



# *Midwest Groundcovers Display Gardens Tour Guide*

## **Welcome to Midwest Groundcovers**

### **To start your tour, we'd like to share a little history.**

When Peter Orum immigrated from Denmark to the United States in 1965 he brought with him a deep knowledge of horticulture and an entrepreneurial spirit. In 1969, Peter, and his wife, Irma, began a life-long journey that would become the Midwest family of companies. Today, annual production at five nursery locations totals nearly 8.6 million market-ready plants produced by a workforce of nearly 300.

This St. Charles headquarters site, built in 1994, was originally planned by landscape architect, Christa Orum-Keller. The display gardens' goal is to provide an educational outdoor classroom, where customers and staff can observe, analyze and share feedback on mature plants and review new plants grown in trial gardens for evaluation.

Our plants are labeled with scientific names and plant lists are available by the entry to some gardens. We hope to inspire you and encourage you to garden with these plants in your designs, and we want to share our enthusiasm for plant communities through creativity and sustainable best practices.

All of our garden beds are amended and mulched with products from our sister company, Midwest Trading. Look for signage to identify Midwest Trading products and visit the product display by the Wholesale Office.

*For more information, visit our website, [www.midwestgroundcovers.com](http://www.midwestgroundcovers.com)*





## Entrance & Visitor Parking

From this parking lot it is an easy five-to-ten-minute walk to all of the display gardens. Adjacent to the parking lot are Roses, Boxwood and larger shrubs. Closer to the Main Office Building, you will find the Piet Oudolf garden and display plantings of Hocus Pocus Groundcovers®, Hydrangeas, Perennial trials, and a mixed border. The Conifer Garden and the Perennial & Grass Display Garden are to the south and north of the office respectively. Follow the signs and the paved walkway to safely cross the customer entry lot. The public restroom is located next to the Wholesale Office in the Main Office Building.



## #1 Rose Garden

Enjoy our Rose Garden, identified by an artful set of brick walls, of which the center wall showcases terra cotta tiles from the historic Baker Hotel in St. Charles. A plaque at the base of the center wall tells the story of the tiles. The more formal style of the garden portrays the planting layouts popular during the Victorian era.

Midwest Groundcovers sells nearly forty cultivars of shrub roses, including David Austin®, Easy Elegance®, Drift®, Knock Out® and Flower Carpet®.

## #2 Boxwood Display (*in development*)

Boxwood hybrids (*Buxus*) are low, slow-growing broadleaf evergreens ideal for upper Midwest landscapes in sun or shade. Favorite varieties of this broad-leaved evergreen are grown in the garden and show cold hardiness and vigorous growth. Frequently used to create formal hedges, such as those you see in many historical English gardens, they respond well to shearing. To maintain a hedge, hand prune occasionally to open the top surface to allow light into the base of the plants. Notice our Boxwood pruning experiments in the Rose Garden and in the patio at the lower level of the office (pruned spring 2018).

Within the last few years, the fast-spreading fungal disease, Boxwood Blight has been documented in the Midwest. After a thorough inspection of our nursery, the Illinois Department of Agriculture has certified that our boxwood crops are disease free. For more information on this disease and our practices, visit our website.



Our Boxwood display garden includes some alternatives to Boxwood that exhibit a similar size and leaf texture. As you will discover, alternatives are both evergreen, such as Shamrock Inkberry (*Ilex glabra* 'Shamrock') and deciduous, like the Deutzia Yuki™ series.



### #3 Shrub Display & Trial Garden (Hickory Island)

In the future, this area will showcase medium (4-6') to large (6-10') shrubs grouped by genera. Species and cultivars will grow closely together for comparison. Plants in this display will never be sheared, but may be periodically hand pruned to maintain their natural shape. Deciduous shrubs represent 1/3 of plants sold at Midwest so we look forward to creating these important gardens to share with you.

*Installation of the shrub beds is scheduled for 2019-2020.*



### #4 Piet Oudolf "New Wave" Garden (Piet Garden)

Plantings aren't always about the flowers; they can also be created through form, texture, light and movement. Designed by world renowned Dutch garden designer and plantsman, Piet Oudolf, this garden showcases a modernist planting, reminiscent of the lush Impressionist style of painting. Oudolf defines this style as "inspired by nature, but controlled by knowledge and skill". He has designed gardens throughout Europe, Britain and the United States, including a 2.3-acre section of Millennium Park in Chicago called Lurie Garden, The Garden of Remembrance in Battery Park and The Highline, both in New York City.

Over 5,000 primarily herbaceous plants, which includes 62 varieties of both native and exotic species grow close together to create a lush tapestry. An under-planting of spring bulbs provides early spring interest when the last season's growth has been mowed away. Little to no pruning or staking reveals the true nature of this multi-seasonal planting.

