

Celebrate HOME

SUMMER 2013

MAGAZINE





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FROM THE EDITOR-IN-CHIEF

The Hospitality Gene

Ancedotal evidence shows that there is a hospitality gene. You may be skeptical about my unscientific observation, but think about it. You know the kind of person you are. You know which homes you feel welcome in and the ones you like to return to.

I know I inherited the hospitality gene. I'm part of a legacy of hospitality. Mom passed away 13 years ago but everyone still talks about how she always made their favorite foods for friends and family. She fed the traveler: when you returned home from a trip, she sat down with you while you ate, no matter the time of day or night. Her Key lime pie recipe is adapted for *Inspired by the Garden: A Garden Muse Tea Reception* on page 48 of this issue.

My dad, Johnny Garneau, had a more public legacy of hospitality. He died this past May. People knew him as a restaurateur who built, owned and operated his own restaurant chain. He started his restaurant ventures in 1949 with a five-seat hot dog shop called The Beanery that touted curbside service. In the 1950s, he opened Johnny Garneau's Smorgasbord, an all-you-can-eat style eatery that was popular at that time.

This success led to his next venture—Johnny Garneau's Golden Spike Restaurants, based on his love of trains and the steakhouse concept. The Golden Spike was inspired by dad's fascination with the Golden Spike National Historic Site that marks where Union and Central railroads joined at Promontory Summit in Utah to complete the first transcontinental railroad in 1869. His Golden Spike restaurants had a train chugging around the bar to deliver customers their drinks. "Sell the sizzle," he would say, and he did that exceedingly well. He had restaurants in several Pittsburgh locations, Ohio and Florida.

Johnny was an ingenious inventor and one of his best-known inventions is the "sneeze-guard" that preceded the current law in the United States for buffet-style food-service sanitation. He obtained a patent for his invention from the U.S. Patent Office in 1959 as the Covered Food Serving Table. He went on to invent and patent other food-industry products such as the "Pretz" sandwich roll, and detachable Sani-Serve food service handles. Johnny, a skilled percussionist, was in every sense of the word the "leader" of the band.

In 1969, Johnny Garneau was inducted into Hospitality Magazine's Hall of Fame for outstanding achievements in the food service industry. He was a celebrity and now he is folklore. I feel pretty lucky to have grown up following in the footsteps of both dad and mom—two generous and open-hearted people.

What if you didn't get the right set of DNA? Or what if you didn't have examples to learn from? Can you learn hospitality, practice it and exude it? I say yes. With a little practice, a well-stocked pantry and bar, and a willingness to take the focus off yourself and put it onto others, your home can be the most welcoming place on earth. You don't have to be a gourmet cook, your table settings don't have to be perfect, and you don't have to have the perfect home. Hospitality is an attitude. Don't let what you don't have in material goods stop you from making memories with friends and family in your own home. It's all about making other feel good about themselves. If you do, they'll be glad they stopped by.

Barbara Kelley, Editor-in-Chief
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Do you have an original recipe you'd like to share? E-mail bkelly@celebratehomemag.com.

We can come to you! Are you having a party or special event at your home or an activity that relates to the subject of home? Contact us to discuss your idea. If it fits the editorial scope of Celebrate Home Magazine, we may photograph your event and write the story.

Celebrate Home Magazine offers a multitude of thanks to our contributors.

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Celebrate **HOME**
MAGAZINE



Celebrate **HOME**
MAGAZINE

10

FEATHER YOUR NEST

Enjoy these summer-inspired lovelies for you and your home.

12

HOME

Up a Creek with Lots of Memories

The Havermann family finds a place to play in a vacation home on St. Leonard's Creek in southern Maryland.

30

FOOD & ENTERTAINING

Light and Lively Summer Fare

Chef Emily Doermann whips up a tasty summer meal.

38

Not-a-Burger

Everyone loves a burger on the grill during summer. If you're not a meat-eater, here is an alternative that can't be beat!

40

Six Summer Sips

Mixologist Karen Covey shares sizzling summer drinks to beat the heat.

46

Space Cake

Put down that Moon Pie and try this heirloom cake with out-of-the-world taste.

48

Inspired by the Garden: Garden Muse Tea Reception

Barbara Kelley caters a photography exhibit reception to remember.

66

Summer Tablescapes

Usher in summer with cool summer-inspired tablescapes.

72

THE ARTIST

Shoe-la-la, Ooh-la-la!

A popular children's book is the inspiration for a mural in a shoe-loving little girl's room.

78

HOME

That 80s House

A bathroom gets a new lease on life.

80

Rest for the Weary

Create a welcoming guestroom for your visitors.

82

GARDENING

Ode to a Chicken

Becka Davis pays homage to a beloved feathered friend.

88

Suburban Agriculture: Confessions of a Brown Thumb

Maria Hufnagel shares her experience as a first-time gardener.

94

Fashioning a Fairy Garden

Kristin Clem connects with her inner child and creates a miniature fairy paradise.

ON THE COVER

Cover photograph of Marisa Sarto by Cindy Dyer. Want to learn how to make her cool, summery scarf? See page 26 for "Fit to be Tied (and Dyed)."

RECIPES

Warm Eggplant Caprese Salad	30
Cold Pesto Pasta Salad	33
Plank-Grilled Pesto White Fish	33
Homemade Italian Herb and Pecorino Pesto	34
Grilled Peaches with Sweet Lemon and Vodka Mascarpone	36
Not-a-Burger	39
Watermelon Cooler	40
Cosmopolitan	41
Long Island Iced Tea	42
Cranberry Lemon Refresher	43
Orange Punch	44
Chilled Jalapeño Margarita	45
Space Cake	46
Lemon Crinkles	50
Key Lime Tartlets	53
Artist's Palette Open-Faced Sandwiches	54
Pesto Pinwheels with Tomato and Mozzarella	57
Stuffed Summer Cucumbers	58
Stuffed Strawberries	59
Flower Garden Cupcakes	60
Brownie Blooms and Orchids	62

Celebrate HOME

MAGAZINE

98

HOW-TO

Photographing Your Garden Through the Seasons

Photographer Cindy Dyer shares her tips for creating captivating images in the garden.

112

THE COLLECTOR

Rampant Biblioholism

Marisa Sarto interviews CHM's art director/photographer, Cindy Dyer, and discovers how a love of books has shaped her collection.

122

So Charming

Ginger Garneau shares her lifelong passion for charm bracelets.

126

CRAFT

Fit to Tied (and Dyed): Fun and Easy Wearables Made with T-shirts

Achieve amazing results with inexpensive t-shirts, colorful dyes, simple knotting and a pair of scissors.

136

PERSPECTIVES

Living Spontaneously, Finding Roots

Celebrating Life at the Table

The Home of My Dreams

Saying Goodbye

Home Is...

Respect for Home

Always Growing



Celebrate HOME

MAGAZINE

We're looking for writers and photographers to add a fresh and distinctive style to every issue. You don't have to be a professional—just someone who is inspired and wants to share your experience. Now accepting submissions for:

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Artist Profiles

Food & Entertaining

Pets

Collector Profiles

Homes & Gardens

Travel

Family Life

Personal Stories

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BARBARA KELLEY is editor-in-chief of *Celebrate Home Magazine* and owner of Kelley Hospitality. She has 25 years of publishing experience and is also editor-in-chief of *Hearing Loss Magazine*. Barbara, "a sneeze guard heiress," is one of five kids whose dad invented the sneeze guard. She is an Army wife to Bill, although he says when it comes to their home, she is the commanding officer. One of her favorite jobs is being a mom. She blogs at www.barbaragarneaukelley.com.



CINDY DYER is the owner of Dyer Design and art director for *Celebrate Home Magazine*. Her day isn't complete without photographing flowers and insects. She is fond of travel and enamored with plants, fabric and craft supplies, and is a certified biblioholic. An avid blogger (www.cindydyer.wordpress.com), she seeks out adventures just so she can blog about them. She loves to entertain so she can justify her obsession with dishes. See her garden photos at www.cindydyer.zenfolio.com.



SOPHIA STADNYK revels in the written word and welcomes this opportunity to celebrate her passion. Many of her earliest and best memories come from books and libraries. An attorney with an extensive background in local government law, Sophia writes a regular column on the U.S. Supreme Court for the America Bar Association's *State and Local Law News*, and writes on legal issues for other publications. When not dealing with torts, she likes to dabble in tortes, experiment with heirloom tomato-growing, and tend to an acre-sized plot of shoes and boots.



CASSANDRA BIROCCO is a photographer and co-owner of K9 Connection in Warwick, Rhode Island. Her business is Zen Dog Pet Portraits (www.zendog-portraits.com) and she was voted the #3 Pet Photographer in New England. She is also owner of CB Group specializing in catalog photography (www.cbirrocco-group.com). She has a passion for cooking and eating wonderful food. One of her specialties is her family's Italian recipe for Bagna Cauda, a seasoned, hot oil dip for fresh vegetables. It's so good and it's a secret.



KRISTEN CLEM lives in the quiet town of Grove City, Pennsylvania, with her husband, Ryan. She has degrees from Penn State University in art education and fine arts in printmaking. She is currently enjoying her "less-stress" job as a part-time nanny where she gets to use her artistic training to work more one-on-one to inspire creativity in children. She spends her free time visiting with family, making jewelry, treasure hunting at antique stores and auctions, and baking gluten-free desserts for her husband.



KAREN COVEY is a Boston-based writer, food blogger, recipe developer and the creator of *Gourmet Recipes for One*, which was named as one of the best consumer epicurean websites on Folio's list of 2010 Eddie and Ozzie Awards. Her work has appeared in the *Boston Globe Sunday Magazine*. Her burger creation, the Dublin, won the Global Burger Contest sponsored by The Met Bar & Grill. She grew up in southern Vermont hanging out in the kitchen of her parent's restaurant. Visit her blog at www.gourmetrecipesforone.com.



BECKA DAVIS is a stay-at-home mom who works part time fundraising for the Vitae Foundation. She rows with a crew of other breast cancer survivors on the Potomac River with WeCanRow D.C. Becka is a chapter coordinator for LeadersNow International, a leadership training organization for teenage girls. She graduated from the University of Virginia with a degree in history and enjoys the temperaments of her cat, Pandora, and her chicken, Rapsallion—loyal but appropriately assertive.



EMILY DOERMAN, R.D., is a registered dietician and certified chef. She had been working as a dietician for almost two years when she decided to return to school. Emily completed the professional culinary program at the International Center for Culinary Arts in Dubai. She enjoys helping people eat and live healthier through nutrition counseling, cooking lessons, cooking demonstrations, and recipe development. Visit her blog at www.sonutritiousanddelicious.blogspot.com.



ED FAGAN owns Columbia Photography, his studio of 25 years in Columbia, MD. Specialties include interior and exterior architectural photography. Starting out with the wet photo process and transitioning to digital when it was brand new, Ed's pictures retain all of the qualities of silver prints with all of the new capabilities digital offers. He says, "The real key is to never let the viewer know what was done to enhance a picture, with sparing use of just the right techniques." www.Columbia-Photography.com



GINGER GARNEAU's first memory of sartorial interest was in third grade when she matched her purple socks to her purple top. From this grew her passion for creating new fashion looks, accessories, and a jewelry obsession. This mother of two lives in Montoursville, Pennsylvania, with her husband, daughter, and a spoiled calico kitty. She is a registrar/counseling assistant at the local high school and she is president of the educational support professionals group in the district. She loves estate sales, auctions, yard sales and e-Bay.



TRACY HAVERMANN is a graduate of the University of Virginia with an education degree. She has five kids, ages 13 to 30, and two grandchildren. She has successfully launched their three oldest children into the world and is working on the launch of the two youngest. She loves to renovate, decorate, design, garden, cook, and create interesting spaces with her growing family in mind. She and Don have been married 34 years.



MARIA HUFNAGEL is a freelance writer and aspiring housewife. She recently graduated from Virginia Commonwealth University, where she studied English and creative writing. She enjoys cooking healthy and conscientious meals as well as unhealthy desserts. Maria currently lives and works in Northern Virginia. When not cooking or keeping house, she enjoys reading, writing, yoga, and cuddling with her cat.



GINA LEWIS has discovered that she can create a gourmet meal with one pot and one electric burner. When she's not whipping up culinary magic, she's exercising her green thumbs in her patio garden. She loves all things lemon, channels Mother Nature with her love of animals, knows all the lyrics from *Chicago*, and never met a crisp white shirt that she wouldn't buy. In the fall you can find her watching LSU football on Saturday and the Dallas Cowboys on Sunday. She'd much rather be in Paris right now.



MARISA SARTO is an educator, activist, and freelance photographer. She aspires to be a photojournalist to capture beautiful depictions of the wild world or ugly evidence of the damage it suffers. To her, both seem crucial—beauty to show what's at risk, its destruction to create a sense of urgency. She has a degree in film from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. When she's not job hunting, she's reading, juicing, writing letters, dancing to Zumba, finding the best sea salt chocolate bar and updating her blog: www.msarto.wordpress.com.



MICHAEL SCHWEHR grew up in the Cleveland, Ohio, area, lived in Worms, Germany, for two and a half years, and finally settled in Alexandria, Virginia. He is the president, chief PC repair technician and network engineer for JumpStart Computing, an on-site PC repair business at www.JumpStartComputing.com. He loves books, camping, photographing bugs with a macro lens, and trying new things. He owns more tools than he can possibly use, and likes to tinker with computers and recipes.



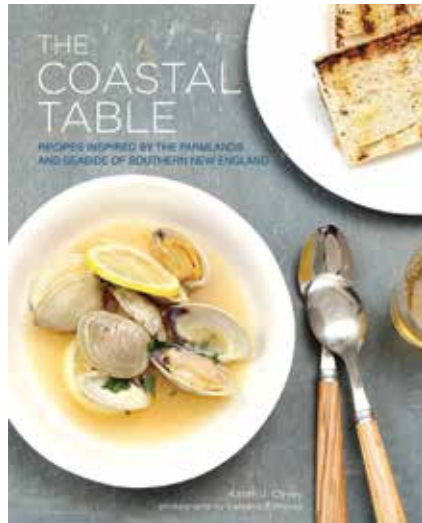
MARGOT STORCH is a college student at the University of Mary Washington, where she studies Studio Art and Education. Most of her artistic passion lies in the ceramics studio where she enjoys playing with clay, but she also enjoys being behind the camera, documenting her surroundings. When she is not studying and stressing over deadlines, Margot enjoys doodling in her sketchbook, reading, and dreaming of all the places she hopes to travel to someday.

Feather Your Nest

Lovely finds for your lovely home

Do you have a product to feature in Feather Your Nest?

For consideration, please submit your high-resolution artwork, brief, description, price and website to bkelly@celebratehomemag.com.



