

## COVER STORY

## LAWN GONE...

Artists replace sod with garden of delight

Story by Special Writer Linda Chanin  
Photos by Gay Warren, Staff Photographer



Garden artists:  
Redford  
Township artists  
Marian Mudie  
and James  
Pujdowski used  
creative problem  
solving to rid  
their front lawn  
of tree roots.  
Greenery and  
flowers adorn  
their yard.

Neighbors shook their heads as Marian Mudie and James Pujdowski ripped up the front lawn of their Redford Township home. Many asked, "How?" Quite frankly, Mudie and Pujdowski were unsure but little by little began replacing the lawn with rocks and patches of perennials. Since both are artists, creative problem solving came easy. The husband and wife team tucked irises and other plants into raised beds, the largest of which is 40 by 20 feet.

Pujdowski and Mudie didn't tear up the lawn because of the latest trend on the West Coast to trade sod for wildflowers. Tired of the roots eating lawn-mower blades and their parents tripping over the monstrous roots of this stately maple, one weekend the duo took axes to the roots only to find the tangled system grew down more than 18 inches into the earth. That's when they called in professionals. Several hours and \$100 later a clean canvas awaited. Railroad ties contributed by his mother, and bricks recycled from her father became the foundation for a garden of delight.

"We started putting in the path then decided we're going to have a rock garden. We brought the rocks back from Marian's parents' cottage in White Rock and each one represents a journey," said Pujdowski, an art teacher at University Liggett School in Grosse Pointe Woods.

But first they had to do something about all the grubs left behind. They decided not to use Dazition because of Bantu, their Basenji hound. Instead, Pujdowski used a recipe from one of master gardener Jerry Baker's books to make a mixture of tobacco juice, dishwashing soap and Listerine. Once the grubs were gone, Pujdowski layered sand, pea gravel and slag for the path before installing the brick in a half-

basket pattern. Then Pujdowski laid the cedar frame-work for the large rectangular raised beds before shoveling in 1/4 cubic yards of topsoil.

Brown-eyed susans and marigolds in scattered plantings paint bursts of yellow throughout the main bed. Pujdowski's sister donated three yuccas that became the focal point. Their bell-shaped white flowers tower over the rest of the garden in mid-July. Grape ivy provides a glossy dark green ground cover. Rug junipers brought at the end of the season and several variations of hosta and sedum add to the sea of green. Red salvia, impatiens and ivy leaf geranium play against the green to create a Fauve-like painting.

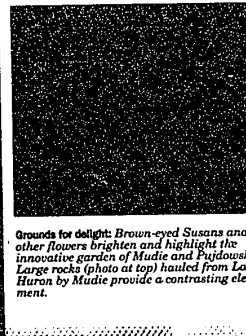
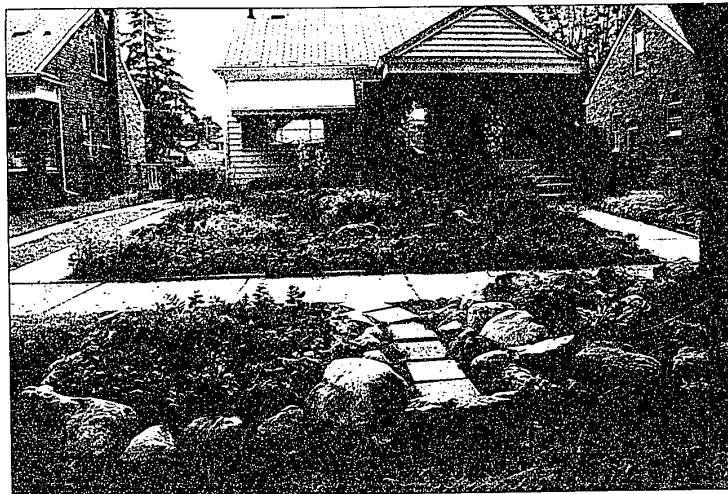
"We always plant a few annuals for color. We used a lot of red this year to punch up the color," said Mudie, a construction worker and electrician's apprentice.

"We're trying to tier it as far as the heights of plants. As things die or have to be moved, we change things. It's trial and error."

"We call it a work in progress," Pujdowski said.

Rocks of lava, granite and quartz produce a backdrop of colors ranging from pink to black. Most recently Mudie built beds around the huge old maple that stands between the sidewalk and street. A family of squirrels living up in the tree loves the new habitat as do Pujdowski and Mudie, who spend many evenings sitting on the front porch. Maintenance is minimal since few if any weeds are able to penetrate the thick cover of plantings. Pujdowski uses Baker's special recipe annually to rid the garden of destructive insects like earwigs that like to eat the hosta.

"I'm not really a green thumb," Mudie said. "If people really want to try what we did but can't afford it they should look to family and friends for plants."



Grounds for delight: Brown-eyed Susans and other flowers brighten and highlight the innovative garden of Mudie and Pujdowski. Large rocks (photo at top) hauled from Lake Huron by Mudie provide a contrasting element.