In an open field near the Alvin Sherman Library, Research, and Information Technology Center, a patch of trees and herbal plants straddle a stone pathway designed to heal those who walk on it. Welcome to Nova Southeastern University’s serene garden. Officially called the Reflexology Pathway at the NSU Medicinal and Healing Garden, the pathway and green space opened in April 2010. The garden and pathway are managed by NSU’s College of Pharmacy (COP). Carsten Evans, Ph.D., assistant dean for continuing education at the COP, envisioned a place where the NSU community could find plants with medicinal qualities and seek healing with a reflexology path. “This is a place where people can escape their busy lives and find tranquility,” said Evans, adding that the garden is the only one of its kind on the East Coast.

The 66-foot long Reflexology Pathway features a collection of special rocks from around the world artistically embedded in cement. Located in the middle of the garden, the pathway is based on similar paths in ancient Egypt, India, and China. Walking barefoot on it massages and stimulates acupressure points in the soles, which are connected to various energy meridians in the body. The pressure of stones under the feet and gravity provide a therapeutic exercise. Descriptions along the path highlight the stones’ benefits. Visitors can also read about the herbal plants and take a tour of the garden, which was designed by landscape artist Jesse Durko. During the tours, Evans talks about the historical legends surrounding the garden’s plants, bushes, and trees.

The garden is also a living classroom, designed to play a central role in the education of the public, students, and health care professionals. NSU will offer integrative-medicine programs, where students will utilize both the garden’s plants and the Reflexology Pathway, in addition to lectures in acupuncture, aromatherapy, Asian medicine, health psychology, nutrition, and wellness.