Deep in the Houston Mill Forest located behind the Houston Mill House there is an old spring house that functioned long ago as a “natural” refrigerator that was used to chill butter, eggs and other food items; without the use of fossil fuels for electricity.

Look inside and you can still see the spring bubbling up through the middle of the spring house. It is surrounded by old oaks, hickory and beech trees and wonderful (some rare) native wild-flowers such as: bloodroot, Christmas fern, rattlesnake fern, nodding trillium, jack-in-the-pulpit, dolls eyes, umbrella and bigleaf leaf magnolia, box elder, sassafrass and starvine (a threatened species in Georgia).

This area is currently not easily accessible due to overgrown brush and invasive weeds; the steps leading to the path are covered with dirt and fallen leaves. Our goal is to restore the spring house and the surrounding landscape and to provide information via printed material and the web about this historically significant place.
**Project Information**

**Spring House** (photo by Annie Carey, 2003)

March 2007, The Emory Garden Club received a $1,500 grant for the Spring House Project. This is an Incentives Fund Project that is sponsored by the Emory University Office of Sustainability Initiatives. There are three phases to this project as described below:

Summer 2007, the project team will attend invasive species and historical preservation workshops (phase III).

Fall 2007, team members will begin removal of invasive species to clear the path to the Spring House.

August 2007, team members will resubmit plans for phases I and II, which includes improvements to the area such as the addition of black wrought iron handrails and a teak bench. This part of the project requires approval by Campus Services, the Committee on the Environment, and other approving bodies and it will take more time to obtain approval.

Please visit our website for updates and additional information: www.emory.edu/gardenclub

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**Bloodroot in flower - a rare native plant found in the Houston Mill Forest**

(photo by Dr. John Wegner)

If you would like to make a donation or match grant funds for this project – please contact Erica Weaver: eweaver@emory.edu

**Photos**

Garden club members Mary Jo and Betsy are hard at work picking up trash and clearing the steps that lead to the Spring House. (photo by Annie Carey, 2003)

Dr. Bill Murdy is leading a group of garden club members down the path to the Spring House. (photo by Annie Carey, 2003)

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