### #5 Spiraea Display

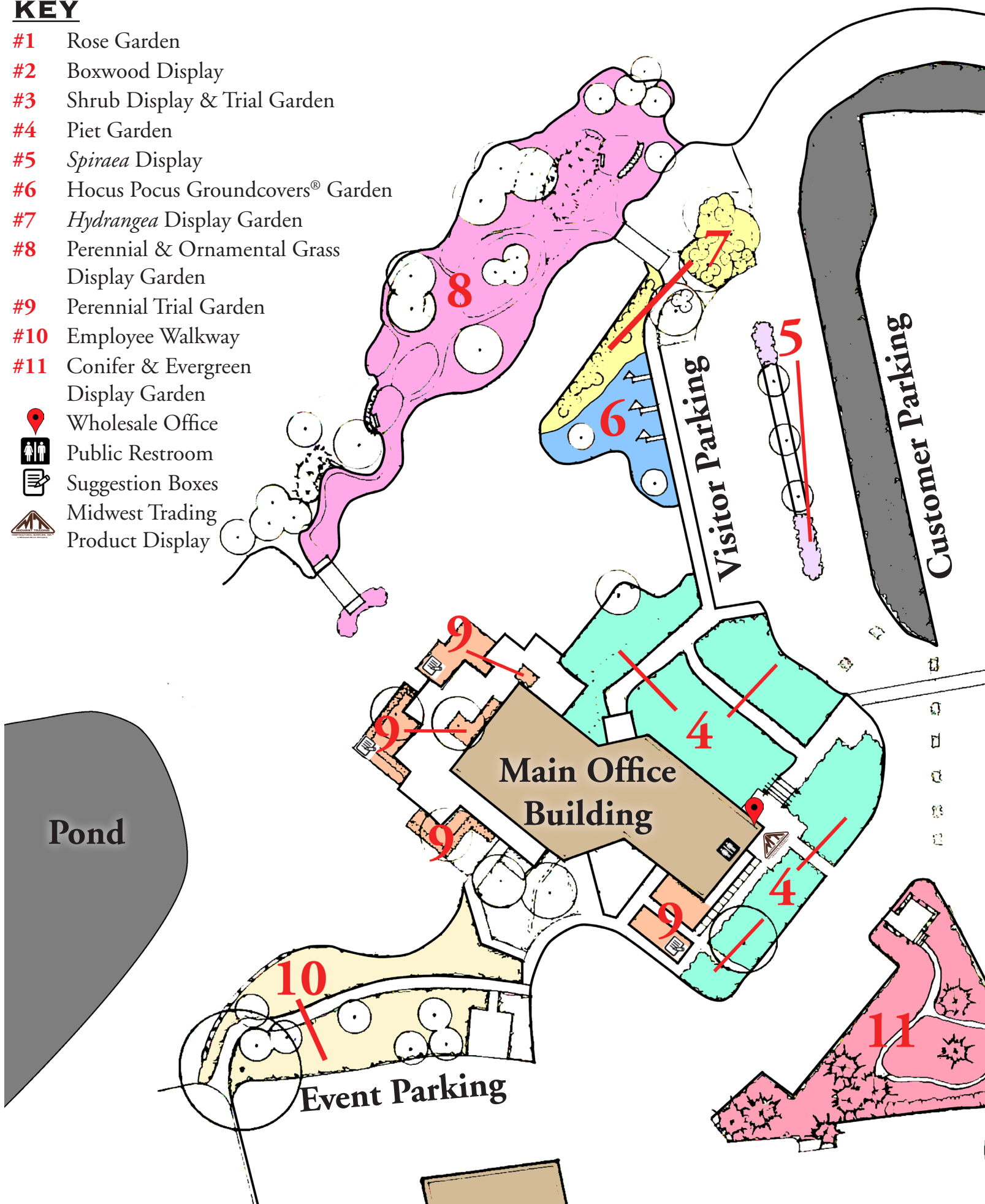
A broad range of low-growing Spireas; useful for their low, mounded habit, spring flowers and colorful foliage, grace the parking island between the exit drive and office visitor parking. Note that many varieties change leaf color from early spring into summer and fall. The delicate, yet numerous twigs add presence in the winter landscape.

Spireas are durable, hardy flowering shrubs with multi-season interest.

