

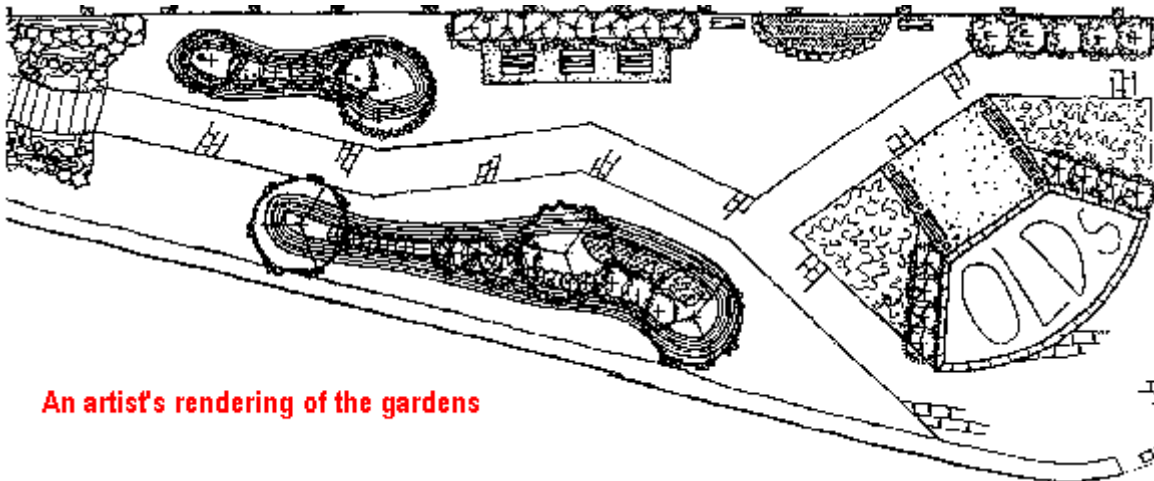
Herb Samis Welcoming Gardens – 50 Ave & 46 St

The "Herb Samis Welcoming Gardens" came about after the initial goal to dedicate an existing park in Mr. Herb Samis' name. Completed in August 2003, this project was a partnership among several local companies, with the financial support of Human Resources Development Canada, to create a new park totally dedicated to Herb Samis -- local pioneer, sportsman, volunteer, historian, humorist, experimental farmer, gardener and community enthusiast.

History and Youth Working Together to Build a Future

In 1893 a young man named Herbert Alexander Samis began a tradition in Olds that would make history for years to come. In those days, travel by passenger train was a way of life. Herb began planting gardens along the Canadian Pacific Railway line in Olds that spelled out messages that passengers could read as they sped by on the trains. For the next 64 years, Herb faithfully planted these gardens until his death in 1957 at the age of 81. Herb Samis strongly believed that Olds, Alberta was a place where one could grow just about anything. Some of the messages he planted in flowers included "See Olds First", "Welcome to Olds", "Olds District Pride of Alta", "Olds District Never Fails", and the lovely message, "Golden Rule Our Goal Do Unto Others Peace".

With the help of the Communities in Bloom Task Force, the Town of Olds, Accredited Supports to the Community, and the Centre for Employment, the Herb Samis Project Team or "Team Herb", has recreated a garden similar in design to Herb Samis'. Using land donated by the Town of Olds at the corner of 46 Street and 50 Avenue along the CPR line, the group met for the first time on 17 March 2003 to begin this project, with the main goal of reviving the memory and spirit of Herb Samis and beautifying the town of Olds. The Herb Samis Welcoming Gardens are part of the Town of Olds Trail System.



An artist's rendering of the gardens

The Herb Samis Project Team was made up of 14 members, mostly youth, from the Olds community. "Team Herb" focused on teamwork and team building, and on working together to develop higher standards, a stronger work ethic and skills and values to prepare the participants for successful future careers, whether in horticulture or other areas. After several months of hard work, the Herb Samis Welcoming Gardens opened to the public on 25 August 2003. The gardens are a wonderful place to sit and just watch the busy world go by, and is a great spot for people who work downtown to have lunch or just sit and sip a cup of coffee.