New! The Coastal Table—Using her adopted region as inspiration, Karen Covey captures seaside living in New England at its freshest and most innovative. With more than 120 recipes that update and modernize traditional New England fare, *The Coastal Table* is filled with dishes for casual beach days, sophisticated outdoor entertaining, and simple, everyday meals that celebrate the epicurean heritage of this breathtaking coastal region. Including contributions by New England's finest chefs from Newport to Ogunquit, this is a book written for the home cook who yearns for the New England seaside—and its flavors—all year round. \$29.95 from www.unionparkpress.com/our-titles/the-coastal-table/ and Amazon.com.

Haymarket Designs' Personalized Beach Towels—Perfect for bachelorette and bridal party gifts, wedding favors, sorority events, family vacations, summer camp or just plain fun. The silky smooth, cotton terry velour beach towels are embroidered with a design and customized with text of your choice. Designs shown in the photo include Waves in Sunshine motif with the midnight stripe and Lexington font and Reverse Moroccan Tile in peacock with circle monogram in sunshine. \$55 from www.haymarketdesigns.com.



Summer Swing for Birds—Here's an attractive and functional bird feeder that can be hung from a tree or under your eaves, made from poplar wood and sealed for years of enjoyment. Birds love the large feeding area. Wire mesh screen allows air and water to flow through keeping food fresher longer. 11-1/4" wide x 6" tall x 6-1/2" deep. \$25 plus \$5 shipping at www.etsy.com/shop/displayinstyle.



Golf Ball and Iron Salt and Pepper Mills Set—Perfect for the golf lover, this sporty set of mills from Olde Thompson is sure to be a conversation starter. Each mill is shaped as a clear acrylic golf ball with an iron that operates as the crank on the top. The grinding mechanism in both mills is adjustable for the perfect spices every time. Each piece is each 4.25" tall x 2.5" diameter. \$33.99 from www.BigKitchen.com.



Summer Fun Wine Charms—These charming little flip flops can help your summer guests keep track of their drinks. You can find a variety of styles and prices on the Internet, some from www.homewetbar.com, www.goftedgrape.com, www.beau-coup.com, www.letsdowine.com, and Etsy sites. Pictured here are ones from Pier 1 Imports, crafted of beads, metal and resin. Prices range from \$8 to \$15 a set.

Hero Socks—Immediately get calves of steel with these Superman Caped Knee Socks or sport the Dark Knight's logo on these Batman socks. \$10-\$15 a pair from www.802tees.com. Scope out all their goods on tee shirts, costumes and other novelty items from the 1980s.



Hide-Away® Ironing Boards—This beautiful scratch-resistant, recessed in-the-wall cabinet, is designed with a raised panel door and swivel ironing board. Pre-finished inside and out, it includes a heat shield for safe hot iron storage. Hide-Away® cabinet and board includes a garment hook for hanging clothes, ironing board cover and pad, and all necessary hardware. Available in various finishes. \$179 from www.hideawayironingboards.com.



Embroidered Aprons—This full length apron is embroidered with baking tools and personalized with your choice of text. The apron is available in 15 colors and can be embroidered with more than 30 different thread colors. Makes a great housewarming or wedding gift! \$22 each. Children's sizes and additional designs are also available at www.atwinklestar.etsy.com.

Custom Tote Bags—The chevron pattern has made its way into summer accessories. This bold and striking zigzag fabric large beach tote will surely make a hit at the pool, beach or seaside. Large opening, easy over-the-shoulder carry straps and exterior water-resistant fabric. 23" wide x 16" tall x 8", with covered rope handles. \$28, includes personalization.

Beach logo tote bags made for tropical wedding destinations or milestone celebrations make great gifts. Choose from all their beach totes for the bag that best suits your event. Immediate shipping and gift service available. This off-white muslin cotton beach tote can be filled with goodies for your treasured guests or wedding attendants. Interchange the date and island for a keepsake gift in remembrance of a special day. Lined with grommet accent rope handles and nylon drawstring extension, this bag will carry all beach essentials. 22" wide x 11" tall x 14" across bottom. \$29 with embroidered palm tree and date. Order from www.simply-bags.com.



HOME

Written by **Barbara Kelley** with **Tracy Havermann** · Photography by **Cindy Dyer**

With a house on St. Leonard's Creek in southern Maryland, a large family found their "heaven" and a place to come together to play in the historic area of the Chesapeake Bay.

Up a Creek

with Lots of Memories

HOME



Don and Tracy Havermann never thought to own a second home. It was already difficult to gather their five very active, sports-crazy kids for a once-a-year vacation. Shortly after their oldest daughter, Alison, graduated from college in 2004 and weeks before her July wedding, Don's father, "Papa Don," suddenly passed away. It was a stressful summer, full of joy for Alison's marriage to now husband, Jeff, but also with great sadness at the loss of a wonderful man.

In August that year, family friends invited the Havermann's to visit their vacation home on St. Leonard's Creek in Calvert County, Maryland, not far from the Chesapeake Bay and Solomon's Island, home to a formerly thriving oyster and crab industry. After a day of crabbing, boating, and de-stressing on the dock, Don had fallen in love with St. Leonard's Creek and southern Maryland. He decided then and there to look for a second home.

Looking for a home large enough to hold their growing family was not easy. Currently they have five kids, two sons-in-law, two grandchildren, Tracy's parents (Tom and Jean Hyde), and a host of aunts, uncles and cousins. After nine months of searching for a home that would fit the needs of their large family, Tracy, with the help of their daughter, Courtney, found the right house on St. Leonard's Creek.

Their home is located in John's Cove off of St. Leonard's Creek, a tributary to the Chesapeake Bay and the Patuxent River. The river and the bay meet at Solomon's Island and the Havermanns' vacation home is located eight miles from Solomon's Island. One of the best things about St. Leonard's Creek is the location. It is convenient to their home in Northern Virginia and Don's work in Washington, D.C.—an easy 90-minute commute door to door.

continued on page 16

OPEN CONCEPT, RUSTIC ACCENTS, STUNNING VIEWS

Nature, water, boats, crabs, family and friends are all a hop, skip and a jump away.





A custom-made sign, given by the children to Don for Christmas, hangs on the stone fireplace facing the water, letting all on the water know they have arrived at Havermann's Crabby Shack.

HOME

Within two days of finding the right place, an offer was made and accepted, and plans for moving many items from Don's parents' home were set in motion. The move into the house took place on Don's and Tracy's 27th wedding anniversary on August 5, 2005.

What's in a Name?

Although many homes in the area are referred to as "lake" or "bay" homes, Tracy early on dubbed the Maryland home the "Creek House," much to the chagrin of her children. After much debate, the Creek House was rechristened "Havermann's Crabby Shack," in tribute to Don's love of the movie *Caddy Shack* and his love for golf (instilled by his father).

Most holidays, you can find a large group gathered on the dock and in the water, enjoying the bounty of a home on the water. Kayaking, paddle-boarding, wake-boarding, tubing, crabbing, fishing, and jumping off the dock contests are only a few of the wonderful memories being created each day at Havermann's Crabby Shack.

Don's favorite pastime at the end of a day is sitting on the dock in the early evening. He watches the herons, sea gulls, and ospreys that swoop over the waters of the cove, the last bit of sunlight sparkling on the water, and stars appearing in the night sky.

Open Concept, Rustic Accents, Stunning Views

Tracy and Don kept all the dark framing in the house to contrast with the lighter paint, and to keep a rustic look. To create an "open concept" effect in the main living area, Tracy took down saloon-style doors that separated the kitchen from the front entry hall and a tri-fold frame that blocked the view from the front door to the water. The large stone fireplace is the centerpiece of the living room. A cozy grouping of chairs and a sofa allows for a great view of the water but is still within earshot of the activity in the kitchen.

continued on page 18



NATURAL ACCENTS

Don and Tracy's son-in-law, Mark, used to collect sharks' teeth in Galveston, Texas, where his extended family have beach homes. He still likes to collect them when he visits Maryland, particularly at Calvert Cliffs State Park. Mark purchased the replicas of the Megalodon sharks' teeth and brought them to the Creek House. This area of Maryland used to be covered in water and the great sharks roamed this area, leaving behind their teeth, which they shed regularly. Megalodon (meaning "Big Tooth") was the biggest prehistoric shark that ever lived. Researchers reconstructed the entire skeleton of a Megalodon and put it on display at the Calvert County Marine Museum in Solomon's Island, Maryland.

HOME

A large hutch that used to be a TV cabinet in their Northern Virginia home was painted and distressed by Tracy and now houses baby things, games, and electronics.

Don is planning to purchase a shuffleboard table to fit along a wall in the living room. Tracy is not wild about this decorating idea as she has visions of some lively games leading to broken glass slider doors that frame the fireplace.

In a 1960s-style sideboard from Don's parents' home, they keep a collection of his parents' stemware, tea cups and china. Don's collection of sunglasses adds an eclectic touch.

The "Rustic Luxe" Look

The floors were covered with white carpet when the Havermanns moved in. With never less than 20 people going in and out in a day, the carpet and the traffic weren't compatible. Don and Tracy removed it and put down hardwood floors. Tracy originally wanted old-heart-pine reclaimed wood from an old building or mill, but that didn't make sense for their water home. They chose KAHRS®, an engineered Swedish wood, because it could be floated on the basement floor without nailing or gluing. They wanted the floor to look like a deck of a ship, or an old farmhouse. A family story that still circulates happened after Tracy's dad

first saw the floors. He yelled, "Tracy, come quick! There are marks all over your floor!"

He had never heard of deliberately purchasing floors with dents, dings, and scratches. After Tracy explained the purpose of the "Rustic Luxe" look, Tom shook his head and said, "People pay for this?"

A Tribute to Papa Don

Don and Tracy are quick to tell you they owe their vacation home on St. Leonard's Creek in Southern Maryland to Don's father, who, as part of the Greatest Generation, was a bombardier/navigator on a B-17 during WWII. Shot down over Germany, he survived 18 months in a German POW camp before being liberated by the Russians. Papa Don came home weighing all of 120 pounds. He quickly proposed to Alice, got married, and they began creating a life together in Vienna, Virginia. After eight long years, Don and Alice welcomed their only child and son, Don.

Don and Tracy realize life is short and the most precious gift you can give your children and grandchildren is the gift of memories. In memory of Papa Don, they create new memories during every visit to their water home, filling it with time spent laughing, loving, and living with family and friends. **CHM**

CREEKSIDE APPEAL

Below: When Tracy found out their creek home was to be featured in *Celebrate Home Magazine*, she realized that a spring cleaning of the yard was necessary after the winter and early spring storms. She contacted her lawn company, explained the need for a quick turnaround of a total yard cleanup, and was pleased that Alex Martinez of Maryland delivered. He was excited to be a part of the photo shoot and took great care to prepare the yard.

The planter on the front porch, constructed by Leo Balderas, and painted and distressed by Tracy, holds a piece of driftwood collected from the water by Tracy's group of college friends (dubbed "The Girlfriends") from a recent visit to the home. The Girlfriends placed the wood, which looked like a bird, on the planter to remind Tracy of their visit. The buoys are from Betsy Cowart.



"IF MOMMA AIN'T HAPPY, AIN'T NOBODY HAPPY"

Above: Don and Tracy's oldest son, Ryan, found this sign, which hangs over the kitchen sink, in a truck stop/farmers' market in the middle of "Nowhere, Wyoming" in one of his cross-country jaunts.

Up a Creek
at the Havermann's
Crabby Shack





CREATIVITY RUNS IN THE FAMILY
Tracy and her dad, Tom Hyde, built these headboards. Tracy got an eight-foot section of picket fencing from Lowes, cut it in half, painted, distressed, and sanded it. Tom added the hardware and attached them to bed frames. "How cheap is that?" Tracy asks.



NAUTICAL NIGHTS
Everyone loves to sleep in this guest room because it's tucked away on the lower level behind the laundry room. It's dark, it's cool, it's quiet and it has a refrigerator in it!



ECLECTIC COLLECTIONS
A 1960s-style sideboard from Don's parents' home holds some of the stemware, tea cups and china his mom collected. Added to that is the current-day collection of Don's sunglasses.



RUSTIC + MODERN
The original master bathroom was cramped with a small corner shower and an old tub, not to mention pink and blue-flowered wallpaper everywhere. Don and Tracy wanted a rustic look but with the upgraded feel of a modern home. They enlarged the bathroom, installed a frameless shower, and painted T1-11 cedar wood with Benjamin Moore Sugar Cookie, a soft white. The tile on the floor has the subtle look of sand. With the natural creamy-white paint, the room has a nautical feel without feeling too beachy. The driftwood-like cabinet and mirror are from Restoration Hardware.

HOME

A GATHERING PLACE

Opposite: The lower level of the house is another treat. The stairwell houses a memory wall full of family photos taken at the Crabby Shack. The family room is decorated cozy-style with overstuffed chairs and sofa, games, seashore memorabilia and the requisite TV. Sliding glass doors lead to another deck with a rope swing and Adirondack chairs facing the water. The lower level houses two guest rooms and a full bath.



BEAUTIFUL BUOYS

Above: Daughter Courtney invited her roommate, Betsy Cowart, to stay at the creek house. When Tracy mentioned she wanted to find some old buoys, Betsy said her dad, a kayaker, collected buoys from the marsh near their home on Skidaway Island in Chatham County, Georgia. She packed up a bunch and sent them to the Havermans. Tracy loves the sign her niece Katie gave her. It reads, "Having some place to go is home; having someone to love is family; having both is a blessing." She feels it says it all.

A SPLASH OF COLOR

Right: Tracy, with the help of her parents, painted the bathroom a vibrant lime green, a departure from the red, blue and yellow palette that runs through the house. A mirror surrounded by white shells serves as a nautical focal point. Bright blue shelves line a nearby wall and showcase family photos and fish accents.







Decor

HOME

VIGNETTES FROM NATURE

Opposite page: A serving tray filled with sand, sea glass, seashells and a distressed wood hurricane lantern graces the kitchen table in a nod to nature.

SLEEPS 26!

The house plus the bunkhouse over the garage has sleeping spots for 26 people plus a crib. If you add sofas and blow-up mattresses, they could sleep more. The house isn't expansive, but Tracy has found a way to use all possible space for sleeping.



HERE'S YOUR SIGN

Above: Whimsical signs are hung in nearly every room in the house.





LIVING ON THE PORCH
A deck chair, a table and a cool drink—the recipe for summer happiness.



SIT A SPELL
Opposite, top: This upper-level deck off from the main floor overlooks the water. It's a great place for early-morning coffee and the paper.

HEED THE SIGNS
Opposite, below: When Tracy's friends came for a girls' weekend at the house, each one painted a sign about a place close to her heart. Tracy's sign is painted with the words "Heaven," and it points to the water.



