

Bloom and grow forever

Gardens all dressed up to benefit Greenmead

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STAFF WRITER

Walk into Antonette and Myrl Mikolon's garden on the day of a garden walk and you will be greeted by the statue of an angel.

And when you leave, another statue of an angel will see you out. Of course, real-life angels (the couple's grandchildren) will be present throughout the yard.

You see, Antonette not only loves her grandchildren, she loves her garden, which is why that labor of love will be one of seven gardens featured on the 14th annual Garden Walk presented by the Friends for the Development of Greenmead (Livonia's Historical Village) Saturday, June 28.

A BACKYARD HAVEN

The Mikolons are flattered to be on the walk. "It's a good way to give back to the city," Antonette said. "Freddie will help fund the preservation and restoration of Greenmead."

The Mikolons' garden is in a ravine, which adds soft sounds

of rain flowing through the yard, another dimension of sound along with the yard filled with colorful flowers.

"I love being close to the earth," she said. "I love getting my hands dirty. I love beauty. I get a sense of peace here, and I've had others tell me the same thing."

Janet Bennett, who helps organize the walk, said organizers try to get a variety of gardens, from different areas of the city. "We have large lots, ravine lots and small lots," Bennett said. "We like a variety, and have them drive around town, and not just in one place."

Mikolon loves the accomplishment of growing plants. "I love springtime, and I feel it's real magical," she said. "God created the flowers and they are popping out of the ground."

Springtime brings out the crocuses, creeping fox, irises, purple hyacinths and white daffodils. What Mikolon expects in bloom that Saturday are dandelions, pink and white yarrow, cosmos and clover.

Arbors stand tall throughout the yard. There's two iron arbors, two wooden ones created by husband Myrl, another wood one with ivy and eucalyptus made by Mikolon. Two arches are on the back of the house.

"We have a lot of hanging flowers and ivy to create a New Orleans look on the back porch," Mikolon said.

The yard contains a pond with a family of ducks, encircled by weeping willows. The rains just flow through the yard and the ravine, Mikolon



The stairway from the patio area leads down to the swimming pool.

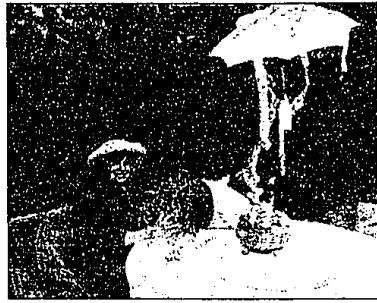
said. "I love the sound of the water, especially after a rain," Mikolon said. "It's almost like being on vacation."

"I call it a welcome garden, because you meet people and the people who garden are the nicest people."

A PEACEFUL PLACE

Megan Levis's garden will also be on this year's walk. Levis shares her home with husband Mitch Ryder (yes, the Mitch Ryder). She jokes that Mitch "does the mule work" in the garden.

For Levis, gardening created an inner peace and "took her mind off of other things," namely a blood disorder. The week following this interview,



Antonette Mikolon enjoys the garden while sitting at her back yard patio table.

she also was scheduled to undergo a radical mastectomy. She's survived two pulmonary embolisms.

When she found she was ill, she planted in the garden plants that may not bloom right away. She recites a perennial adage. "For perennials, the first year they sleep, the second year they creep and the third year they leap," Levis said.

Levis has surrounded her garden with the sound of metaphysical music, helping her with healing meditations. She also has a crystal ball from Sedona, Ariz., a destination for many because of its healing and metaphysical powers.

"The garden is a mix of plants."

"It has a real eclectic taste, something of a structured chaos," Levis said. "It has a little bit of everything, I like

GARDEN WALK

What: The 14th annual Garden Walk presented by the Friends for the Development of Greenmead (Livonia's Historical Village). Seven lovely gardens and yards of homes throughout Livonia will be open for viewing. All proceeds benefit the restoration and preservation of Greenmead Historical Park.

When: 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday, June 28.

Tickets: \$9 in advance, \$10 the day of the event. They may be purchased at any of the three Livonia public libraries, the Civic Center Library Gift Shop, Greenmead and the Department of Community Resources on the fifth floor of Livonia City Hall. The Civic Center Library and Livonia City Hall are at Five Mile and Farmington Road. Greenmead is at Eight Mile and Newburgh. Steinkopf Nursery also will sell shrubs and plants discounted for 20-25 percent off with a percentage going to Greenmead's restoration projects. Those plants will be available at the Hill House at Greenmead. For information, call (734) 466-2540 or (734) 425-4855.

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