

Natalie's Garden Grows Organically



GENERAL TIRE
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By BETTY FRANKEL
Special Writer
"What's a nice girl like you doing with corn in the back yard?"

That's the reaction that Mrs. Richard Lankin often gets when guests stroll into her back yard in Farmington Township's Olde Franklin Towne subdivision. Not only does Natalie Lankin have corn, but also beans, tomatoes, peppers, onions, squash and lots of other vegetables—all of them grown "organically."

Mrs. Lankin has been a gardener for years and has always enjoyed planting flowers and keeping her shrubs and lawn in perfect order.

A few years ago she became concerned about the insecticides used on commercially grown produce and decided to grow some of her own vegetables. Shortly after this, she saw a copy of a little publication entitled "Organic Gardening." This seemed to present such a sane and sensible approach to gardening that Mrs. Lankin

decided to adopt the methods proposed. Since then she has become a member of the Royal Oak Organic Gardening Club, an organization of dedicated people willing to share their gardening skills and interests with others.

THE YARD in front of the Lankins' gray brick house looks no different from the other beautifully landscaped, carefully groomed yards in the area. The lawn is smooth, velvety and a rich green color. Yews and other evergreens set off at this season by lots of bright red geraniums.

The back yard is beautifully landscaped, too, with attractive trees and shrubs. There is a paved patio adjacent to the house.

A large fish pond is a decorative focal point for the yard. This free-form pool is surrounded by a rock garden that is raised at one side to form a backdrop for the pool.

Water cascades down a small waterfall into the pool and is re-circulated by a pump

concealed beneath the rocks. Evergreen wintercreeper, a plant with attractive glossy oval leaves, and pink petunias and other low plants grow between and around the rocks. Behind the pond are some willow trees, helping to create a natural pond atmosphere.

ATTRACTIVE AS ALL this is, the real point of interest in the yard is the vegetable garden occupying a sizable area in a back corner.

Here several rows of corn provide the background for neat rows of tomatoes, onions, squash and other vegetables. The plot is tidy and free of weeds. The plants are mulched with grass clippings so little cultivating or weeding is necessary.

Careful inspection of the garden revealed a bit of newspaper lying under the clippings. Mrs. Lankin explained that she had put three or four thicknesses of paper as a mulch along some of the rows. Then, the clippings were put over this. Eventually the newspapers will disintegrate, and both newspapers and

clippings will be worked into the soil.

All winter the Lankins saved the ashes from their fireplace. These are a great source of potash and help make the vegetables, flower and fruit better. Also, Mrs. Lankin sprinkles the wood ashes around and on the leaves of some plants, such as cabbage, to ward off slugs and keep them from chewing holes in the leaves. If she is out of ashes, she uses flour. This seems to work, too.

The little garden has been very productive. So much so, in fact, that Mrs. Lankin jokingly claims that her neighbors hide in their houses when she goes out to her garden so she can't give them any more zucchini squash.

After showing off her organic garden to visitors recently, Natalie Lankin packed up a basket of produce and went to an organic picnic held by the Royal Oak Organic Gardening Club.

THERE THE CONVERSATION centered chiefly on the plans for the "Fall Festival" being held by the

Federated Organic Clubs of Michigan Saturday and Sunday Sept. 16 and 17 at Our Lady of Mercy High School, 28300 W. 11 Mile, Farmington. This is the 20th year for this

event but the first time it has been held in the metropolitan Detroit area.

Natalie Lankin will probably exhibit some of her beautiful, organically grown

produce and plans to attend the lectures and classes and demonstrations so she can be an even better organic gardener - and raise even more zucchini squash.

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NATALIE LANKIN grew these big zucchini squash by organic methods. (Evert photo)

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ROCHESTER
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This unusual course begins Monday, Sept. 25 with an evening session for both parents at the university's child care center. Nursery school sessions at the center are on Tuesdays, 9:30 - 11:30 a.m. Mothers, teachers or teacher's aides without offspring of the specified age also may enroll. Registrations can be made by contacting the division of continuing education, Oakland University, Rochester 48063.

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