Recipes by **Emily Doerman** • Styling by **Barbara Kelley** and **Cindy Dyer** • Photography by **Cindy Dyer**

Light & Lively Menu

Warm Eggplant Caprese Salad

Cold Pesto Pasta Salad

Plank-Grilled Pesto White Fish

Grilled Peaches with Sweet Lemon and Vodka Mascarpone

This warm salad looks beautiful on a plate, yet is quite easy to make. Impress your dinner guests with this eye-appealing and tasty appetizer.

Warm Eggplant Caprese Salad

INGREDIENTS

- 1 large eggplant
- 2 large tomatoes, such as heirloom or Beefmaster
- 1/2 cup fresh basil leaves
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 tablespoon balsamic vinegar, plus extra for drizzling
- 4 ounces buffalo mozzarella cheese, cut into 1/4-inch round slices
- Salt and pepper

DIRECTIONS

Preheat the oven to 375°. Wash and trim off the ends of the eggplant. Create a striped eggplant look—use a peeler and peel off skin in one-inch strips alternating with one-inch strips of eggplant skin lengthwise.

Next, cut eggplant crosswise into one-half-inch round slices until you have 8 slices. Lay slices on a plate and salt both sides. Let stand for 10 minutes. With a dry paper towel, wipe off salt and pat dry.

Cut the tomatoes crosswise into one-half-inch slices. To chiffonade the basil leaves, make a stack of 6 to 8 leaves at a time. Tightly roll leaves. Make very small slices crosswise into the roll. Mix the cut basil with vinegar and a pinch of salt and pepper. Set aside.

Prepare a baking sheet with nonstick cooking spray or oil. To layer the eggplant caprese salad, start with one eggplant slice on the bottom, top with 1 tablespoon balsamic basil mixture, then a mozzarella slice, a tomato slice; next, another slice of mozzarella, a slice of tomato, 1 tablespoon of the balsamic basil mixture, and finish with a slice of eggplant.

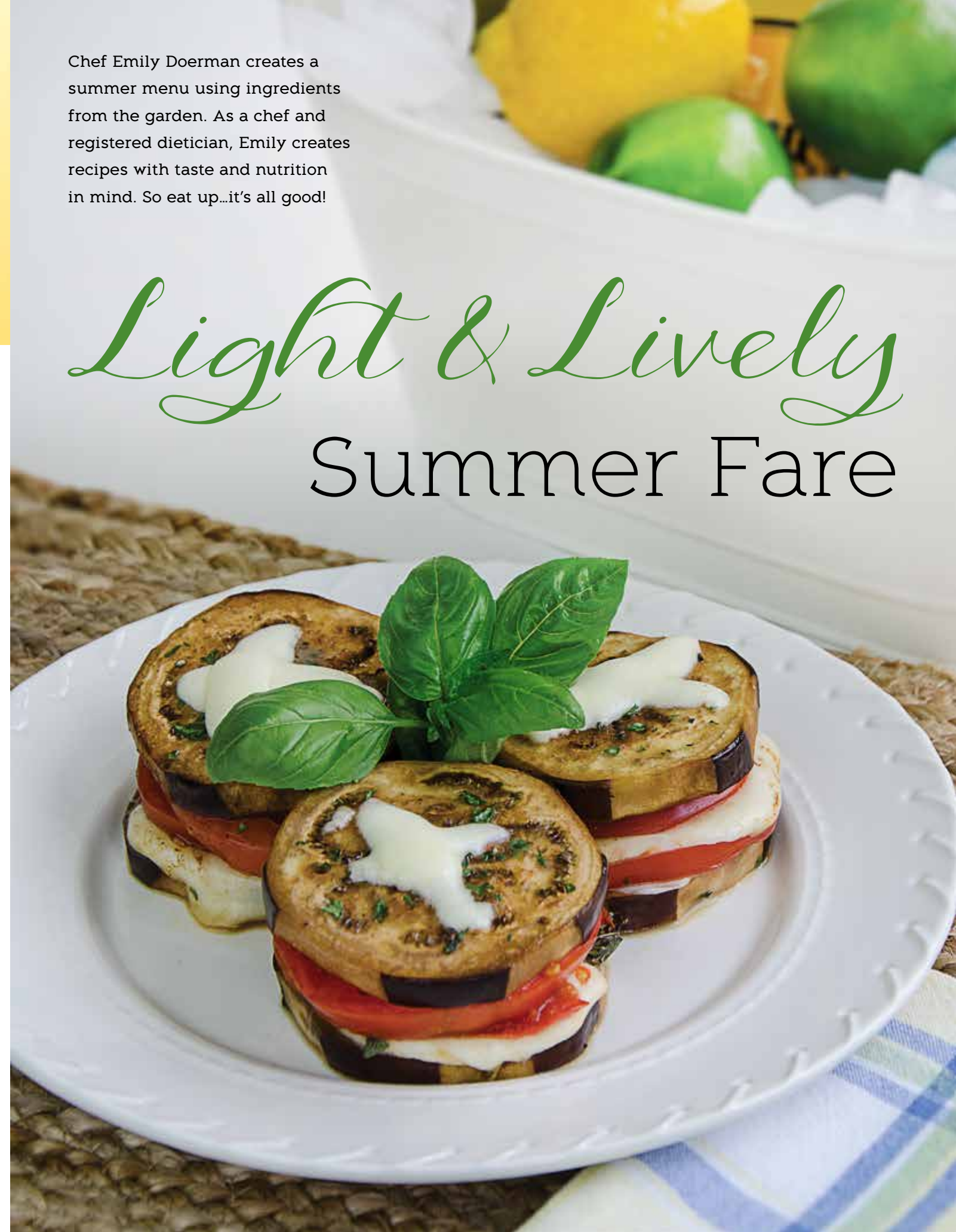
Hint: When layering the salad, make sure the slices of the eggplant, mozzarella, and tomato are similar in diameter.

Drizzle tops with balsamic vinegar. Repeat this for three more stacks. Use toothpicks to hold the stacks in place while baking. Bake 18 – 20 minutes until cheese is melted and eggplant is soft. For garnish, top with small slices of mozzarella and allow to melt. Remove toothpicks before serving.

Yield: 4 servings

Chef Emily Doerman creates a summer menu using ingredients from the garden. As a chef and registered dietician, Emily creates recipes with taste and nutrition in mind. So eat up...it's all good!

Light & Lively Summer Fare





Recipes by **Emily Doerman** • Styling by **Barbara Kelley** and **Cindy Dyer** • Photography by **Cindy Dyer**

The large portion of veggies and the moderate portion of pasta makes this a low-carb pasta salad. Ditching the mayonnaise and opting for pesto and olive oil also help to make this recipe heart-healthy. This can be a side dish or a vegetarian lunch.

Cold Pesto Pasta Salad

INGREDIENTS

- 1/2 cup red bell pepper, chopped
- 1/2 cup green bell pepper, chopped
- 1/4 cup red onion, chopped
- 1/2 cup zucchini, chopped
- 1 cup grape tomatoes, halved
- 1/2 cup canned cannellini beans, drained and rinsed
- 2-1/4 cups dry whole wheat pasta, such as penne or rotini, cooked and cooled
- 3/4 cup pesto (see homemade recipe on page 34)
- 2 tablespoons olive oil

DIRECTIONS

In a large bowl, combine all the chopped vegetables, beans, pasta, and pesto. Stir to coat well. Refrigerate for 20 minutes. Sprinkle with olive oil and stir just before serving.

Yield: 4 servings as a side dish or 2 servings as a lunch

Using a cedar plank is a great way to grill fish without worrying about it getting stuck to the grill. This technique also creates a smoky flavor and helps to keep it moist. Just remember to soak the wood for at least two hours before putting it on the grill.

Plank-Grilled Pesto White Fish

INGREDIENTS

- 4 fillets of white fish, such as halibut
- 1/4 cup pesto (see homemade recipe on page 34)
- 1 lemon
- Salt and pepper
- Canola oil

DIRECTIONS

Soak cedar planks (1 or 2 depending on size of wood and fish fillets) for at least two hours. Heat entire grill on medium-high.

Season each fillet with salt and pepper to taste. Lightly coat the top and sides of each fillet with pesto. Squeeze the juice of one lemon over the fish. Set aside.

After soaking, dry wood with a towel, and then lightly coat both sides of the wood plank(s) with canola oil using a brush. On one side of the grill, turn off the heat. Place wood planks on this side of the grill and close grill to keep in the heat. After five minutes, flip wood and return to the side of the grill without heat. Place fish fillets on top of planks. Close grill and cook 10 to 12 minutes, until fish just starts to flake.

Yield: 4 servings

Pesto tastes extra delicious when it is homemade. This recipe uses a few different herbs for a more complex flavor. As with all pesto, this recipe goes well with pasta, chicken, white fish, or just spread on toasted bread.

Homemade Italian Herb and Pecorino Pesto

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup packed fresh basil leaves
- 8 large fresh parsley leaves
- 16 fresh oregano leaves
- 1/4 cup olive oil
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon white pepper
- 1/4 cup Pecorino-Romano cheese, shredded
- 1/3 cup unsalted pine nuts
- 2 cloves garlic, minced

DIRECTIONS

Combine all ingredients in a food processor. Pulse carefully until the mixture is well combined but still has a mealy or grainy texture. This should take about 1 to 1-1/2 minutes. After this, you may need to scrape the inside of the food processor bowl, then mix again for an additional 15 seconds.

Hint: I personally love Pecorino cheese, but others find the taste too strong. If you know you do not like the taste, you can replace the Pecorino with Parmesan.

Store any unused pesto in a tightly sealed container in the refrigerator for up to a week.

Yield: 1-1/2 cups

Light & Lively
Summer Fare



Having fruit for dessert is a great way to satisfy your sweet tooth. When paired with this sweet mascarpone-yogurt topping, this dessert just melts in your mouth. You won't even realize that this is actually a virtuous dessert with less than 200 calories per serving.

Grilled Peaches with Sweet Lemon and Vodka Mascarpone

INGREDIENTS

- 3-1/2 tablespoons mascarpone cheese
- 2-1/2 tablespoons plain nonfat Greek yogurt
- 1 tablespoon vanilla vodka
- 2 tablespoons lemon juice
- 1 teaspoon sugar
- 1/4 cup chopped hazelnuts
- 4 peaches, soft but not overripe
- 1 tablespoon canola oil

DIRECTIONS

Heat grill to high heat.

Mix together mascarpone, yogurt, vodka, lemon juice, and sugar.

Refrigerate for 10 minutes.

Cut peaches in half lengthwise and remove pits. Lightly coat the inside half of each peach with canola oil. This is to prevent the peaches from sticking to the grill.

Reduce heat on grill to medium. Place peaches on grill with the flat side down. Let peaches cook 5 minutes, until you see grill marks on the peaches.

Remove peaches from grill. Serve 2 halves, each topped with 1 tablespoon mascarpone mixture and a sprinkle of hazelnuts on top.

Yield: 4 servings

Light & Lively
Summer Fare



Recipe by **Jane McLaughlin** • Photography and styling by **Barbara Kelley**

Everyone loves a burger on the grill during summer. But, if you're not a meat-eater, here is an alternative that can't be beat! Thick, juicy and succulent, the Not-A-Burger is served with a sizzle.

Not-a-Burger!

INGREDIENTS

- 6 portobello mushrooms (about 5-6 inches in diameter)
- 6 Beefsteak tomato slices (one inch thick)
- 3 green bell peppers, sliced
- 1 large white onion, sliced
- 2 tablespoons butter or margarine (divided)
- 6 slices of provolone cheese
- 6 ciabatta sandwich buns (or any hearty burger buns)
- 3 ounces A.1.[®] Steak Sauce
- Salt, pepper, garlic salt to taste

DIRECTIONS

Remove stems and clean cores of portobello mushrooms. Season to taste and place on grill until ready to assemble. Grill mushrooms for about five minutes until tender.

Season tomatoes to taste and place on grill for about three minutes. Top each with a slice of provolone cheese and cook until cheese melts.

Sauté green pepper and onion in 1 tablespoon of butter until soft.

Spread inside of the buns with butter and grill each bun until toasted.

When all ingredients are cooked, layer in the following order on the bun:

- Portobello mushroom slice
- Tomato with melted provolone
- Sautéed peppers and onions
- Drizzle of A.1.[®] Steak Sauce

Yield: 6 Not-A-Burgers

Hearty and delicious, but...
NOT-A-BURGER!

Recipes by **Karen Covey** • Photography by **Cassandra Birocco**

Six Summer

Six summer sips to help you beat the heat!

Watermelon Cooler

INGREDIENTS

- Ice
- 1 tablespoon simple syrup (see below)
- 1 cup diced seedless watermelon
- 2 ounces white tequila, or to taste
- Juice from 1/2 lime
- Fresh watermelon wedge, for garnish

DIRECTIONS

To make simple syrup, place 1/4 cup sugar in a saucepan along with 1/4 cup water and bring to a boil. Stir until sugar dissolves, about 2 minutes. Remove from heat and allow to cool completely.

When cooled, add 1 tablespoon simple syrup to a cocktail shaker. (Reserve extra in a well-sealed bottle in the refrigerator for later use.)

In a blender, purée watermelon until smooth. Pour through a fine-mesh strainer, pressing gently to extract as much juice as possible. Discard pulp. Add watermelon juice to cocktail shaker along with tequila and lime juice. Fill shaker with ice. Cover and shake vigorously, or stir, until combined.

Fill a serving glass with ice and strain the watermelon mixture into glass. Garnish with a watermelon wedge and serve cold.