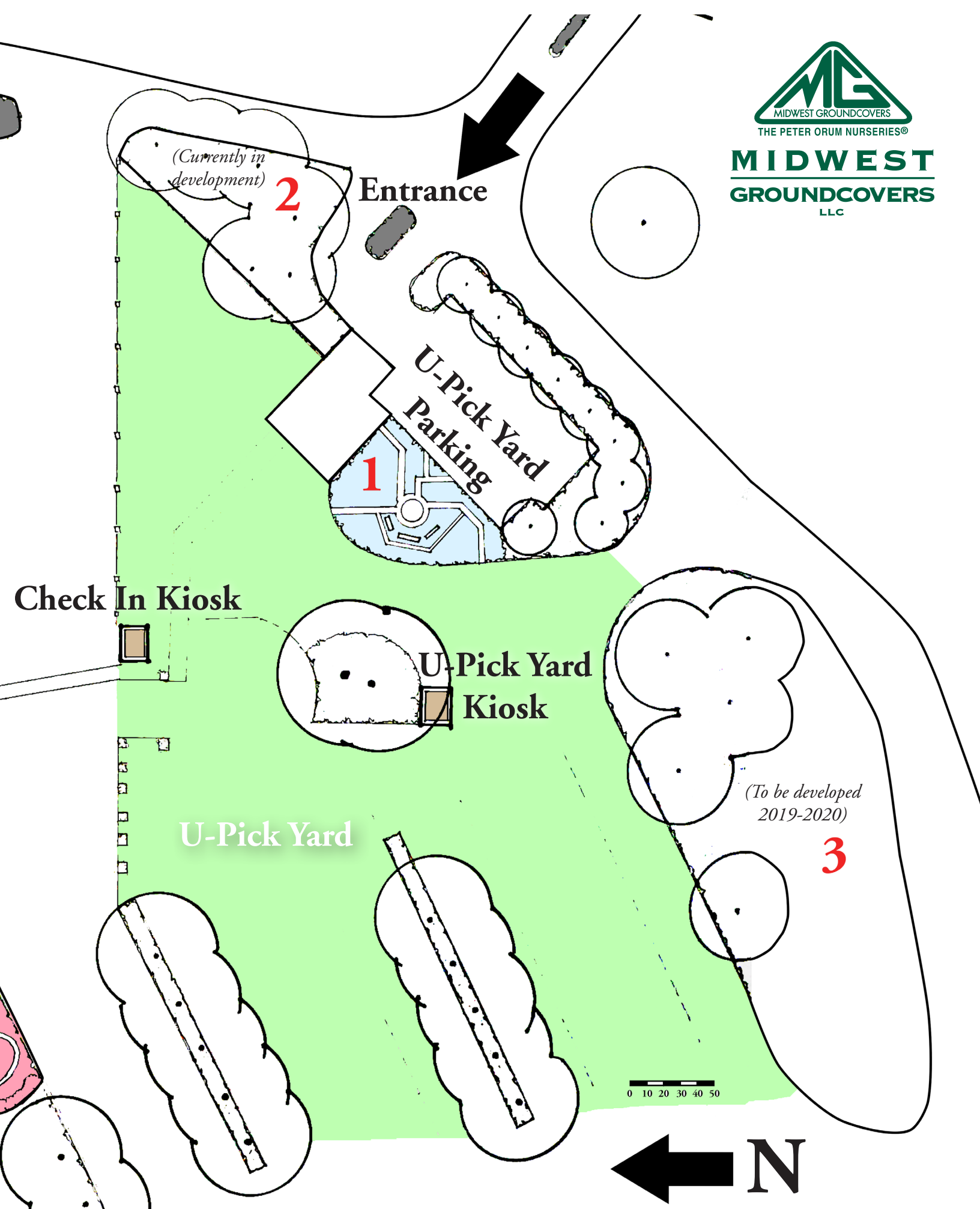


# KEY

- #1 Rose Garden
- #2 Boxwood Display
- #3 Shrub Display & Trial Garden
- #4 Piet Garden
- #5 *Spiraea* Display
- #6 Hocus Pocus Groundcovers® Garden
- #7 *Hydrangea* Display Garden
- #8 Perennial & Ornamental Grass Display Garden
- #9 Perennial Trial Garden
- #10 Employee Walkway
- #11 Conifer & Evergreen Display Garden
-  Wholesale Office
-  Public Restroom
-  Suggestion Boxes
-  Midwest Trading Product Display











## #6 Hocus Pocus Groundcovers® Garden

### They Cover Like Magic!

Hocus Pocus Groundcovers® is Midwest Groundcovers' brand of over ninety unique and durable groundcovers. The best of the low spreaders form a colorful quilt around our flag poles. Look for color, texture and bloom times that fit your site needs. This planting includes many of our low-growing sedums, which are often used in green roof plantings. Learn more at [www.hocuspocusgroundcovers.com](http://www.hocuspocusgroundcovers.com)

### \* Fun Fact \*

At Midwest Groundcovers, the American flag flies daily, and Danish and Mexican flags are common sites. When foreign guests visit, we have a tradition of flying their flags to welcome them. We've welcomed folks from England, Germany, France, Canada, China, Japan, Australia, Poland, New Zealand and Russia, just to name a few!

