



Three in one

She has Feng Shui, woodland and prairie gardens

GARDEN SPOT



MARTY FIGLEY

A personal tour of Lana Jerome's garden in West Bloomfield was a learning experience about a very different kind of gardening. She recently has three separate types of gardens on her property, all unique.

The back yard is designed using the principles of Feng Shui gardening and the front contains a woodland and a prairie garden.

Feng Shui (pronounced Fung Shway) is an ancient way of life, celebrated largely in China, which helps us to live in harmony with our environment. There are several 'schools' such as Compass, Land Form and Blackhat, which Lana follows. She has interpreted this discipline and designed her back yard into such a space.

Everything is composted and put back into the gardens. Sinker hoses provide water when necessary. Lana's mentor is Bill Schneider of Wildtype Nursery in Mason, Mich. She also gets many plants from the growers at the Pontiac Farmers Market and belongs to the Hardy Plant Society and The Wild Ones. This talented lady is an advanced master gardener and for 16 years has maintained three gardens at the Detroit Zoo.

She is a professional gardener and takes care of residential and business accounts.

Come and walk with us. In each of nine areas, plants with appropriate colors have been used; occasionally an object such as a large rock provides the correct color and symbolism.

The entrance to the garden from the back door is designated Career. Black and dark tones are in order and the dark, natural wood deck leads to the center or Earth section. Here a brick patio represents Earth. Although not Feng Shui, it's bordered on three sides with striped cosmos, white peonies, pink clove, and a small pond in which pink water lilies bloom. This adds additional color and serenity.

Moving counter clockwise through the garden we come upon the Knowledge & Self-Cultivation area; colors: Black, blues and greens. The compost is in this area and is perfect as a place to learn more about the success of gardening. Next is Health & Family, colors: Blue and greens. The area is filled with plants waiting for new homes and a blue rock pro-

vides that color. Wealth and Prosperity follow, colors: Blues, reds and purples. Peonies and other flowers including purple hyacinths in the spring are here, golden sunflowers, and a stake with a crystal door knob atop draws energy. Then Fame & Reputation, color: Red. Geraniums and the number of other plants are symbolic of this area. The Love, Marriage & Relationship area is a lovely spot with an antique bench for resting; colors: Bright flowers, pinks, reds and white.

Two metal angels keep watch. Lana doesn't hang anything metal from trees because they may "cut"



Wildlife friendly: The small water garden encourages wildlife — cosmos in background.

the tree limb. A little path winds past a bird house (wrens are born here each year). One of the stepping stones reads: "Love Grows Love."

Nearby is an old swing set with one large wooden swing and a single-person hammock. This is the Creativity & Children garden, colors: White and pastels; a happy place.

The final area is Helpful People & Travel. This corner is filled with hostas, given to her by friends, that look tiny among the pine trees. Someday the hemlocks will replace the pines. The colors: White, grays and black. A small Buddha is patiently sitting on a little old stool tucked in amongst the hostas.

At one edge of the deck is quite a large handsome ornamental cherry tree, which is more than 30 years old. It adds stability and shade. A grouping of potted plants including a

20-year-old lemon tree this gardener raised from seed sits along with a grapefruit and avocado (from seed) and other containers. One pretty container of annuals and a large container of bright red geraniums overwintered indoors.

Back to tall trees. Come around to the front of the house and we'll find a different feeling. Four very tall and large Norway maples grow here that would make the shady situation a challenge to any gardener. Lana says "Four years ago I mustered all my courage, grabbed the can of orange landscape paint and began to walk, visualizing how my new prairie and woodland garden might look. I felt a little like David dancing Goliath."

The next step was to hand-trunk the entire edge of the garden. Next layers of newspaper were laid down and covered with hundreds of bags of oak leaves, and eventually grass clippings from neighbors. This rid the area of what grass remained under the trees. The soil is clay and alkaline so the oak leaves added the right amount of acid.

Her idea was to design two very different gardens that would work in her yard. This part is the woodland garden and is very natural and appealing. What little grass remains gives a soft effect. As a consequence of this, neighbors are 'getting into the act' and making more natural landscapes. Look carefully at the interesting logs and large rocks that are placed near plants so that before they emerge in the spring she will know where they grow. The logs are often hollow and add their own ambience to the garden; a country look in the city. The stepping stones are old slate from a roof.

She has rescued many plants and Mother Nature has added her share. Growing here are alternate leaf red bud, whitebud, red, yellow twig and flowering dogwood, fragrant amur, a hazelnut tree (with tiny nuts when I visited), asters and her prize witch hazel that has yellow blooms in the fall rather than in late winter.

She likes to try different plants such as a moonseed vine that has seed pods in the shape of a half moon, zig-zag goldenrod and others to see if they survive. Also in this garden are hepatica and Pennsylvania sedge. Yellow flowering ranunculus is used as a ground cover near the edge of the road where it is shady in the morning. Don't miss the blue, pink and white spiderwort, several geraniums including Johnson's blue, also pink and lavender ones.

As you walk, look for the low-growing hoary puccoon. White yarrow and pretty asters are included in the garden as are several varieties of ferns.

Another path of white flat stones



Gardener's delight: Lana Jerome of West Bloomfield (top photo) has a number of hidden treasures in her gardens, including this whimsical wind chime.

separates this lawn from a neighbor who has property that slowly has been added to the garden with happy results. They have fun at Halloween and put yellow caution tape around sections of the garden to lead trick-or-treaters through the garden. Ghosts mounted to posts also added to the fun.

The transition from the woodland garden to the prairie garden is very natural and gradual. Well cared-for lawn separates the gardens from the front walk. The prairie garden is a bright lively area with tall bright yellow woodland sunflowers anchoring one end. Monarda in white, red, purple, and deep pink echinacea, a cultivated lupine, sword Monarda, vervain and prairie smoke live in harmony. The pink bloom of prairie smoke appears on a stalk in May and looks quite feathery, giving the illusion of smoke coming out of each stem. Here we will also find Joe Pye, black cohosh, liatris and St. John's wort.

Many grasses also fill this space.

Carex (variegated sedge). Miscanthus gracillous, 'Carl Foerster,' Big blue stem, a Michigan native with a bloom that resembles a turkey foot, dwarf fountain grass with a white stripe add much texture.

These two gardens are done in a 'Nearly Natural' style in that although many plants are native to Oakland County, some cultivators are used.

She can be reached at (248)826-3653 or fax (248)626-4377. By the way, she is also an accomplished artist and I enjoyed viewing her beautiful paintings.

Lana has been an organic gardener for 20 years, and it's obvious that her dedicated approach to gardening works.

She says, "My goal is to help the Earth recover."

Marty Figley is an advanced master gardener based in Birmingham. You can leave her a message by dialing (734)953-2047 on a touch-tone phone. Her fax number is (248)644-1314.



LISA LUCKOW-HEALY

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