



Speaking with Stones

A new garden grows quirky statements out of stone and creativity

If you have something to say, the new garden outside of the McCarthy Arts Center is the place to say it.

With the arrival of 350 stones in early July, the new Word Garden has come to life. The stones engraved with words ranging from the silly (ninjas, leprechauns, fur) to the spiritual (God, heaven, prayer) to the downright oddball (spooky, creosote) allow anyone with a hankering to be heard to make a poem, a sentence or a declaration.

"It's a bit like magnetic poetry on your refrigerator," says Valerie Bang-Jensen, associate professor of education and one of the masterminds behind the newest garden to spring up between St. Edmunds Hall and McCarthy, joining the Books in Bloom and Native Plant gardens. "And as far as we know, we're the only college campus in the country with something like this."

The Word Garden is a circle about 60 feet across, filled with words carved in stones that are scattered on small pebbles and surrounded by large boulders (some with checkerboards sandblasted onto them). The meditative garden invites creativity, communication, thoughtfulness and reflection, and playfulness, too. For many passersby, the draw to compose is irresistible.



In addition to Bang-Jensen, biology professor Mark Lubkowitz, stone artist Chris Cleary and associate director of grounds Alan Dickinson put a concerted effort into making the garden happen. "Colleges are about communication," says Lubkowitz. With phrases ranging from "Live God's Truth in Love" to "Ninja Fur Zombies Sing," the communication possibilities are endless. +

The Campus Seen

When: July 12, 2010, 2:16 p.m.

Where: The lawn between Klein and McCarthy, now home to the Teaching Gardens.

What: The first delivery for the new Word Garden is unloaded by stone artist Chris Cleary, left, and Associate Professor of Biology Mark Lubkowitz.

For more on the Word Garden, see p. 14

