

# Lafayette Gardens Vignettes

Written by Greening Acopian Team

Another day, I got up for breakfast at 8 am and ate until 9 am. I went down to the Bourger Varsity Field House for treatment and therapy at 9:30 am. Already the day is super busy and I did not even begin classes. The day went on and the class ran on, I had to go back to the cafe to make sure to eat a big lunch to fuel up for practice. I got another class from 1 pm to 2 pm. Once finished, back down to the Bourger Varsity Field House in the pouring rain as I am in a hurry to go watch film and lift. This beautiful Lafayette Gardens on the east side wall of Acopian is providing me an easy pathway down without slipping and falling. I watch film and review game plan adjustments for the week. Practice begins at 4 pm and does not end until 7 pm. Tired and exhausted from practice, I drag my way up the bleachers to head to dinner but I stop at the Lafayette Gardens to take a moment to finally sit down and relax. Thankful for the opportunity to rest, I acknowledge the beautiful sights and sounds of nature around me. I am glad I have a place to rest.



Life as a honeybee has never been easy. It's bad enough having to fear for your life whenever you fly near humans that try to squish you, but then you add on the fact that pesticides are used to a damaging extent and the ever-decreasing areas habitable for bees, and all of a sudden you are struggling to survive. So, when the space outside of the Lafayette College engineering building was redone, I was shocked. I cannot express enough gratitude to Lafayette College for its efforts to establish locations for us pollinators to live. The space referred to as the Lafayette Gardens is now full of new plants that never used to exist. The living wall towers above the small gardens that are growing up from the ground, and during the spring and the summer, the space flourishes with life and color making it my favorite place to fly. Ever since the establishment of this space, the stress that has been weighing me down during my daily routine of pollinating has been reduced and I can take comfort knowing that some colleges are trying to make a difference during times when the state of the environment isn't great.

As my parents and I exit the parking deck, we walk into the backdoor of Markle Hall and are greeted by our smiling tour guide. We step out into the hot summer sun and I look around and take in my first glimpse of campus. To my right, I see vibrant colored plants on the side of a building with a gazebo-like space in front, I make a mental note to investigate the space later. After visiting Acopian Engineering Center, my tour guide explains that the space is called the Lafayette Gardens and was formed from a student-driven project. The space incorporates many core values of the College in it: sustainability, inclusivity, and collaboration. I turn to my parents and express that it's pretty impressive that the school listened to a student-driven project and constructed the space. We bid farewell to our tour guide in front of Markle and all sigh at the thought of getting back into the hot car and driving a few hours to our next college to visit. So, we first decide to sit and cool down for a bit. We decide the Lafayette Gardens would be the perfect place to do so. The Adirondack chairs provided us a comfy place to sit down, take a break from the hot summer sun, and reflect on our tour of Lafayette. After about 15 minutes, we felt recharged from the shade, sights, and smells and were ready to continue on our college road trip. As I walked down the rock path of the Lafayette Gardens, I smiled to myself knowing this wouldn't be the last time I found myself on this beautiful campus.

As we start driving up the hill, passing by Williams, I notice all the greenery surrounding the stairs leading up to campus. I would always hear it from my brother that this part of the hill was tough to go up through, but the view is always worth it. As we got closer to Markle Hall, I just could not help but notice all of the beautiful landscaping the school has worked on. The flowers blooming, the pink cherry blossom trees, the huge green trees, this was just getting started. Thinking about choosing Lafayette College as my own college would be exciting, but it still has not sealed the deal! Once my parents and I parked the car behind Markle Hall, we started walking by the side of Old Oeschle, up the stairs, and started walking towards Acopian, where my brother said he lived most of his time. Is that not an academic building? Well, anyways, once we got closer to Acopian, I noticed something like a little forest up ahead. My parents noticed it as well and wanted to check out. The space gave the vibes of a little getaway from all of the chaos college may give students. There were small benches made out of wood that blended in well with the rest of the greenery. The poles with vines coming down also made the space feel like a small little forest, especially with all the birds, butterflies, and all of the biodiversity surrounding us. Not only that, but the space felt enchanted and so unreal, that it made me want to stay there longer. There were a couple of other people there, but it felt so quiet and calm compared to the people walking around outside of this area. Soon, my parents wanted to go see the rest of the college, but I think this space will be something that will always stay on my mind. This looks like it might be my future spot.