Yield: 1

Sips

Cosmopolitan

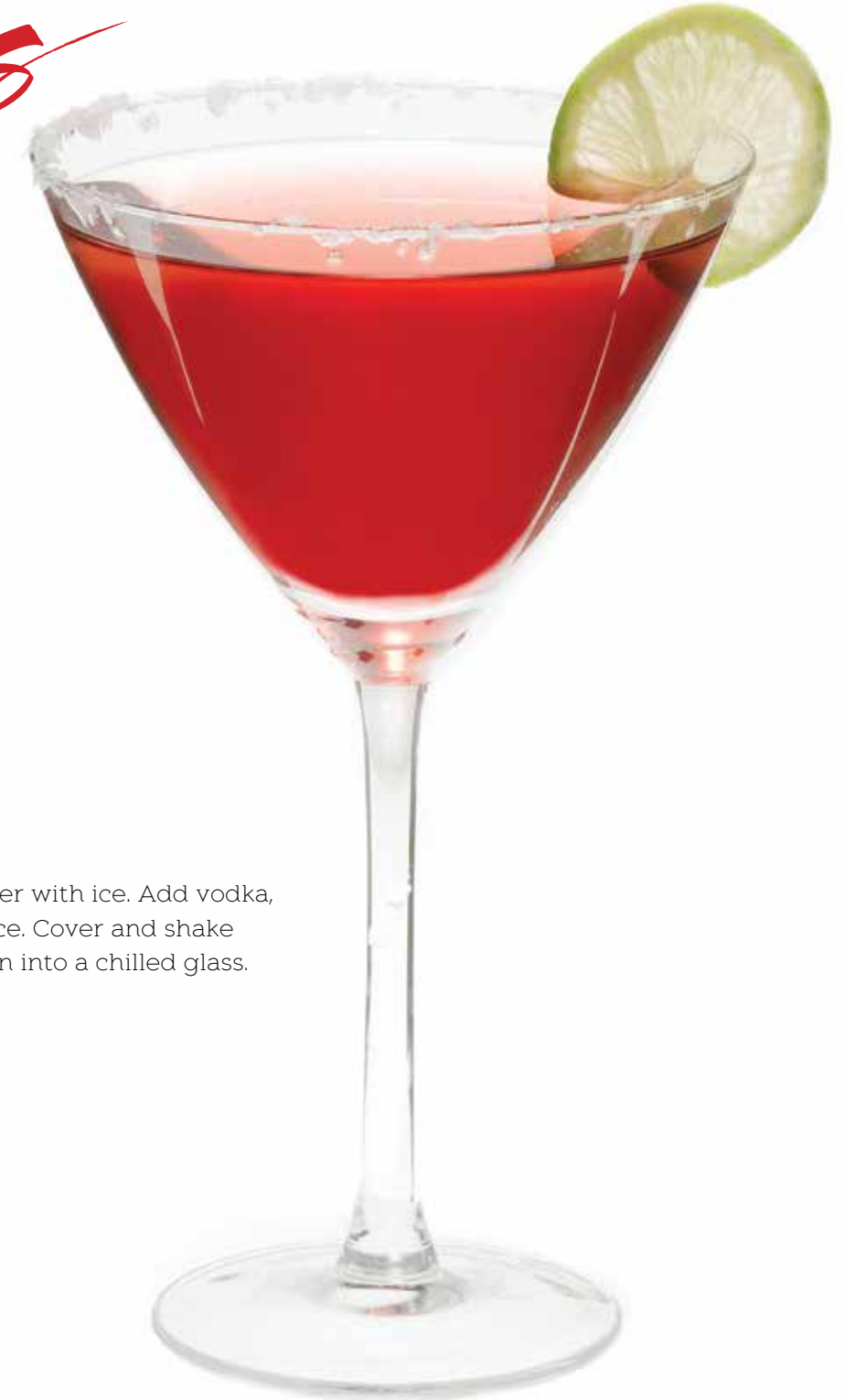
INGREDIENTS

- Ice
- 2 ounces vodka
- 1 ounce cranberry juice
- 1/2 ounce Triple Sec®
- Splash of fresh lime juice
- Slice of fresh lime, for garnish
- Sugar for garnish, optional

DIRECTIONS

Chill a martini glass. Fill a cocktail shaker with ice. Add vodka, cranberry juice, Triple sec and lime juice. Cover and shake vigorously, or stir until combined. Strain into a chilled glass. Garnish with lime slice and serve cold.

Yield: 1



Six Summer

Sips

Cranberry Lemon Refresher

INGREDIENTS

- Ice
- 2 ounces vodka, or to taste
- 1 ounce cranberry juice, or to taste
- Rosé wine
- Slice of fresh lemon, for garnish

DIRECTIONS

Fill a serving glass with ice. Add vodka and cranberry juice and stir. Fill with rosé wine. Garnish with lemon slice and serve.

Yield: 1

Long Island Iced Tea

INGREDIENTS

- Ice
- 1/2 ounce vodka, or to taste
- 1/2 ounce gin, or to taste
- 1/2 ounce white rum, or to taste
- 1/2 ounce white tequila, or to taste
- Splash of Triple Sec®
- Juice from 1/2 lemon
- 1/4 cup Coke® or to taste
- Lime wedge, for serving

DIRECTIONS

Fill shaker with ice. Add vodka, gin, rum, tequila, Triple Sec® and lemon juice. Cover and shake vigorously, or stir, until combined. Pour mixture, including ice, into a serving glass. Fill with Coke®, garnish with lime wedge and serve cold.

Yield: 1



Six Summer Sips

Recipes by **Karen Covey** · Photography by **Cassandra Birocco**

Chilled Jalapeño Margarita

INGREDIENTS

- Kosher salt, for rim
- 1/4 jalapeño, seeded and roughly chopped, or to taste
- 1 lime, cut into wedges (reserve 1 wedge or slice for garnish)
- Ice, for serving
- 3 ounces sour mix, available in grocery stores
- 2 ounces tequila, or to taste

DIRECTIONS

Chill margarita glass. Pour some salt out onto a flat plate. Rub 1 lime wedge around rim of glass. Dip rim in salt and set aside.

Place jalapeño and 2 lime wedges (or 1/2 lime) in a cocktail shaker. Muddle until slightly mashed. Add ice, sour mix and tequila. Cover and shake vigorously. Strain into chilled glass, garnish with lime wedge or slice and serve cold.

Yield: 1

Orange Punch

INGREDIENTS

- Ice
- 2 1/2 ounces orange juice
- 2 ounces white rum, or to taste
- 1 teaspoon granulated sugar, or to taste
- Juice from 1/2 lime, or to taste
- 1 maraschino cherry, for garnish
- 1/2 orange slice for garnish

DIRECTIONS

Chill a martini glass. Fill a cocktail shaker with ice. Add orange juice, rum, sugar and lime juice. Cover and shake vigorously, or stir, until combined. Strain into chilled glass. Garnish with cherry and orange slice and serve cold.

Yield: 1





Mable Marie Varner Space

Space Cake

Recipe recreated by **Barbara Kelley** · Photography and styling by **Cindy Dyer**

Here's a cake that won't heat up your kitchen this summer!

Space Cake is one of those recipes that was never written down—it was just enjoyed. It began with my maternal grandmother, Mable Marie Varner Space, otherwise known as Gran. We figure the name Space must have been a shortened version of the German name Spache or Spack. When our forefathers came through Ellis Island, they pronounced their names and the officials at Ellis Island spelled the names the way they sounded or changed the names altogether. Gran's maiden name Varner would have been spelled Warner in German, with the W sounding like a V; thus, the spelling.

We never called this Space Cake originally—I named it that. Whatever the name, we just knew we loved the scrumptious peanut-butter-chocolate cake. Gran was a sturdy and quiet woman who always had a quilt in progress, with quilting racks adorning her dining room. My grandfather, Pa, was always cheerful. In fact, the nickname given to him by people on his rural mail route was "Happy."

Gran made this cake, cherry and lemon meringue pies, and soft white bread with a chewy crust. Pa made homemade egg noodles. Going to their home was an adventure for me. I sat quietly for a while and listened to the grown-ups while I swiveled in the big gray knobby chair with the crocheted doilies. Then I would go exploring. The rooms where my mother grew up were intriguing to me. I investigated each of them. They held old furniture with lots of drawers and baubles. Off from the dining room was a secret door that either went to the cellar or was a closet. I was never brave enough to open it or ask. The back yard was lush with plum, cherry and apple trees. I wanted to climb the trees but never did.

Never having a recipe, I instinctively made Space Cake when I became a young woman. I am still making it, and I suspect so are my siblings and cousins. It's still my all-time favorite. **CHM**

DIRECTIONS

Layer graham crackers in a baking pan. Slice bananas lengthwise and layer on top of graham crackers. Repeat the layers at least twice until you end with a layer of graham crackers. Frost the top with your favorite chocolate frosting mixed with peanut butter (about half and half). Optional garnish is chocolate chips, mini-peanut butter cups or chopped peanuts. Cover tightly and let the cake sit for at least 24 hours before eating it. It gets better with age and will keep in the refrigerator a few days after that.



Space Cake

You've tried Moon Pie? Try this cake with an out-of-this-world taste.

MEMORIES OF CELEBRATING HOME

Do you have a recipe handed down through your family with a story wrapped around it? We would love to hear about it. Contact bkelly@celebratehomemag.com.



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Photography by
**Ed Fagan and
Margot Storch**

Botanical
photography by
Cindy Dyer

FOOD & ENTERTAINING

Inspired by the Garden

Garden Muse Tea Reception

Gardens are in full bloom, so summer is the time for special occasions. Weddings, showers, birthdays, anniversaries and graduations call for a special celebration. Afternoon teas are fun to put on and people love milling about enjoying a variety of foods.

I created *A Garden Muse Tea* for the afternoon art reception of Cindy Dyer's brilliant botanical macro-photography exhibit at Green Spring Gardens in Alexandria, Virginia, last spring.

The food: inspired by Cindy's art.

Her art: inspired by nature.

Let summer be your muse. Here are the makings of a grand-scale afternoon tea. If you want a smaller event, pick one or two items from both the sweet and savory offerings. Some of the recipes are shortcuts because, when you produce *en masse*, you need a few menu items that won't take a lot of time but will make a big impact in appearance and taste.

Make your spread bloom as bold as your garden. Have fresh garnishes on hand, like flowers, berries, basil, dill, mint, parsley, lemons, cherries, and whatever is growing in your yard.

continued on page 50

Garden Muse Tea Menu

Sweets

Brownie Blooms
Lemon Crinkles
Stuffed Strawberries
Flower Garden Cupcakes
Key Lime Tartlets
Zucchini Bread
Fruit Kabobs

Savories

Stuffed Cucumbers
Artist's Palette Open-Faced Sandwiches
Pesto Pinwheels with Tomato and Mozzarella

Beverages

Iced herbal tea
Cold Champagne and/or wine
Water in a decorative dispenser or pitcher,
with raspberries and mint floating on top



There are all kinds of lemon crinkle recipes, much like the popular chocolate crinkle cookie. Here is a quick version that cuts the usual prep time in half when every minute counts. This recipe is widely available on the Internet but we added a little lemon juice and zest for added kick.

Lemon Crinkles

INGREDIENTS

- 1 box lemon cake mix
- 1 (8-ounce) container Cool Whip,[®] thawed
- 1 egg
- 1/3 cup confectioners' sugar (for rolling)
- 1 tablespoon fresh lemon juice
- 1/4 teaspoon lemon zest

DIRECTIONS

In medium bowl, beat Cool Whip,[®] egg, cake mix, lemon juice and zest, until well blended. The dough will be thick and sticky.

Drop by teaspoonfuls into a bowl of confectioners' sugar and roll to coat. Place on a parchment-lined cookie sheet and bake at 350° for 10-12 minutes.

The parchment paper is essential. Let the cookies completely cool on the sheet as they are too gooey to remove when warm.

Hint: If you don't have parchment paper, grease a cookie sheet with Crisco[®] and flour it. Don't use wax paper.

Yields: 2 dozen





If you're lucky enough to find Key limes, don't pass up the opportunity to use them. Regular limes don't fit the bill. My Key Lime Tartlets are a fresh twist on the traditional Florida Key Lime pie, by taking all the tropical goodness and putting it into little bites. Here, I used clear plastic square cups and filled them for a buffet.

Key Lime Tartlets

INGREDIENTS

- 1-1/4 cups graham cracker crumbs
- 3 tablespoons sugar
- 1/3 cup butter or margarine, melted
- 1 can (14-ounce) Eagle Brand® Sweetened Condensed Milk
- 1/3 cup Key lime juice (use a citrus reamer to extract the juice) or use Nellie and Joe's Famous Key West Lime Juice,® found in some grocery or specialty stores
- 2 egg whites, beaten until thick
- Whipped cream, fresh or the kind in the can
- Key lime rind and fruit for garnish
- 36 clear plastic cups

DIRECTIONS

Mix graham cracker crumbs with sugar and melted butter until combined. Press approximately one tablespoon of crumb mixture into the bottom of each cup. Prepare the filling by mixing sweetened condensed milk and Key lime juice until blended. Fold in beaten egg whites until combined.

Fill cups with the Key lime filling and refrigerate for at least two hours. These can be made one day ahead and covered. When ready to serve, top with whipped cream. Garnish with a slice of Key lime rind and fruit.

Yield: 36 tartlets



CHM TIPS



Use flower-shaped cookie cutters to cut dense bread for the open-faced tea sandwiches. Use two different spreads, and then complete the “palette” with flowers and vegetables.

Little finger sandwiches are traditional fare for teas, and the varieties are endless. If you can imagine it, spread it on little pieces of coarse breads. Bake sweet bread, like banana or zucchini, and make sandwiches with cream cheese and orange marmalade.

Watercress, cucumbers, and herbs are all traditional fillings for savory dainties, with either sweet butter or soft cheeses such as goat, cream cheese, or mascarpone. Chicken salad, finely chopped, is always great, and so is Brie with thin apple slices. Use smoked salmon on dark bread spread with butter and capers. Even a little mayo with a slice of garden-fresh tomato on white bread sprinkled with fresh basil makes a summer hit. Here are two of my favorites:

Artist's Palette Open-Faced Sandwiches

INGREDIENTS

- 1 container (6.5 ounces) Alouette® spreadable cheese, garlic and herb flavor
- 1 package (8 ounces) cream cheese
- 1/2 cup chives, fresh and coarsely chopped
- Milk, enough to thin the cream cheese
- 2 loaves dense white bread, such as Pepperidge Farm® brand, crust removed and cut into flower shapes using cookie cutters
- Red and yellow peppers, sliced thinly into rings and strips
- 1 bunch watercress, washed and trimmed
- Edible flowers

DIRECTIONS

Variation 1: Spread bread with Alouette® cheese, top with pepper slices and a flower or two. Serve open-faced.

Variation 2: Thin cream cheese with milk to desired consistency for easier spreading. Stir in chives. Spread on bread and top with watercress and edible flowers. Serve open-faced.

Yield: 30 sandwiches





Here's a summer twist on the common cheese and cracker platter. Buy prepared marinated mozzarella balls in the deli section and mix with cherry tomatoes. Serve with Pesto Pinwheels and you have summer's finest on a platter.

FOOD & ENTERTAINING

Pesto Pinwheels with Mozzarella and Tomatoes

INGREDIENTS

- 1 can of Pillsbury® Pizza Crust in a can
- 1/8 cup olive oil
- 1 cup pesto, can be homemade (see page 34 for recipe) or bought fresh in a jar
- 1 cup Asiago cheese, grated
- 1 egg white, lightly beaten

DIRECTIONS

Open pizza crust dough according to directions on the can. Roll out the dough to dimensions as suggested on the can. Brush the dough with olive oil, then spread with pesto. Sprinkle with Asiago cheese.

Roll the dough in a jelly-roll fashion until you end up with a tube. Cut into one-inch slices. Place on cookie sheet and brush top of dough with egg white.

Bake at 350° for 8-10 minutes or until done and golden. Serve with marinated mozzarella balls and cherry tomatoes.

