

# Features

## Botanical Gardens: A nearby sanctuary of nature

by Katie Rozycki  
Staff Reporter

Now that spring has finally sprung, UNCA students can take in all Southern Appalachian nature has to offer at the Botanical Gardens at Asheville.

Located adjacent to campus, the BGA features over 700 species of wildlife native to Southern Appalachia, which is considered the area from central Virginia to northern Georgia.

The gardens attract over 35,000 visitors a year. The past year brought in guests from 44 states and a variety of countries.

"The Botanical Gardens is great, because it offers a quiet place to study, meet with friends or just look at the flowers," said Jay Kranyik, board chair of agriculture at the BGA.

Spring is decidedly the best time to view the gardens, according to Dorie Adams, BGA volunteer and chairperson of its membership committee.

"It's so fulfilling to see spring burst forth with beautiful plants," said Adams. "It gives [me] goosebumps just thinking about it. Some of the weeds are even beautiful."

The BGA is known for its sensitivity towards nature.

"We pride ourselves on a holistic approach to the environment," said Kranyik. "The Botanical Gardens basically doesn't use any fertilizer or pesticides, and 99 percent of weeding is done by hand. Herbicide is very rarely used and only when absolutely necessary."



OLIVIA KORMAN/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

For some students the Botanical Gardens, close to campus, is the perfect spot to study or just get away from it all. The gardens are home to over 700 species of plants and animals.

The BGA is open year-round from sunrise to sunset. Admission to the garden is free, but donations are accepted.

Although the BGA is located on land belonging to UNCA, the garden is a non-profit, independently operated organization.

"The garden is a way to awaken students' interests [in botany and the environment]," said Karen Moux, BGA board member and volunteer. "We care about the UNCA students [that visit], because it is such an educational process."

A walking trail forms a half-mile loop around the garden's 10 acres and leads visitors across streams, through meadows and over a woodland ridge to a wildflower cove.

Picnicking is allowed, and a variety of picnic benches and



OLIVIA KORMAN/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

A walking trail forming a half-mile loop leads visitors across bridges, streams and meadows at the Botanical Gardens.

tables are provided throughout the garden.

For those seeking shade, a large gazebo provides shelter in the middle of Sunshine Meadow.

Students can also bask in the shade of one of four award-winning trees.

"They're considered the largest trees of their kind in North Carolina and include the paper birch, large-leaf storax, washington hawthorne and

alleghany plum," said Kranyik.

Students can also expect to see a myriad of animals and insects.

Rabbits, chipmunks, woodpeckers and snakes all make their home in the garden.

Though most of the animal population is harmless, Kranyik warns about a few species.

Many of the raccoons that have been taken off UNCA property and the Botanical

Gardens have tested positive for rabies, according to Kranyik.

"If a student sees one during the daytime, he or she should call animal control, since raccoons are nocturnal animals, and daytime activity is a possible sign of infection," said Kranyik.

Very few other animals should actually pose a threat, although poisonous copperhead snakes have occasionally been spotted.

Pets, radios and sports equipment are not allowed in the gardens.

"The garden is not simply a park," said Kranyik.

Students are not permitted to bring in kickballs, Frisbees or other sporting equipment.

Bicycling and dogs are not allowed either.

"We've had remarkably few [behavioral] problems with UNCA students," said Kranyik.

Kranyik warns that the area is patrolled at night by a security guard who lives on the premises.

Campus Police have also been known to make rounds in the gardens.

"Don't come into the gardens at night. Trouble could happen, and we don't want that," said Kranyik.

The BGA also hosts a variety of events geared towards everyone from the casual visitor to the experienced horticulturalist.

Private tours are also available for groups of five or more.

On Saturday, April 23 at 10 a.m., the BGA is hosting a "Wildflower Walk."

Attendees have the opportunity to walk the gardens and observe the wildflower season at its peak.

On Friday, May 6 and Saturday, May 7, the BGA is holding its annual "Days in the Gardens" fundraising and educational event.

