection of Eastern Ave. and Olive St. Walk 0.6 mi on Eastern to Kenilworth, then take Douglas to Anacostia Avenue



The gardens are located directly across the Anacostia River from the National Arboretum. Take Kenilworth Avenue to The Eastern Avenue Exit. From South of Route 50 make a U turn to the left onto the south bound service road. From north of Route 50 go straight to the service road at the top of the Eastern Avenue Exit. From the service road, go right onto Douglas Street. Go right at the end of Douglas onto Anacostia Avenue. The park is on the left.

Hours

7 a.m. to 4 p.m. Mornings are best for viewing flowers.

Special Features

Garden walks on summer weekends and holidays - 9 a.m., 11 a.m., other programs available.

Information

Call (202) 426-6905 V/TDD or write to: National Capital Parks- East, 1900 Anacostia Drive, Southeast, Washington, District of Columbia 20020

For additional details about planning your trip on metro bus and/or metro rail visit the following web sites: www.nps.gov/anac
www.metroopensdoors.com