## #7 Hydrangea Display Garden

With such a broad range of hydrangeas on the market, it's handy to have this display of species and cultivars side by side. Desired for their summer blooms and large white to pink/purple flower heads, hydrangeas range in size from 2' to 8' depending on the cultivar. *Hydrangea paniculata* cultivars are generally upright and flower best in full sun, while the mounded cultivars of the Japanese, *H. macrophylla* and *H. serrata*, do better in some shade. "Hydra" is Greek for "water or water serpent," so sun or shade, hydrangeas need moist soil. Those most drought-tolerant are our native *H. arborescens*. Their coarse leaf texture (from big leaves) is a useful design contrast to fine textured shrubs.



## #8 Perennial & Ornamental Grass Display (Perennial Island)

Perennials add texture, seasonal color and diversity to the landscape, filling the height gap between woody shrubs and the lowest ground layer. These herbaceous plants range from short, grass-like habits with diminutive flowers to tall, full-leaved mounds, with saucer-sized flowers.

To help you locate particular species and cultivars, and to aide in teaching plant identification, these beds are numbered and the display is loosely arranged in alphabetical order by genus from the east (closest to the flag poles) to the west (closest to the pond). Ornamental Grasses and Sedges are grouped together for comparison at the west end of the garden.






## #9 Perennial Trial Garden

Take a break on your stroll through our many displays and sit on the patio to help us evaluate the surrounding plantings of the Perennial Trial Garden. Hundreds of new plant varieties enter the marketplace every year.

Our staff selects those that they feel are significant, hardy, vigorous and useful to this region. We grow them in our garden beds for at least a year. Each year a small number of successful candidates make it into our production program.

### \* *Share Your Opinion* \*

You have a voice in what we grow next. Tell us which plants you would like to see us add to our product line by leaving your suggestions in one of the three boxes. Two are around the patio and one is by the upper office trials. Look for the  symbol on the map.

## #10 Mixed Border Garden (Employee Walkway)

This garden greets Midwest Groundcovers employees daily. It provides a moment with plants, to inspire and refresh our team. This is a Mixed Border, meaning both woody plants and perennials are planted together. The repetition of Black-leaved elderberry (*Sambucus* 'Black Lace') directs your eye through the garden with its dark lacy foliage. A relatively new cultivar of False Cypress (*Chamaecyparis* 'Soft Serve') adds evergreen winter interest. An intensely-planted perennial ground layer offers color throughout the growing season. This style of planting is useful for both corporate and residential settings.



## #11 Conifer and Evergreen Display Garden (Conifer Island)

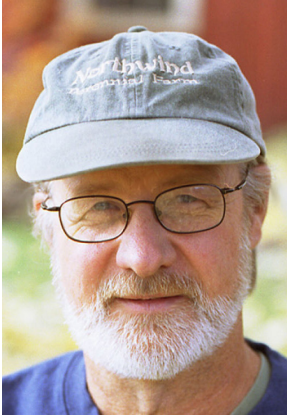
Conifers and evergreens are a staple of Midwestern landscapes, bringing winter interest and unique structure to each planting. This display garden showcases the dynamic and broad selection of evergreen cultivars offered by Midwest Groundcovers, including False Cypress (*Chamaecyparis*), Junipers (*Juniperus*), Yews (*Taxus*) and Arborvitae (*Thuja*). This display shows off each plant's natural habit and garden value, as we do not prune. A highlight of this area are the Danish hybrid Nordic™ Spire Arborvitae (*Thuja* x

'MGnrds15'), introduced into the trade by Midwest Groundcovers. This small tree, with a strong central leader shows good resistance to deer browsing, and exceptional tolerance to wind and ice.

To offset the formality and rigid form of the conifers, a small selection of grasses are used for contrast and to add movement. Use evergreens alone or in mixed borders to provide contrast, winter interest and a structural backdrop to seasonal flowers and fall color.



## Plants-People You Should Know



Roy Diblik, of Northwind Perennial Farm, has long worked in partnership with Midwest Groundcovers. His planting design work is featured at our entrance gardens at Route 25, and through his collaboration with Piet Oudolf in our Piet Garden.



Austin Eischeid holds a degree in Horticulture from Iowa State University and has worked in renowned gardens such as Chanticleer Gardens in Pennsylvania, and Hermannshof Botanical Garden in Germany. His own garden design consulting company was established in 2013. In 2017, he began working with our Midwest team as we renovate many of our display and demonstration gardens. Learn more at [www.austineischeid.com](http://www.austineischeid.com)



Karla Patterson-Lynch has worked as an educator at The Morton Arboretum and the College of DuPage. She is formally educated in landscape design and horticulture from the University of Kentucky and through the Longwood program at the University of Delaware. In 2016, she designed and managed the installation of our new Perennial & Ornamental Grass Display Gardens.



Modified 5/25/2018