Yield: 40 Pinwheels





If you have a garden with fresh cukes-a-plenty, keep these other ingredients stocked for appetizers. You can vary the recipe according to what you have on hand: for example, use blue cheese instead of feta.

Summer Stuffed Cucumbers

INGREDIENTS

- 4 cucumbers, any variety, but I like the English cucumbers
- 8 ounces cream cheese, softened to room temperature
- 1/2 cup feta cheese (less or more, according to your taste)
- 3 tablespoons milk or desired amount for consistency
- 1/2 cup ripe, pitted olives, chopped
- 1/4 cup fresh parsley, chopped
- Fresh parsley for garnish

DIRECTIONS

Wash and score cucumbers with a fork. Do not peel.

Cut off the ends and cut the cucumber into one-inch slices. Hollow out the pulp, leaving a little in the bottom to hold the filling.

Mix together cream cheese and milk until softened. Add feta cheese, olives and parsley. Spoon this mixture into cucumbers. Garnish with a sprig of parsley. Refrigerate until ready to use.

Yield: About 30 servings

Difficulty level... None! These are beautiful and delicious.

Stuffed Strawberries

INGREDIENTS

- 2 dozen medium-to-large, fresh strawberries
- 1 prepared New York-style cheesecake, approximately 8 inches in diameter
- 1 cup fine graham cracker crumbs
- Fresh mint for garnish

DIRECTIONS

Wash, hull and hollow out strawberries. Buy a quality New York-style cheesecake (dense and smooth, not runny). Use a melon ball scooper and scoop the cheesecake and stuff it into the strawberries.

Dip the tops of the stuffed strawberries in graham cracker crumbs. These can be made the day ahead and wrapped tightly. Dip in graham crackers right before serving. Garnish the plate with mint when ready to serve.

Yield: Two dozen



Recipe by Magnolia Bakery

Take time to smell the flowers—eat them while you're at it! The passion for cupcakes goes on—all flavors, all decorations—because we love our cupcakes. And, we love flowers!

Here are the cupcakes I designed with the help of Cindy Dyer, who fashioned the fondant butterflies. These are made to look like flowers upon which little butterflies have perched.

Flower Garden Cupcakes

SUPPLIES

- Magnolia Bakery Vanilla Cupcakes, recipe below
- Flower-petal cupcake papers made by Wilton
- Ready-made fondant, in yellow, pink and blue (Michaels, A.C. Moore or other craft/baking supply store)
- Sharp knife or fondant tool
- Mini butterfly-shaped cookie cutters (optional)
- Edible food marker (black for outlines and details)
- Pastry tube
- Yellow food coloring

MAGNOLIA BAKERY VANILLA CUPCAKES AND FROSTING

In my book, this is the only vanilla cupcake recipe I ever use. It is the best, and we are so pleased that the Magnolia Bakery has given us permission to reprint it.

CUPCAKE INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup unsalted butter, softened to room temperature
- 2 cups sugar
- 4 large eggs, room temperature
- 1-1/2 cups self-rising flour
- 1-1/4 cups all-purpose flour
- 1 cup milk
- 1 teaspoon of vanilla extract

DIRECTIONS FOR CUPCAKES

Line muffin pans with flower petal cupcake liners. Cream butter until smooth; add sugar and beat until fluffy. Add eggs one at a time, beating well after each. Combine flours and add in four parts, alternating with milk and vanilla.

Spoon into cups, three-quarters full and bake at 350° for 20-22 minutes or until tops springs back.

Yield: 24 cupcakes



FROSTING INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup unsalted butter, softened to room temperature
- 8 cups confectioners' sugar (2 boxes)
- 1/2 cup milk
- 2 teaspoons vanilla extract

DIRECTIONS FOR FROSTING

Combine butter, four cups confectioners' sugar, milk and vanilla; beat slowly at first until smooth and creamy. Gradually add the remaining sugar, one cup at a time until the mixture reaches spreading consistency. Use and store at room temperature. Frosting can be stored in airtight container for three days.

DIRECTIONS FOR FONDANT BUTTERFLIES

Roll out fondant with rolling pin. Lightly dust with powdered sugar to keep it from sticking to the small cookie cutters or the fondant cutting tool. Cut out butterfly shapes by using a knife,

fondant tool or mini cookie cutters. Bend each butterfly shape in the center and tuck the butterfly-shaped fondant into a piece of bent cardboard. The butterflies will hold their shape while they harden. Use an edible marker to draw butterfly markings on the wings.

These can be made up to three days ahead and stored in an airtight container. Remove the cardboard before placing the butterflies on the cupcakes.

CUPCAKE ASSEMBLY

Tint frosting with a small amount of yellow food coloring until a pale yellow color is achieved.

Pipe frosting on tops of cupcakes in concentric circles or a stippled fashion to imitate a flower's center.

Top random cupcakes with fondant butterflies. After all, butterflies wouldn't land on all the flowers, right?

Two of my favorite pleasures—brownies and orchids—pair perfectly. I created this display with edible orchids, my Brownie Blooms, and mint sprigs from the garden. If you have time to spare, use your favorite brownie recipe. These can be made ahead and frozen for up to two weeks. Wrap tightly in plastic wrap, then aluminum foil. Thaw completely before sprinkling with confectioners' sugar when ready to serve.

Brownie Blooms and Orchids

INGREDIENTS

1 brownie mix, prepared according to box directions for cake-like brownies
Edible flowers or blackberries
Cooking spray and flour for dusting pan
Confectioners' sugar for dusting brownies

DIRECTIONS

Nordic Ware® makes a mini cake pan in the shape of flowers. Check Amazon.com or kitchen stores for similar garden-themed bakeware. Prepare the baking pan by spraying it with cooking spray then dusting with flour. If the bakeware gives alternate instructions for preparing the pan, follow the directions for the specific bakeware.

Prepare the brownie batter by following the instructions for cake-like brownies (usually requires 3 eggs). Using a tablespoon, fill the molds three-quarters full.

Bake at 350° for 10-12 minutes until a toothpick comes out with some crumbs. **Hint:** if the toothpick is perfectly clean, your brownies will be too dry.

Cool in pan and gently remove. When ready to serve, sprinkle the brownies with confectioners' sugar. Arrange on a tray with fresh berries or edible flowers.



Everything You Need to Know About Edible Flowers but Were Afraid to Ask

Written by **Barbara Kelley**

Edible flowers were all the range in the 90s. You could hardly go to a restaurant without seeing them sprinkled all over the plate as a garnish. I just had to have them for the Garden Muse Tea, but what did I know about edible flowers?

I know one thing I want to share right up front: *not all flowers are edible*. In fact, some are poisonous. Don't assume if a dish in a restaurant is garnished with a flower that the flower is edible. Do not purchase flowers to eat from florists or roadside stands; grow them yourself or buy them from a reputable horticultural vendor. They have to be grown without any pesticides and in a perfectly-Ph-balanced soil.

Enough scare tactics. I purchased my edible flowers from Gourmet Sweet Botanicals, an online store at www.GourmetSweetBotanicals.com. They were fresh, gorgeous and, most of all, safe to eat. I chose the Premium Flowers Mix. The description on their website read: "Elegant assortment of edible flowers with full array of colors; fragrant, colorful, and versatile; an extraordinary garnish for any entree or dessert; create beautiful presentations on multiple dishes with this amazing collection!"

I was not disappointed. The flowers by FedEx with three small ice packs and were visually appealing. Here are a few things I learned about specific edible flowers and my experience with them.

Marigold—These familiar flowers are common in flower beds because their blooms are vibrant yellow, orange, and red. Who would have known they have a citrus flavor? In a bold move to prove to a guest that the flowers were, indeed, edible, I popped a marigold in my mouth, chewed, and swallowed. I rather liked its zing. And, I did this all without wincing.

Nasturtium—These red, yellow and orange flowers were tasty and "peppery" and worked well with the tea sandwiches.

Orchid—Nibbling on these bright pinkish-purple flowers with their mildly sweet crunch gives one a sense of exquisiteness.

Pansy—These ubiquitous spring annuals are a spectacular combination of colors: purple, blue, yellow, orange, lavender, and violet. These silky flowers were surprisingly bland, which makes them a safe choice for those timid souls wondering if they should take a tea sandwich. Any flavor the pansies had was masked with Alouette® cheese on the sandwiches. Pansies will always be on my must-have list.

Viola—Their purple with yellow and blue hues was striking. They had a mild taste with a hint of tartness. They are recommended for cheesecakes, desserts, salads, or for floating on drinks.

Snapdragon—These unusually-shaped flowers have a bitter-tart flavor much like radicchio, and their odd shape added dimension to the tea sandwiches. Our 13-year-old son wanted to try one when they arrived and created a lot of drama around the tasting. Well, he won't eat radicchio, either.

Rose—Gourmet Sweet Botanicals sent small rose blossoms but it was the one big, fat rose in the middle of the package that made me laugh. I had visions of chomping on it at the end of the day, leaning in the corner with a glass of wine while others looked at me like I was a nut-case. (Kind of like Daryl Hannah in the movie *Splash*, when she ate the lobster whole, shell and all.) Roses are 95 percent water and, therefore, low in calories. Thank goodness because something had to be low calories that day! They also contain Vitamin C and fibers, so eat up. **CHM**

Tablescaping Your Garden Muse Tea Party

Think outdoors—set up your tables and chairs along a shaded portico, lawn, or deck. Your garden or backyard can provide a leafy and lush backdrop.

The Displays

We used standard six-foot folding tables, white tablecloths, and yards of wide burlap for a rustic touch. For the tea sandwiches, we decorated a pre-made cardboard cupcake stand with fabric and ribbon, and topped it with a ceramic potting-shed candleholder. Colorful flower-shaped platters and chargers held the appetizers. Some dishes were elevated on small balsa-wood crates to add varying heights to the display.

Decorating Your Tables

You can even use edible flowers in your menu! Bright green paper plates and botanical print cocktail napkins will echo the garden theme. Try new and clean gardening tools as whimsical serving pieces: a hand spade can be used for potato salad; a soil sifter is a dandy ice-scooper.

Add a floral touch with LED flower lights draped around the tables and eating spaces, or scatter silk (or real) flowers along table surfaces. Use seed packets from a local garden shop or nursery for colorful accents. Gardening gloves, a garden hat and clean garden tools add a “potting bench” look to the table. A large ceramic urn filled with artificial pussy willow branches or other “greenery,” interspersed with battery-operated LED lights, acts as a statement piece.

Get Creative—Imagine and Repurpose!

Visit your local craft store for inspiration and inexpensive decorating touches. Home Goods, TJMaxx, and Marshall’s are also great for garden-related and entertaining items (seed trays, wood crates, bread baskets, bowls, serving platters, obelisks, lanterns, vases, tablecloths and decorations).

Last...have a contingency plan in case the weather turns showery! **CHM**



Written by **Barbara Kelley**

Styling by **Cindy Dyer** and **Gina Lewis**

Photography by **Cindy Dyer**

Summer Tablescapes

The staples of summer—sunshine, gardens, birds, the seashore—can be the inspiration for your tables. Whether eating indoors or out, let summer's bounty grace your tabletops to welcome your family or guests.

Digress from the typical matching set of dishes and a centerpiece. Find one inspiration piece to drive your scheme—a plate, napkin, candle, flower, plant, seashell, and go from there. Be bold when it comes to mixing patterns and contrasting colors. Yellow is a happy color like the sunshine, use a lot of it.

Look to the outdoors and what you can borrow. Fresh herbs, flowers, ferns and even tree branches can add green to your table's palette. Cut or buy a bouquet of summer flowers—sunflowers, zenias, snapdragons, gerberas, daisies—and cut their stems down to put in low clay or glass pots for the table. Accent the flower pots with fresh mint.

Pack a Picnic

Take your dinner on the road for an outdoor concert or dinner by the lake. Nowadays there is a plethora of insulated picnic carriers and ice packs to keep the food cold. Keeping it simple is always best. Pack a pretty tablecloth to spread the food on. Pack clean-up materials, trash bag, insect repellent or citronella candle, and a blanket to sit on. Try these easy-to-carry picnic foods that don't need extensive refrigeration.

Baked or fried chicken, good eaten cold

Cold shrimp, cooked and peeled

Bread

Cheese

Olives

Fruits

Cookies

Throw some whimsy out there and see what happens. Set a table (indoors or out) that says "Welcome, we're glad you're here." **CHM**

Get the look!

1. Reversible picnic quilt (Williams-Sonoma)
2. Hemstitched white napkins (Pottery Barn)
3. Wine glasses (IKEA)
4. Fiddlehead flatware (Pottery Barn)
5. Metal flower napkin rings (Pier 1 Imports)
6. Blue plates by Gibson (Garden Ridge Pottery)

Picnic in July





Poppy Fields Forever

Get the look!

1. Handmade tablecloth (Hancock Fabrics)
2. M Studios salad bowl (Home Goods)
3. Opificio Etico, made in Italy (Home Goods)
4. Scalloped metallic green chargers (Michaels)
5. Wine glasses (IKEA)
6. Gold napkins (Home Goods)
7. Handmade whitewashed pine trough with oregano
8. Burlap runner, cut to size and frayed on all four sides (Joann Fabrics)

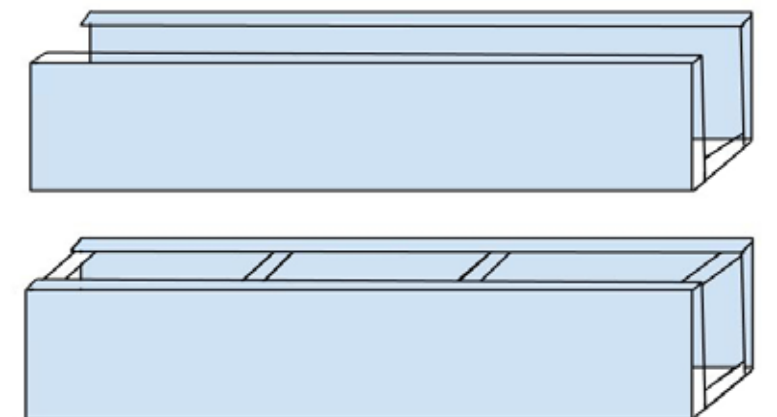
Centerpiece Box

Written and designed by **Michael Schwehr**

My wife needed a series of centerpieces for several tables at an upcoming party and had a vague outline for how they would look. Because she wanted to be able to add cut plants in water, it had to have pockets in it that could accommodate quart-size freezer bags for water, or could hold pockets of sand for pillar candles.

