

# Photo of the Month

## Rogers Garden Club



The Rogers Garden Club meets at the home of Mrs. Gregory, circa 1944. Photo by H. Musteen. (Neg. #N009346)

On November 4, 1929, ten women met together in the home of Vera Key in Rogers. They shared a love of gardening and a common goal: "To make Rogers the most beautiful city in Arkansas." Thus was born the Rogers Garden Club.

Despite the problems of the Great Depression, the Garden Club had a banner year in 1931, holding its first flower show, sponsoring its first yard contest, and having the petunia declared by city ordinance to be the official flower of Rogers.

Their most ambitious project that year, however, was raising funds for the beautification of Campus Park, which was once located just east of Tillery Elementary. For many years club members also donated time to maintaining the park. Another successful early project was a nature trail which ran a mile from Lairdale Spring to the Willola Pool southeast of Rogers.

One of the most spectacular Garden Club projects, and one which still benefits the community today, was the planting in 1946 and 1974 of about 2,000 colorful hard maples and flowering redbud and dogwood trees around the city. The spirea and maples at the Rogers Cemetery the Garden Club members planted themselves.

The Club was willing to get involved in projects that went beyond gardens and beautification. During World War II they rolled bandages and packed care packages for servicemen. Later they helped raise funds toward the building of St. Mary's Hospital.

In 1955 the Garden Club split into two organizations: the Garden Club of Rogers and the Flower Garden Club. Over the next 20 years the Garden Club of Rogers became much more active in environmental issues, including protesting the damming of the Buffalo River, funding Audubon Camp scholarships, and

encouraging environmental education in the Rogers Public Schools.

Today the Garden Club of Rogers boasts 34 members. Civic beautification projects include Centennial Park and Tower Park, and a 2003 wildflower planting at Walnut and Interstate 540. The Club has left a legacy of community beautification and environmental awareness that will continue to benefit Rogers well into the future.