Featuring thousands of plants for sale from regional native plant vendors, the event will also have live music, entertainment and food.

The BGA lays claim to a small piece of American history as well.

Part of the Battle of Asheville was fought on its grounds over 140 years ago. A recent anniversary celebration commemorated the soldiers who fought in the battle, according to Kranyik.

The construction of a new parking lot and two wetland ponds are underway.

The wetland ponds will help purify the water flowing from Reed Creek, according to Kranyik.

The project should be completed in about a month.

"My favorite aspect of the BGA is that it does such a great job of replicating ecological bio-systems native to the area," said Ryan Kleinhardt, horticulture assistant at the gardens. "It's amazing that the garden is only 10 acres and there are over 700 species on it. It is a wonderful escape from the craziness of school."

Students hope to have more opportunities to relax in the garden.

"Now that the weather is nicer, I hope to spend much more time in the gardens," said Casey Michael, undeclared sophomore. "Just sitting outside and enjoying the atmosphere is rewarding. I should actually make a point to go to the gardens more, it's not as if it's hard to get to from my dorm."

"Just sitting outside and enjoying the atmosphere is rewarding."

Casey Michael  
undeclared sophomore

"We pride ourselves on a holistic approach to the environment."

Jay Kranyik  
board chair of agriculture, BGA

## With finals around the corner, these late-night joints will feed your brain

by Nicky Marshall  
Staff Reporter

It's time for midnight munchies, caffeine pills and Spark Notes. It's time for finals.

While not much can be done to protect students from the onslaught of papers, tests and situations that will determine the rest of your life (so your teachers say), there is some hope for those who will be up late studying and want to get some brain food.

Three places that leave the light on no matter the time are Denny's, Waffle House and the 51 Grill.

"We offer our great service and hospitality," said Jon Cooley, Denny's manager. "We have a bigger restaurant, so patrons can stay as long as they want. Here, we don't have to worry about turning over the tables."

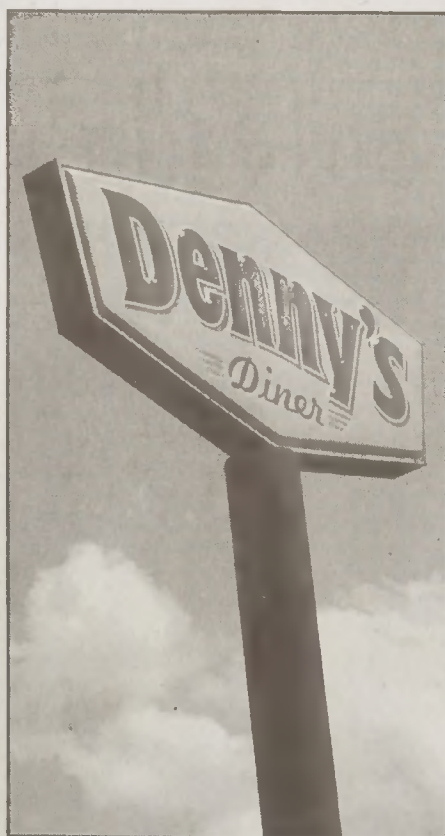
Cooley also boasts having more of a laid back atmosphere at Denny's than the other late-night restaurants.

The restaurant feel of Denny's and the large dining space makes this place the easiest to hold a conversation with those at your table, making it the ideal place for a study group.

At night, the menu at Denny's switches over, so the average meal will cost about \$7, though there are a few specials that run for \$5.99.

As opposed to Waffle House and the 51 Grill, the menu at Denny's has more options for late-night munchers.

The crowd at Denny's is older than would be found at the other eateries, because it is more of a sit-down, family-oriented restaurant. However, younger people do stop in after hours.



