

**Acclaims and a shame for March 16, 2009**

**By Dale Dimitri and Glenn Krampota**

The Facts

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New 'Enabling Garden' designed for everyone

This garden might not be secret, but it sure is special.

Area elected officials, parks administrators, gardening enthusiasts and the Multiple Sclerosis Society's Lone Star Chapter teamed up with Brookside Village resident Jennifer Northrop to break earth on Brazoria County's new "Enabling Garden."

A March 4 groundbreaking ceremony launched the new vegetable and flower garden — a place where anyone, including those with disabilities, can engage in gardening — off Hospital Drive near CR 171.

Northrop, a gardening hobbyist who was diagnosed with multiple sclerosis in 2003, got together with the Multiple Sclerosis Society, the Texas AgriLife Extension Service and the Brazoria County Master Gardener's Association to plant her idea for the garden. With the Master Gardeners owning 5 acres of land at the site — plenty of room for future expansion — and the Multiple Sclerosis Society kicking in \$10,000, the project has taken root and soon should be ready to blossom.

"A garden isn't to be looked at. It's to be planted and to be played in," Northrop said. "Everybody should be able to garden. This is all about people helping each other out."

In fact, people living with physical challenges will be encouraged to use the garden where they should be able to learn some methods that would allow them to do some gardening at their homes. The facility is designed with several different planting arrangements, including vertical planting, raised beds ranging from a few inches to a few feet, plants on trellises, potted plants on pulleys and water-grown plants. The facility also will include handicapped-accessible entrances and walking paths.

The garden also will be incorporated in the county government's master plan for parks, with local leaders fully behind the project. A ceremony is planned for later this spring when the grounds are ready for planting. Photos and future ideas will be posted at [www.enablinggardens.com](http://www.enablinggardens.com).

Anyone interested in volunteering may call Northrop at (281) 433-1588.