DIRECTIONS

- Cut three 1" x 4" pine boards to two feet long. These will form the bottom and two long sides.
- Cut four identical-size pieces of 1" x 4" board to 2.75" long to serve as two dividers and the two short sides.
- Nail the long sides over the edges of the bottom so that the bottom will not be seen.
- Nail the long side pieces in place so that both the bottom board and the edges of the long side boards will rest on the table when assembled. The four identical pieces will fit as two short end pieces and two dividers forming 7" pockets.
- Hold the short pieces in place by nailing the end pieces and dividers in place through one long side first, with the box on its side, then flipping the box and nailing the pieces in place through the other long side. If any single piece is nailed in place through both long sides before the others, then the long sides cannot be spread out enough to easily insert the other short pieces into place.
- Once the box was assembled, it was painted white and the edges were lightly sanded to give it a distressed look. **CHM**





Seaside Supper

Get the look!

1. White tablecloth (Home Goods)
2. Basketweave charger (Pier 1 Imports)
3. Primagera dinner plate, made in Portugal (Home Goods)
4. Primagera salad plate, made in Portugal (Home Goods)
5. Fishnet and shells (Michaels)
6. Driftwood candleholder (Home Goods)
7. Handpoured graduated candle from Decorware (Home Goods)
8. Striped glasses (Home Goods)
9. White tablecloth (Bed, Bath & Beyond)

It's Too Hot to Eat

Written by **Barbara Kelley**

I remember growing up in western Pennsylvania. The summers were dreadfully hot only for a short period so no one had air-conditioned homes. On those hot days after we got home from the pool, my mother would say, "It's too hot to eat!"

That meant dinner would be all fresh vegetables from my dad's garden. I remember the succulent tomatoes we would eat right off the vine like an apple, with the juice dripping the whole way down our tummies. And the kids debated: is tomato a fruit or a vegetable? And, dad would say: "These tomatoes are so good, THEY'LL DRIVE YOU NUTS!"

Hot Town, Summer in the City

Fast forward to now. It's summer in the Washington, D.C., area, and it's hot and humid. The temperature is about 104 degrees when you factor in the humidity. I agree with mom, it's too hot to eat, so this is what I am doing for tonight's weeknight dinner after work:

- Fresh sliced tomatoes from the local farmer's market. (I can't grow my own because the squirrels and deer eat them.) **Tomato tips:** Don't ever refrigerate a tomato! If the tomato reaches the point you have to refrigerate it, then eat it. Also, consider peeling your summer tomatoes. A good, ripe tomato skin will peel off easily if you hold it in the palm of your hand. There is nothing like a peeled tomato. Don't ask me why, but my grandmother peeled her tomatoes and so do I.
- Basil from my herb garden plus a taste test of lemon basil and cinnamon basil a colleague gave me at work
- Sliced fresh mozzarella cheese
- A freshly baked, warm baguette from, believe it or not, Safeway (it's on the way home)
- A little olive oil and a little balsamic vinegar, salt and fresh ground pepper
- The drink: Sprodkas (my own creation, named by my husband, Bill. People now ask for them by name when they come to our home.)

Not only is it too hot to eat, it's too hot to think. So, I'll just say "Bon Appetit," as Julia Child would say. **CHM**



THE ARTIST

Shoe-la-la!

A children's book inspired interior design artists to create a room with a certain child in mind.

Written by **Barbara Kelley** • Photography by **Cindy Dyer**

Do you remember Imelda Marcos? She was a politician and wife of Ferdinand Marcos, former president of the Philippines. She and her husband led a corrupt government and were hounded out of the country in a popular uprising in 1986. Although this was an historic political uprising, what fixated the media watchers was Imelda's extravagance, including her collection of 2,700 pairs of shoes.

Most women thought, "So what's so odd about 2,700 pairs of shoes?" Husbands everywhere began calling their wives "Imelda." Her name remains synonymous with women's love and passion for shoes, shoes, and more shoes.

Starting Young

Once upon a time, there was a little three-year-old girl named Bridget who loved books. But one book in particular struck her fancy. *Shoe-la-la!*, by Karen Beaumont, with illustrations by LeUyen Pham, was her bedtime favorite.

continued on page 72

Oh-La-La!



THE ARTIST

"Read it one more time, Mommy," was the constant refrain. Not only did Bridget love the book, she, being a girl, grew to love shoes, too. In fact, according to her mother, Susan McKinney, the more shoes the better.

Being curious, I bought the book. I can see why it's a little girl's favorite. It quickly became a favorite of lots of little ladies. Beautifully illustrated and with clever rhymes that go right to the heart of a girl, it's a story about four little girls. They go shoe shopping and can't make a decision on what to buy, so the mini mademoiselles go home and create their own shoes.

**Shoes with zippers,
Shoes with straps,
Shoes with buckles,
Shoes with taps....**

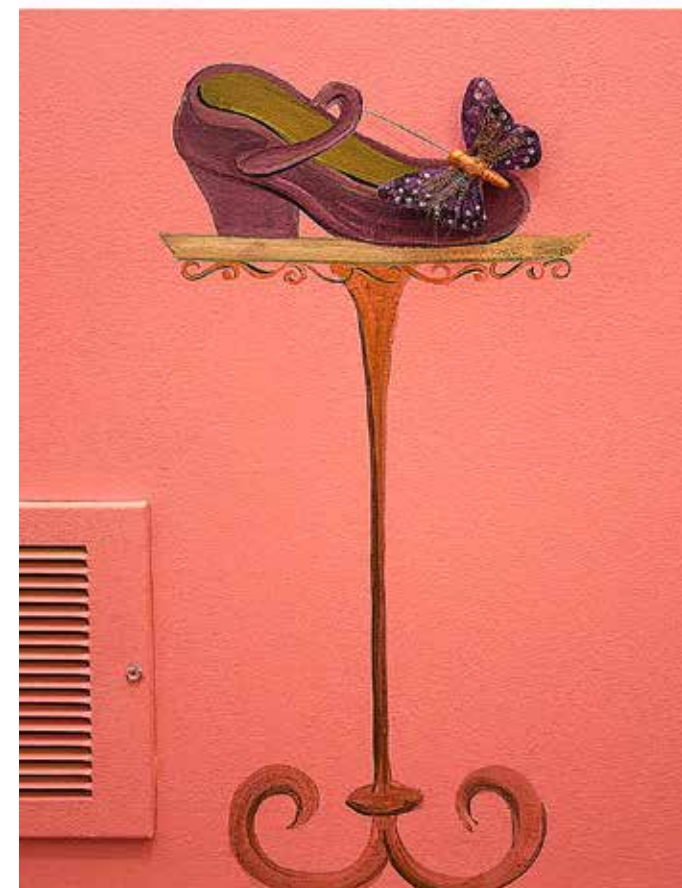
**Fancy ribbons.
Filly lace.
Shoe-la-la!
We love this place!**

The Idea

Inspired by the book and Bridget's fascination with shoes, Interior Designer Cathy Gilg wanted to bring the pages to life for Bridget. Cathy teamed up with Melinda Dishong, an artist with Shackelford Decorative Painting, and the duo put their creative minds to work to bring *Shoe-la-la!* to life. The result is a playful feast for the imagination and the eyes. Girls of all ages can't help but devour each shoe with anticipation of the next one.

A backdrop of pink was the palette for Melinda to create the shoes. A lace border with ribbon woven throughout adorned the walls at

continued on page 74



THE ARTIST

chair-rail height. Pearlescent tone-on-tone stripes were featured as the technique for the top half of the bedroom walls.

Melinda's creative spark came from Bridget's favorite shoes. She drew the shoes freehand on the wall with acrylic paints, and used her imagination and creativity to fill in the rest. Melinda said, "Bridget's spirited personality was a huge inspiration in the design element of the room."

Cathy Gilg had the idea to make the shoe wall interactive, so Bridget could move the shoes' bling around. They used gemstones, butterflies, trinkets and other decorations and affixed them with Velcro® and sticky pads for easy removal and replacing.

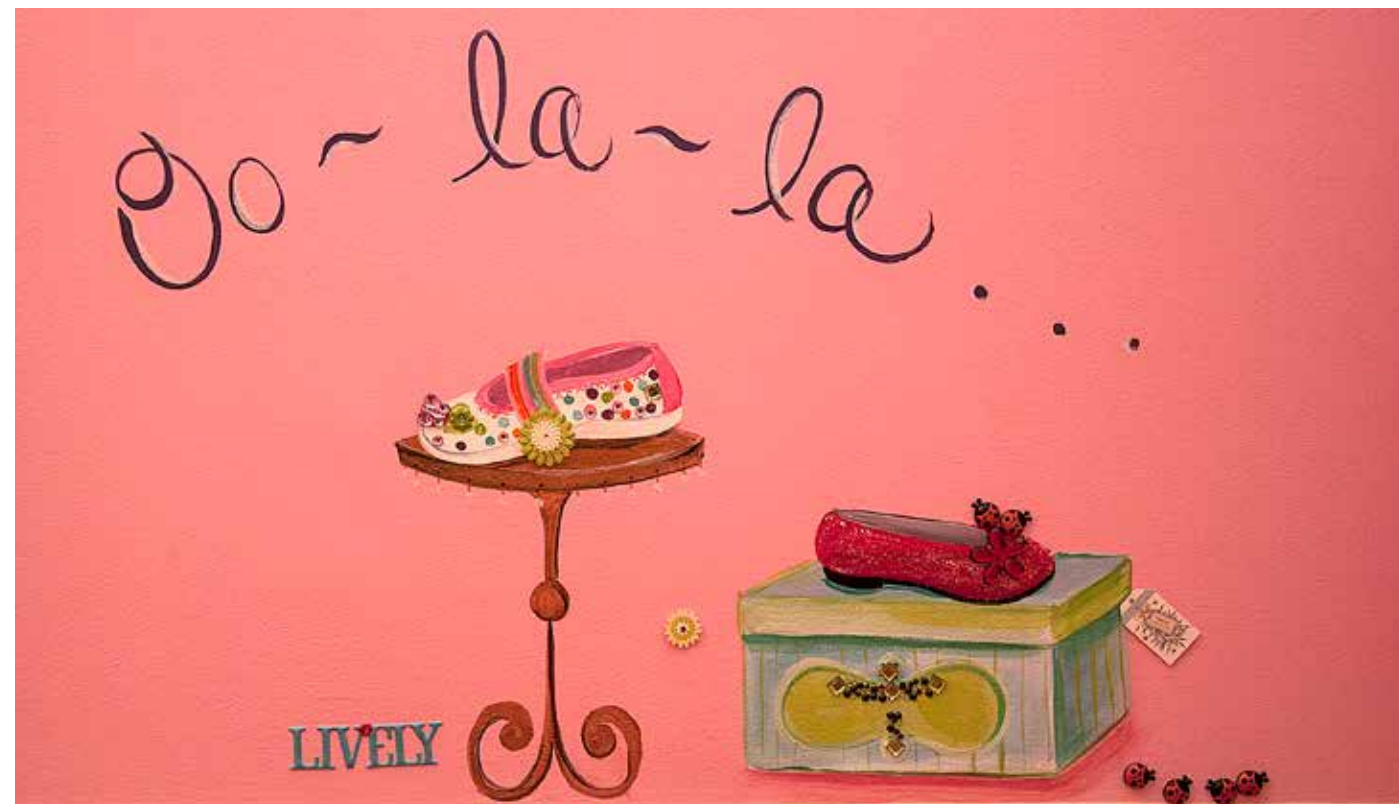
"We Love This Place"

Melinda and Cathy immersed themselves in a little girl's imagination and created a spectacular gallery of shoes—all meant to captivate girls of all ages who walked into the room. What was Bridget's reaction when she saw their masterpiece? She identified the drawings on the wall and found the



ones that were fashioned after her actual shoes. She went to her closet and put the pairs of identical shoes under the drawings and said, "They are my real shoes!" Not a day goes by that Bridget, now five, doesn't move the shoe bling around. Like the girls in the book, Bridget is making her own shoes—shoes with bling and shoes with zing. **CHM**

Shackelford Decorative Painting creates custom decorative painted/textured finishes for walls and ceilings, murals, cabinet refinishing and color consultations. E-mail Debbye Shackelford at wgshack@zoominternet.net or call 724-538-4161.



Artist Melinda Dishong was inspired by Bridget's personality when she painted the shoe vignettes.



ALL THAT GLITTERS

Bridget's room has lots of girlie touches like this elaborate glass chandelier that hangs over her bed.

BRIDGET'S FAVORITE COLOR? NEED YOU ASK?

Pink is the color of the day in Bridget's room. Sugar and spice and everything pink, cerise, blush, rose and fuschia.



That 1980s House

A Bathroom Gets a New Lease on Life



HOME

Written by **Barbara Kelley** · Photography by **Cindy Dyer**

You can often recognize homes built in the 1980s by their dark, cramped kitchens and bathrooms. This homeowner had pretty much renovated everything in the house to bring it up to date, but, one hall bathroom was lacking that certain up-to-date something. The homeowner was also lacking the certain funds for a total renovation—meaning gutting it, and installing new tilework, tub and shower. The age of the house made installing a new sink and vanity a necessity, but the bathroom still looked uninviting. Here's what our clever and enterprising homeowner did to give it a fresh, clean, updated look.

1. Re-grout the original tilework. The tile was still in good shape but the grout was dirty and stained. This can be a do-it-yourself project if you have the patience to scrape out the old grout. Use a special scraping tool and buy unsanded grout and follow the directions. You can give your tile a second life by doing this. There are many DIY websites on re-grouting tile.

2. Install beadboard wainscoting. Beadboard is an eye-pleasing design element that mimics the classic look of tongue and groove paneling. Here, she decided to take it from ceiling to floor and paint it using Benjamin Moore®'s Lenox Tan, semi-gloss. The walls were originally painted a similar color but the inexpensive paint didn't stand up to the steam. The beadboard was installed with liquid nails for paneling (wood and foam molding adhesive) to withstand moisture and mold. You can also install it half-way or two-thirds the way up the wall. Use a molding to finish it off.

3. Remove tile and install baseboard. The tiles along the baseboard looked shoddy, so they were removed and replaced with wooden baseboard.

4. Install crown molding. To finish off the beadboard, install crown molding at the ceiling.

5. Change up the color palette: For a Nautica®-brand-look, she went with green, blue, red and

khaki towels. She replaced the striped shower curtain with the clean look of a waffle-white, which opened up the room. The green bathmat is memory foam HD.™

6. Hang a hook rack for towels. This leaves room for more towels to hang.

7. Keep in mind that little things mean a lot. Storage space is at a premium, so a basket holds hand towels and wash cloths. A glass jar holds the soap supply and looks nifty. An inspiration quote art piece adds a whimsical element to the room.