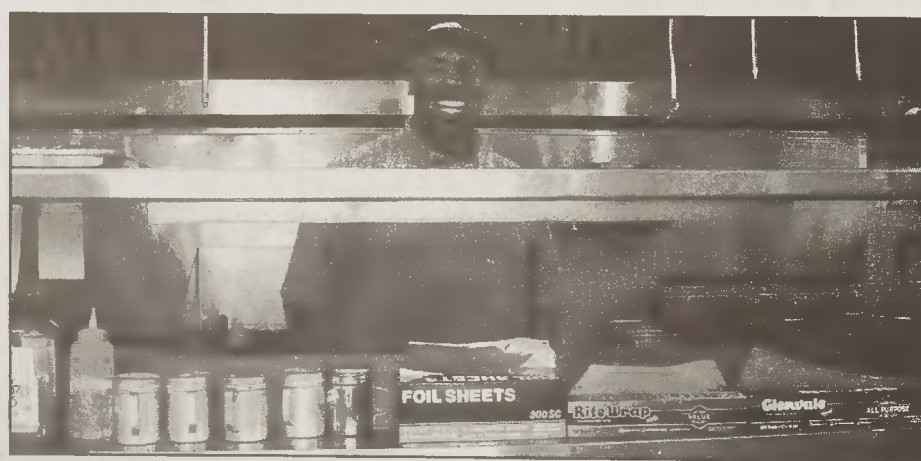
CHARLOTTE CLAYPOOLE/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Denny's off Patton Avenue is another late-night option.

"I don't see a lot of students come in to study at night, but they do come in to cap off their evenings," said Cooley.

Denny's is located at 1 Regent Park Blvd. off Patton Avenue and is, of course, open 24-hours a day, seven days a week.

"I like the food at Denny's, but I don't like all of the little kids running around," said Katie Brown, senior classics student.



CHARLOTTE CLAYPOOLE/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

At the 51 Grill, you can watch your food being prepared and either dine in or carry out. The restaurant has turned into a popular late-night eatery.

Waffle House is another late-night favorite for students, while Denny's has a reputation for better food.

"Most of the time I'll go to Waffle House, because I've gone there forever," said Kyle Anderson, senior math and computer science student. "But, Denny's has the best food and the best selection for sure."

There are a few Waffle Houses scattered around town, but the closest to campus can be found at 117 Tunnel Rd.

"Waffle House is great to go to for the experience, but not for the food," said Brown. "It's smoky and greasy, but fun. It's a great break from college pretentiousness."

The average meal at Waffle House will run for about \$6. Another plus to eating at Waffle

House is the expedient service.

For the student on the go, out of these three restaurants, Waffle House will get your meal out to you the fastest.

"At Waffle House, we have quick and friendly service," said Amber Montville, Waffle House server. "You know, service with a smile."

Waffle House routinely serves college students, especially on the weekends, according to Montville.

The 51 Grill located at 51 Merrimon Ave. is the closest late-night eatery to campus.

"We like to keep things cheap here," said Jason Turner, server at the 51 Grill. "A full meal will cost between \$5 to \$7."

A plus to eating at the 51 Grill is

that there is no wait staff, so no tipping is necessary.

Another interesting fact about the 51 Grill is that everything there is home made, giving the food a fresh flavor. And like Waffle House, you can watch your food being prepared.

"I definitely liked the 51 Grill the best," said Brown. "I was surprised to find out that the food was home-made, but it reflects in the taste because the food isn't greasy or bland."

If the food isn't enough to keep you awake, there is always the gas station mini-mart next door which is conveniently stocked with energy drinks.

Another mentionable aspect to the 51 Grill is the pleasant atmosphere. "The staff at 51 Grill are extremely nice," said UNCA alumnus Landry Mayeux. "It was refreshing to see a cook who really cares about what customers think of his cooking."

The masses that gather at the 51 Grill usually descend upon it in full force around 2 a.m.

"After 2 a.m., when the bars and clubs let out, we'll be packed," said Turner.

So, to the student looking for a quiet place to study, avoid the 51 Grill at this time, as it fills up with those unable to part with the night just yet.

The 51 Grill runs out of seating quickly, so if you plan on eating in, get there early.

Luckily, all of these restaurants have carry-out options for those who like to eat at home.

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REVIEW