



Dayton VA Medical Center Grotto Gardens Usage Information

The Grotto and surrounding gardens were developed by resident Civil War veterans in the area surrounding a limestone quarry. The twin towers are the centerpiece of the Grotto Gardens landscape at the Dayton VA Medical Center, a National Historic Landmark in Dayton, Ohio. Congress established the system of National Asylums for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers and legislation was signed into law by President Abraham Lincoln on March 3, 1865. The Central Branch, also known as the National Soldiers Home, opened in Dayton in 1867.

Starting in 2012, the Dayton VA Medical Center and The American Veterans Heritage Center initiated the current reclamation of the historic Grotto Gardens landscape. The Ohio State University Extension's Greater Montgomery County Master Gardener Volunteers joined the team in 2013 to provide maintenance support, develop and maintain new gardens, and continue the reclamation process. Along the way, other volunteers have joined the team and there have been significant financial and in-kind donations by individual, organizations, garden clubs, and garden centers.

There is no charge for usage of the grotto; however, donations to the American Veterans Heritage Center (AVHC) are welcome to continue to support the maintenance and beauty of the Grotto Gardens. To donate for Grotto usage, please visit www.americanveteransheritage.org.

Below is a list of additional guidelines that must be followed in order to utilize the grotto area:

- No feeding the ducks, geese, etc.
- No swimming
- No fishing
- No climbing the gateway entrance
- No fires (Candles)
- No smoking
- No alcohol
- Do not pick or cut flowers or other vegetation
- No digging
- Replacement of grass or dirt if tent is installed.
- Cleanup necessary of all things, waste, etc.
- No photos of Veteran patients
- Any tents will need to be coordinated with Engineering prior to driving stakes into the ground
- Only 110v power is available
- Nothing (benches, boulders, signs, etc..) will be moved
- No available bathrooms – portable toilet locations to be pre-determined (most likely near small parking area near entrance road)
- No parking or driving on grass
- No bike riding, rollerblading, skate boarding, or ball playing
- No decorations may be attached to any walls pillars or other structures within the buildings
- Any public address or other amplified sound system equipment used must not be of a volume to interfere with the general public's enjoyment of the facilities or grounds and must not create a nuisance to adjacent buildings

All groups or individuals are subject to approval and adherence to Grotto Garden Usage Agreement to include Revocable License and liability insurance.

To start the process, please fill out the Grotto Usage Application Form.

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