Good News for DIYers

Because no plumbing was harmed (or moved) in this project, it can be a do-it-yourself project if you're a little bit handy. If not, try doing what you can and finding a reliable handyman (or handygal) to do the things you can't. This little project took two days and was done by Heber Zelaya. The owner was so pleased with her new bathroom and asked if *Celebrate Home Magazine* could give "Herb" a plug, as he does all kinds of projects, big and small, in the Washington, D.C., area. He can be reached at heberzelaya@yahoo.com. **CHM**

Design Hint for Elevator-Shaft-Sized Bathrooms

Interior Designer Cathleen Gilg suggests you can "raise the ceiling" in a small bathroom by darkening the ceiling and adding some molding. Here, she darkened the ceiling with dark sienna-colored wallpaper six inches from the ceiling and added molding.



Written by **Barbara Kelley**
Photography by **Cindy Dyer**

Rest for the Weary

Creating a Welcoming Guestroom

The best way to see if your guest room is hospitable is to sleep in it yourself. Go ahead, spend the night! Not everyone has a dedicated room just for guests, but, if you did, what would you put in it? If you have a futon in your home office, or your kids clear out of their room for the night, there's no reason why you can't provide a space worthy of your traveler. These home touches will make the stay a more convenient and comfortable one.

- a carafe of water and cup within easy reach of the bed (a water bottle and cup will also work)
- an alarm clock
- a reading lamp
- a bouquet of fresh flowers
- extra pillows and blankets
- selection of magazines and books you are willing to lend in case your guests want to take them home to finish
- a writing desk with paper, pens, stamps, and the Wi-Fi password
- a luggage rack
- a tissue box
- a waste can with plastic bags
- a mirror
- Add a whimsical touch like this clock. It can only be read in the mirror, (as shown in the photo) and is inscribed in German "In Bayern gehen die Uhren anders." (In Bavaria, time goes backwards.)





Written by **Becka Davis** · Photography by **Cindy Dyer**

Ode to a Chicken

She was a faithful layer and loved to follow me around when there was promise of a tasty treat—worms, seeds of a green pepper, or a morsel of watermelon or corn. In the fall and spring, I would don my green Wellies, grab the shovel and go to the mulch pile to dig up worms for “the girls,” as I fondly call my chickens. Even though they are treated much better than most backyard poultry (we joke they have a summer and winter home), I liked to let them be “free roaming” hens every day. After all, a good diet produces good eggs. While they have ample space in their caged-in area, there is no greenery or worms, the staples for happy and healthy chickens. When I open their door, they fly out, stretch their wings, have a dust bath, and definitely find grubs, worms and deer ticks in the yard. Chickens also eat stink bugs.

Beloved Annie

My daughter had the day off from school and let the girls out around noon. She was out there most of the time with them until about 1:30 p.m., when she came in to get a glass of water. I was upstairs enjoying an early afternoon nap and heard some racket but largely ignored it. I have raced out to them before only to find that they were just laying eggs and were letting me know they were extremely proud.

My daughter heard the noise too, and rushed out, but feathers were already all over the place. The scene didn’t look like a normal egg-laying event. We first saw the fox lurking behind the

compost pile a year ago when my daughter went to let them out in the morning. The compost pile is next to the chicken coop. Obviously, she didn’t let them out that day. This time, she saw an animal that looked to be either a coyote or fox scampering away. They don’t call them wily coyotes or sly foxes for nothing. The helpless victim was Annie—one of our four Red Star hens. Annie had been brutally attacked.

How it Began

I never wanted to get chickens because I knew I would become too attached to them. Growing up in Fairfax County, Virginia, we had a chicken for seven years. Her name was Helen. She would lay eggs faithfully and we would let her roam all day until she would fly up into the kitchen window sill as a signal that she wanted to be put back in her cage. Helen would take dust baths near me when I was outside sunbathing. Also, having a cat, I was accustomed to stroking my pet, so I attempted it with Helen. I discovered that chickens do not like to be touched. It stresses them out.

Many years later, our next-door neighbors ordered 25 chicks from a farm in Iowa and were desperately trying to give some away. My husband, in a conversation over the fence, agreed to take eight, two of which we gave to my brother. My husband built a cage for our new flock that was impervious to foxes, coyotes or hawks. Unfortunately, they outgrew it quickly. Even worse, the cage was at a low point on our property so the

continued on page 82

GARDENING



chickens were standing in water after the infamous flood of 2011.

After their first winter, I elicited the help of my brother to build another chicken coop. This one had three nesting boxes and, since chickens sleep on a perch, this one also had a perch made out of a tree branch where they could sleep at night. We put the coop close to our back door for ease of access in the winter. So that they could have a run, we also enclosed a large area around the coop with horse wire and the second "Fort Knox" was built

Missing Annie

Today, after a few tears, we put Annie in a Boden hot-pink shoe box and buried her in the back yard. We will miss the beautiful eggs she gave us—large, brown and many times with double yolks. Her sisters—Carmen, Giselda, Rapsallion, Big Red, and Little Chicken—will have one less beak to compete with for food. I will have a little less mulch to sweep back into my ever-expanding flower bed every evening.

The good news, my daughter reminded me, is that our friends down the street have new chicks that will probably be looking for a home in about two months. The bad news is that I could turn into a crazy chicken lady, and that is something I don't want to happen. **CHM**

Above: Becka says her fresh eggs are superior in taste and her chickens are fed no hormones. Below: The egg factory girls are hard at work.



Got Chickens?

Written by **Sophia M. Stadnyk**

Urban dwellers are increasingly being drawn to the pleasures of growing their own vegetables, foraging for edible greens in parks and open spaces (see Perennial Vegetable Spring in the Spring 2013 *Celebrate Home Magazine*), and, for the most adventurous, raising backyard poultry for eggs and meat, or as pets. If you're intrigued by the Backyard Chicken Movement, look into the many resources available online. A few to get you started include:

Urban Chickens at www.urbanchickens.org ("dedicated to the practice of backyard chicken keeping in urban and suburban environments"), has a lot of interesting information, including an Urban Chicken Google Map and FAQ.

The City Chicken by Katy Skinner at www.thecitychicken.com ("a web site to encourage city folks to take the plunge into poultry!") has lovely photos, among other things.

Chicken Coop Checklist at www.urbanchickens.net ("wish I'd built it that way the first time").

Backyard Poultry Magazine (www.backyardpoultrymag.com) posts several articles for enthusiasts; current offerings include "Confessions of a Chickenaholic, by Cindy."

My Pet Chicken (www.mypetchicken.com) has all sorts of info and supplies, including chicken diapers for indoor chicks (five sizes, in pink, red polka dot, or blue daisy).

There are also online forums and meeting groups. **Note:** Not all areas permit keeping poultry in suburban or urban areas—check with your municipality first about any necessary permits and other legal requirements to make sure your chickens aren't rogues or outlaws. **CHM**



Egg-xactly What Does “Free-Range” Mean?

Written by **Sophia M. Stadnyk**

Eggs are a nutritional powerhouse in a low calorie package: according to the American Egg Board, one large egg has over six grams of protein and “almost every essential vitamin and mineral needed by humans.” Yet an egg weighs in at a modest 70 calories and just 4.5 grams of fat (7 percent of the daily value).

Backyard poultry enthusiasts state that fresh, pastured eggs are superior in taste and nutrition to conventionally-produced or other “supermarket” eggs. One source claims a study shows pastured hens laid eggs that had a third less cholesterol, two-thirds more vitamin A, twice the omega-3 fatty acids, and three times more vitamin E, than commercially-farmed eggs (see Meet Real Free-Range Eggs, by Cheryl Long and Tabitha Alterman, *Mother Earth News*, October/November 2007).

For those of us who can’t realistically resort to having our own hens (and don’t know someone who does), the Egg Nutrition Center (overseen by the U.S. Department of Agriculture) offers these definitions of egg-carton labeling terms to help consumers in choosing eggs:

Cage-Free/Free-Roaming Eggs

“Eggs laid by hens at indoor floor operations, sometimes called free-roaming. The hens may roam in a building, room or open area, usually in a barn or poultry house, and have unlimited access to fresh food and water, while some may also forage for food if they are allowed outdoors. Cage-free systems vary and include barn-raised and free-range hens...”

Free-Range Eggs

“Eggs produced by hens that have access to outdoors in accordance with weather, environmental or state laws. The birds have continuous access to fresh food and water and may forage for wild plants and insects. They are also provided floor space, nesting space and perches.”



Pastured Eggs

“Pastured eggs originate from hens free to roam and forage on a maintained pasture area. The vegetarian diet may be supplemented with grain. The hens are moved to various pasture areas to maintain vegetation. USDA does not recognize a labeling definition for pastured eggs as no standards are established...”

Organic Eggs

“Eggs that are laid by cage-free, free-roaming hens that are raised on certified organic feed and have access to the outdoors. The hens’ feed is grown without most synthetic pesticides, fungicides, herbicides or fertilizers, and 100% of the agricultural ingredients must be certified organic. Antibiotics and growth hormones are prohibited (although these will not be found in any shell eggs). Producers with more than \$5,000 in annual sales of organic eggs must be certified by a USDA accredited certifier. The egg carton must bear the name of the certifier.”

(See <http://www.eggnutritioncenter.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/04/ENC-Egg-Labeling-Guide-PDF-proof.pdf> and the USDA for additional information on product labeling.)

Now that you’ve come home with some lovely eggs, what will you do with them? For me, nothing brings out the unadorned glory of a fresh egg better than a soft-boiled egg, with some toast fingers for dipping. **CHM**

Boiled Egg with Toast Fingers

INGREDIENTS

1 large, fresh egg (a large is a two-ounce egg; adjust cooking times for larger or smaller eggs)
1 piece of good toasting bread, whole wheat or white
Salt

DIRECTIONS

Keep the egg at room temperature for a few minutes, as an egg straight out of the fridge is more likely to crack when you place it in hot water. Set your timer or cell phone for five minutes (six if you prefer a firmer, not totally runny, yolk). Bring water to a simmer in a small pan, large enough to cover the egg. Carefully lower the egg into the water, using a spoon. Start your timer or cell phone, or check the clock. Keep the water at a simmer, not a full, rolling boil. When the five or six minutes are up, take the pan off the heat, drain the water, and run some cool water into the pan. This will stop the egg from cooking further.

Make your toast and cut it into four or five slices or “fingers.” Place your egg in an egg cup, cut or peel the top off, sprinkle it with a little salt, and get ready to dunk your toast into the luscious yummy yolk.

Yield: 1





© www.photos.com

GARDENING

Written by **Maria Hufnagel**

I planted my first garden at age six. My parents helped me and my sister split it in half: I planted vegetables in my half, and my sister planted flowers in hers. We even had a miniature shovel and rake set, which made the process almost possible. My dad chose this activity for us because it was good for the environment. In retrospect, it was probably also an activity we could do without causing any serious damage.

I had all but forgotten about my training when, a few years ago, my aunt gave me an herb-growing kit, which included seeds and three pots. Fortunately, the kit was practically foolproof, and that summer I grew enough basil to make more pesto than I knew what to do with. But, with only a small apartment balcony, I didn't have the option of expanding my crops. I accepted the limitations imposed on me by my apartment and dreamed of the day that I could expand my reach.

After four years downtown, I moved back to the suburbs. For the first time in my adult life I have a yard, and with grass instead of tiles. As my first winter in the suburbs tiptoed into spring, I knew that I had to take advantage of the opportunity and plant a vegetable garden—both for my benefit, and for that of mother earth.

The Motive

Have you ever made a deliciously fresh summer meal, such as tabbouleh, full of tomatoes, cucumbers, parsley and mint? In my experience, a week of a glorious leftover tabbouleh phase ends with the discovery of half a bunch of parsley, a few soggy tomatoes, and a quarter of a mushy cucumber all taking up valuable space in the crisper. The vegetables go straight into the trash, and even if any of the herbs are still good, I'm so parsleyed out that it doesn't seem worth it to whip up another dish based solely on its parsley content. It's a great problem to have, of course, but one

that I know all too well: I have fresh produce, and I waste it.

It's bad enough that I toss out food that would have been fine had I used it a week earlier. Aside from wasting money and valuable resources, I know that I hurt the environment a tiny bit every time I throw away produce. Wasting fresh produce means wasting the packaging too, which is, more often than not, plastic. There's also the fuel that was used to transport my food from a farm somewhere unknown all the way to my refrigerator. Add all of that up, and it's not just throwing out a few tomatoes or some parsley. This waste was enough to make me think twice before buying fresh produce in the first place.

So, I decided to grow my own food.

The Plan

As spring poked its head around the corner, I had big dreams. My modest little yard was going to house the greatest DIY vegetable garden that my little townhome community had ever seen. I was itching to reach my yard's full potential, and I was excited about growing my own sustainable menu. With a new seed kit and a ridiculous variety of vegetable seeds, organic and conventional, I was ready to never buy produce again.

Of course, it if was that easy, we would all do it, right?

I think back on that day that I first stood in the seed aisle, considering all the combinations of food I could grow. I used zero gardening logic; the different climate and care needs of each variety could not be farther from my thoughts. All I wanted was to grow every single vegetable I would otherwise need to buy.

Because tomatoes are my favorite to eat and my least favorite to buy, I bought three varieties: Roma, Beefsteak, and red cherry. I also purchased

continued on page 88

GARDENING

three types of peppers: Big Dipper, hybrid mix, and red bell peppers. Spinach, lettuce, and rosemary rounded out the bunch.

My seed starter tray allowed me to plant 72 seeds at a time. It also came with an amazing potting mix, the type that expands when water is added. I planted between six and twelve of each type of seed, figuring that planting more would put the odds in my favor. I had intended to buy lights and grow my plants indoors from start to finish. Natural light did not seem like the most reliable choice, especially in February. However, the allure of consistent light in a controlled climate gave way to the allure of a cheap and easy solution, and I decided to give natural light a chance.

The Reality

Despite the cloudy weather, my seeds started to sprout after about a week. The first phase of cultivation ended with a bit of an imbalance. I had about 12 tomato plants, six pepper plants, and nothing else. As uneven as the variety was, I was still thrilled to start thinking about replanting my sprouts.

I decided to grow my plants in containers to move them between inside and outside more easily, allowing them to adjust slowly as the weather grew warmer. A few seedlings crumbled in my hands as I was transplanting them, and I made a mental note to water the soil and pack it more tightly next time. Still, the majority of the plants transplanted well, and I found myself cramming pots onto a shelf in front of the sliding glass door that leads into my backyard.

Long after they deserved to be in the ground, the tomatoes were still in tiny pots on the windows, crawling over one another. After pulling the vines apart, I used bamboo skewers as stakes to support them. When I was done, I had a handful of six-inch tall vines. It was easy to be proud of my work. I planted another round of seeds once I had transplanted all of the survivors from my starter kit. This time, I bought a new soil mixture to use in my tray, a concentrated brick of coconut fiber mix. It was easy to handle and environmentally friendly, but it was also full of

strands that had the consistency of something between string and hay.

