



# WALKABLE OLEAN

A VISION FOR UNION STREET

## ***An Overview of Landscaping North Union Street***

As the North Union Complete Street Transformation Project continues with construction along the south section of the street, a major component of the project has taken root along the north section with the planting of trees, shrubs, grasses and perennials. All of this greenery will be seen along the entire section of downtown North Union Street in the not-so-distant future. So what exactly has been planted and why?

The plantings along North Union Street are comprised of four different types of trees, eight types of shrubs, five grasses and 11 perennials. The rain gardens have a specific function and thus specific planting needs: the soil mix and vegetation enhance the infiltration, storage, and removal of pollutants from storm water, so plants found within the rain gardens were selected to be drought resistance as well as to have a high salt tolerance.

Trees planted along North Union Street include:

- Skyline Thornless Honey-Locust
- Espresso Kentucky Coffee Tree
- Swamp White Oak
- Greenspire Littleleaf Linden

The light, dappled shade cast by the lacy foliage of the Skyline Thornless Honey-Locust is only one of this tree's virtues. It also is durable and adaptable, tolerating a wide range of soil conditions as well as drought, and road salt, and has a lovely yellow fall color.<sup>1</sup> The huge doubly compound leaves of the Espresso Kentucky Coffee Tree give it a tropical feel, and the arching branches present an elm-like form. This is a seedless selection and has a tolerance of heat, drought, and cold.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.mortonarb.org/trees-plants/tree-plant-descriptions/thornless-honey-locust>

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.jfschmidt.com/introductions/espresso/>



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Shrubs that have been planted include:

- Black Chokecherry
- Hummingbird Summersweet
- Kelsey's Dwarf Red Twig Dogwood
- Compact Inkberry Holly
- Red Sprite Winterberry
- Boyberry
- Anthony Waterer Spirea
- Meadowsweet

The Hummingbird Summersweet is a beautiful, versatile, compact shrub, with three-season interest. Glossy, dark green foliage is not bothered by pests or disease, and in late summer it is covered with 6-7" creamy white flowers with a deliciously, spicy scent. The flowers bloom for many weeks attracting butterflies, hummingbirds and native bees, and in autumn, the foliage turns a shade of yellow.<sup>3</sup> The Red Sprite Winterberry offers bright red berries that brighten the winter landscape and provide food for birds. It is an extremely hardy shrub.<sup>4</sup> The Anthony Waterer Spirea offers flat-topped heads of rosy-pink flowers, and attractive new growth in spring that is reddish purple.<sup>5</sup>

Grass species include:

- Canadian Wild Rye
- Soft Rush
- Red Switchgrass
- Hamelin Fountain Grass
- Little Bluestern

The Canadian Wild Rye grass is extremely easy and fast to grow. It is planted for soil stabilization, provides good ground cover and erosion control as well as holding up to winter elements.<sup>6</sup> The Red Switchgrass is known for its foliage color with fast growing green leaves that emerge with red tips in spring, darkening through summer, and turning burgundy in fall.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> <http://www.abnativeplants.com/plant/Clethra-alnifolia-Hummingbird>

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.monrovia.com/plant-catalog/plants/1555/red-sprite-winterberry/>

<sup>5</sup> <http://www.monrovia.com/plant-catalog/plants/2103/anthony-waterer-spirea/>

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.americanmeadows.com/grass-and-groundcover-seeds/canada-wild-rye-grass-seeds>

<sup>7</sup> <http://www.monrovia.com/plant-catalog/plants/1925/shenandoah-switch-grass/>



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And finally, the perennials planted include:

- Butterfly Weed
- Green and Gold
- Moonbeam Coreopsis
- Happy Returns Daylily
- Rosey Returns Daylily
- Little Grapette Daylily
- Big Blue Liriope
- Spotted Horsemint
- Obedient Plant
- Goldstrum Black-Eyed Susan
- Golden Alexanders

The Butterfly Weed is a hardy North American native that grows about 3 feet tall and bears dense, flattened clusters of cheerful orange blooms, often covered with feeding butterflies.<sup>8</sup> The Moonbeam Coreopsis produces yellow flowers that take the heat and bloom faithfully all summer. The plant is tolerant to most soils and looks great with most annuals and perennials.<sup>9</sup> The Little Grapette Daylily has compact clumps of grass-like leaves that are highlighted by lavender purple flowers on tall stems. This smaller growing selection re-blooms throughout the summer months.<sup>10</sup> Big Blue Liriope produces abundant blue flower spikes that rise above the attractive, tufted arching, grass-like foliage followed by clusters of black berries. This perennial tolerates drier conditions.<sup>11</sup>

The plantings along North Union Street offer a variety of colors and seasonal blooming, all of which tolerate our four distinct seasons found within the Southern Tier. We encourage the community to take a walk and discover the beauty found along our new streetscape. Stay apprised of the project through our Walkable Olean Facebook page ([Facebook.com/walkableolean](https://www.facebook.com/walkableolean)) or through the website at [www.walkableolean.com](http://www.walkableolean.com).

For additional information, please contact the Olean City Public Works Department at 716.376.5651.

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<sup>8</sup> <http://www.gardening.cornell.edu/homegardening/scene6c17.html>

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.burpee.com/perennials/coreopsis/coreopsis-moonbeam-prod000024.html>

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.monrovia.com/plant-catalog/plants/2430/little-grapette-dwarf-daylily/>

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.monrovia.com/plant-catalog/plants/2468/big-blue-lilyturf/>