My experience with the second round of crops was an exact replica as the first: an abundance of tomatoes and peppers. I transplanted the younger sprouts and found myself with an overabundance of potted crops. It was not the variety I had hoped for, but you can never have too many tomatoes, right?

Outside temperatures finally hovered above 50 degrees in mid-April. I was overjoyed to think about relocating my budding agricultural largess. My spinach, lettuce and rosemary seeds hadn't fared well indoors, and I guessed that it was because the weather was too warm. I planted my final round of seeds (omitting tomatoes and peppers, naturally) and this time, I moved my starter kit outside. It took a few weeks, but sure enough, I peered down to see green seedlings in the rosemary and spinach cells.

Fortunately, the tray has a clear plastic roof, offering protection from both the wind and animals. Squirrels and birds help themselves to anything on my porch. By the time spring was in full bloom, I had way too many plants in all different life stages vying for space in a single window, and I knew that they would be so much happier and healthier outside—provided I found a way to keep them safe.

I had nurtured each tiny plant so carefully that I could not stomach the risk of moving them outside without the utmost security in place. I found a solution with the help of my boyfriend. He built me a high-walled garden box, complete with chicken wire along the sides and top. I chose the spot in the yard that seemed likely to get the most even sunlight. We prepared the soil and removed the existing weeds, then spread out a layer of drainage rocks.

I bought a pretty basic potting mix from the hardware store, and the only additional fertilizer I added was a few crushed eggshells that I mixed into the soil. Soil absorbs calcium from eggshells, plus the sharp edges create a natural barrier against pests.

continued on page 90



Maria opted for container planting, adding a trellis for this climbing plant. Photo © Maria Hufnagel



Maria found a solution using this homemade, high-walled garden box. She adds flowers around the crate for a "soft look." Photo © Maria Hufnagel



The lily bulbs grew very quickly in the containers. Photo © Maria Hufnagel



Eureka! The vegetable seeds are beginning to sprout. Photo © Maria Hufnagel

GARDENING

In the early stages of the transition outdoors, I put the tomatoes in the garden box while they were still in their pots so they could adapt to the weather and sunlight slowly, and I brought them in at night when it got chilly. This also bought me more time to think of the absolute best crop arrangement. I brainstormed blueprints for my plant arrangement in the garden, worried about giving their roots room to grow and the air room to circulate. Eventually I staggered them in rows.

The very last step was to plant a border of flowers around the garden box. My hope was that this would create an extra border from animals and weeds. I chose petunias in a vibrant magenta. The end result is a softer look, or just something a little bit less like a chicken coop. Which is good, because as my project neared completion, I remembered that at one point I had planned to paint and finish the wood panels on the box. But hey, this is agriculture, not a modeling contest.

The Results

After putting so much time and effort into a project like this, it's easy to forget that even if every single plant doesn't grow, it's still worth it. Everybody needs food, and if we all grew one item instead of buying it, the environment would be enormously grateful.

This experiment in sustainability was a huge success, although I ended up with less variety than I would have liked. I'm sure that my results can be attributed to my lack of research about the best crops for my climate and environment: something I can hopefully improve by next spring.

The purpose is not to drop everything and devote your life to promoting sustainability. The purpose is to think twice before you buy something you might be able to grow yourself. Even if still I have to buy lettuce (heavy packaging and all) I don't have to buy tomatoes. Well, not this summer. **CHM**



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Creating a

GARDENING

Fairy Garden

Written by **Kristen Clem** • Photography by **Dana Wolfred**

“Young or old, there’s still a glimmer of make-believe in all of us.”

I **do** believe in fairies...I **do** believe in fairies...I **do**!

Fyes pinched tightly closed, fists clenched in extreme concentration, I remember my six-year-old self desperately reciting this phrase, feeling whole-heartedly that I would see a real enchanted fairy if I just believed. Now, as an adult, I get enjoyment out of watching my niece, nephews, and friends’ children having the same intense excitement over imaginary creatures. I am reminded that young or old, there’s still a glimmer of make-believe that lives in each one of us.

During the summer months as you plant your flower beds and tend to your garden, might it be fun to set aside a little place for your imagination to gather? Here is a guide to creating your own summer fairy garden that can be enjoyed by children ages 3 to 103!

Supplies

- Fairy House
- Stones and pebbles
- Flowerpot saucer
- Found objects
- Miniature plants and flowers
- Gardening tools
- Imagination

Step One

Scout Your Location

This step is critical to enjoying your fairy garden all summer long. It is best to find a location that is secluded enough for fairies to feel safe to visit, but also accessible for you and youngsters to enjoy. Think under the shade of a tree or possibly a secluded spot of a flower bed.

For young children, it might be nice to place the garden near a window for them to watch in the evenings or on rainy days. Don’t have any landscaping to set your scene? No worries. Many fairies have found shelter in large flowerpots, planters, birdbaths and window boxes.

Step Two

Collect Your Supplies

Due to the recent popularity of fairy gardens, you are now able to purchase charming miniature houses, furniture, and vegetation online. But, fairies are instinctively drawn to creativity

continued on page 92



A little fairy hide-a-way is tucked into this landscaping border. Photo © Dana Wolfred



This little sprite likes to sit and think alongside her pebbly pool. Photo © Dana Wolfred

and imagination, so the more home-spun and inspired you can be, the better!

Start with the house. Fairies need a place to rest their wings when they come to visit, so this is a fairy garden staple. Small birdcages, birdhouses, and lanterns make great homes. Or, it might be fun for you or a child to paint an unfinished wooden house from a craft or hobby store. If you like a more natural look, you could create your own from twigs and materials found in your backyard.

Next, collect accessories for the garden that encourage fairies to relax and stay awhile. This is where the imagination of a child really comes into use. Small pebbles and stones from a craft store or your backyard are needed to create walking paths and borders. For a pond, use an empty flower pot saucer. Scour your home for trinkets and treasures to add to your garden. Turn wooden thread spools into tables, thimbles into flowerpots, old pencils into a picket fence, bottle caps become stepping stones...you get the idea.

Last, visit your local greenhouse and pick out some flowers, grasses and vegetation to enhance the fairy garden. Some fairy garden favorites are Irish moss, corkscrew grass, miniature ivy and ferns, dianthus, miniature roses and blue star creeper. It is also believed that fairies are drawn in by the smell of fragrant herbs, such as thyme and rosemary.

Step Three

Build Your Fairy Paradise

Now the real fun begins! First, place your fairy house in your chosen location, and then build out from there. Accessorize your garden with stone paths and places to relax. To make a pond, press a flowerpot saucer into the ground until the dirt is up to the edge. Fill the bottom with pebbles, cover the edge with a stone border, and fill the saucer with water.

Now, customize the space with your treasures to make it feel cozy, inviting, and homey. Lastly, fill in with your vegetation. You may want to use your plants to create a protective enclosed plot, or scatter them about for a more whimsical English garden look.

Step Four

Let the Magic Happen

Over the course of days and weeks as your garden begins to mature and bloom, keep a watchful eye out for fairies. It is thought that fairies are attracted to gardens that appear loved and well cared for, so be sure to water your flowers, prune your plants, and keep pathways tidy.

If you are doing this project with children, it might be fun to leave little treats and treasures in the garden to entice fairies to visit. Check your garden in the mornings when the dew is fresh, and, if you are lucky, you might be able to spot some evidence of over-night guests! **CHM**

Fairy Garden

HOW-TO

Written by **Cindy Dyer** • Photography by **Cindy Dyer**

Garden Photography

Capturing the beauty of your garden

Photography has been a passion for me since my high school days when I was the yearbook photographer, but it wasn't until about 10 years ago that I also got bitten by the gardening bug (figuratively) and combined the two endeavors. It was a match made in heaven!

Photography and gardens are a natural fit due to the variety of subjects, types of light, patterns and color palettes available. No matter the season, there is always something to photograph in the natural world, from a bird's eye view to a worm's eye view. Here, I share my tips for how I capture beautiful images in public gardens as well as my own backyard.

Read and Watch

If you have read photography how-to books before, they almost always begin with, "read the manual" or "get to know your camera." There is a reason for this. The more you know about what your camera can do for you, the more natural it will feel when you're shooting. You won't have to second-guess whether you're doing something right or not. Shooting will become second nature to you (I promise) and you can spend your time seeking out compelling subjects and composing thoughtful and memorable images. Read your manual in small chunks and have your camera nearby, so you can see where the controls and menus are.

There are so many informative and free videos online; most likely there are videos highlighting the features of your particular camera. Some are better than others, of course, but they can be an invaluable resource in your self-education as a photographer.

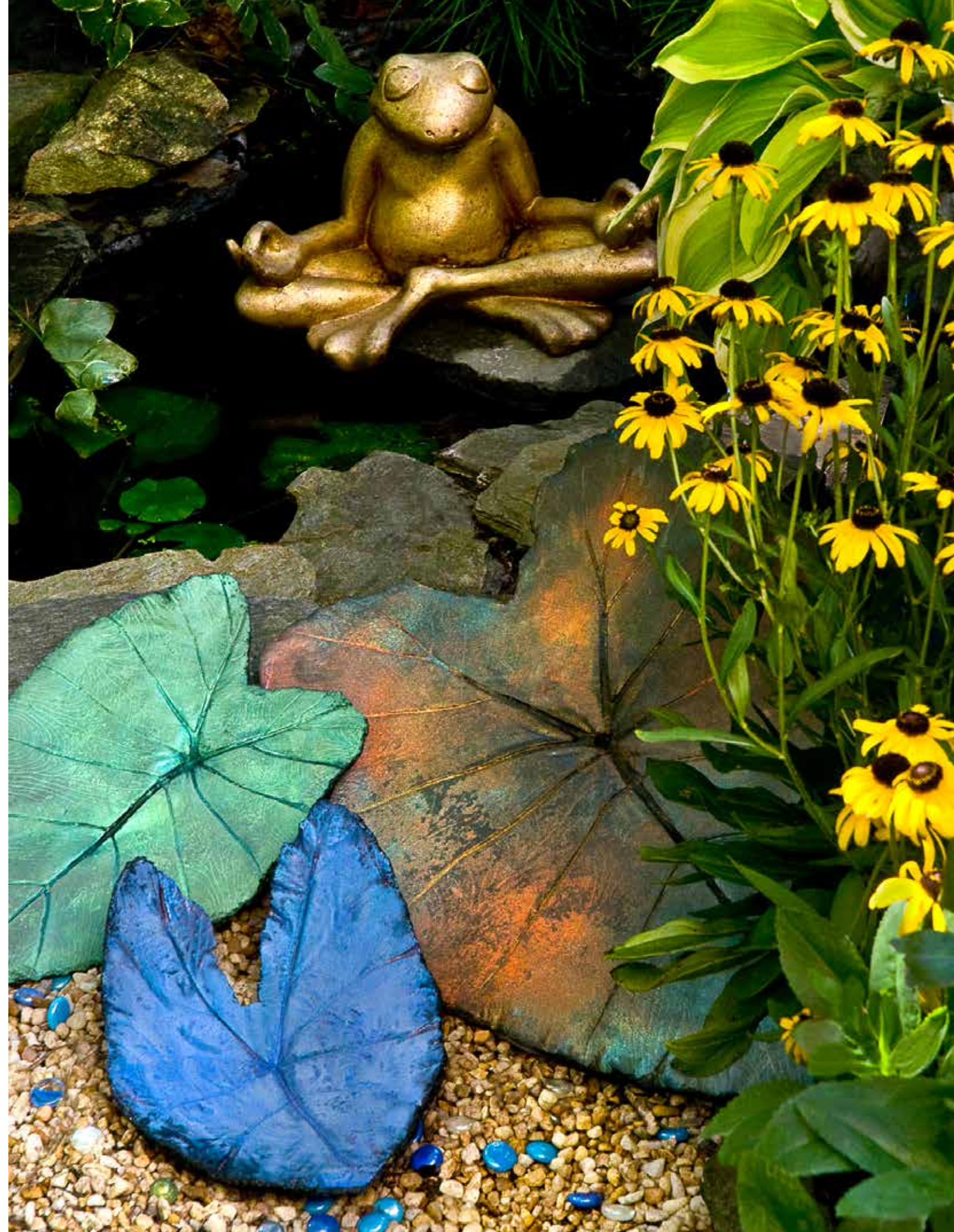
I searched for "Nikon D300" and found more than 20,000 videos that highlight that model. Many are reviews by both amateur and professional photographers. Some are detailed how-to videos that are either generalized tutorials, while others cover a specific feature of the camera. There are more than 100,000 videos related to my Nikon D7000. There are other sites that offer free tutorials and/or fee-based subscriptions. See page 109 for a list of resources.

Get Down and Dirty

I've captured some of my best images while sitting down, eye-level to the flower bed. These unusual perspectives capture a view that most passersby will never consider, making your images more memorable. While you're down in the trenches, shoot upward and catch petals backlit by the sun, and photograph the backs of flowers as well. From this perspective, you also slow down long enough to really notice the tiny insects and pollinators that inhabit your garden. Getting down and dirty also allows you to include a brilliant blue summer sky behind your subject, adding more pops of color. I always carry a trash bag in my camera bag so I can sit and capture images of flowers laden with freshly fallen rain.

continued on page 100

This corner of my townhouse backyard garden has a tiny pond with my "Zen" frog holding court, a gravel pathway strewn with dollar-store glass marbles, and my handmade cast cement leaves painted in metallic jewel tones. This bright spot in my backyard garden is a great subject to photograph.



HOW-TO

Harness the Light

Most of the time I prefer shooting gardens in the early morning or later afternoon, preferably when the sky is overcast, making for more saturated color and no harsh shadows. If I'm out shooting on a sunny day, I will bring along a tri-grip reflector to diffuse the light over my subject. Although there are many brands of diffusers available, I found one from **Fancier Studio** that is less than \$20 from **www.Amazon.com** and that folds down like a car sun shade to fit perfectly in a camera bag. The closer you hold the diffuser to your subject, the more the light will glow. Put your camera on a tripod, leaving one hand free to hold the diffuser.

I know what you're thinking—who wants to lug around a tripod? I am a very steady hand-held shooter but, when shooting flowers and insects, I shoot with a tripod 95% of the time. It forces me to slow down, be more deliberate with my compositions, assess various angles and backgrounds, spot tiny bugs, and most important—achieve the sharpest focus possible. A tripod is probably my most important photographic accessory!

When I'm shooting flowers without a diffuser, I look for backlit petals and dappled background light behind my subject. I rarely shoot flower closeups in direct mid-day sunlight because of the harsh shadows created on petals. I will, however, capture wide shots of an entire garden or garden bed from a distance when the sun is out. These types of shots work best when the sky is very blue and filled with puffy white clouds.

Divide and Conquer

Don't immediately center your subject. While extreme closeups of a single flower work best centered, try dividing your frame into thirds like a tic-tac-toe grid—and place your subject on a crossline of that grid. If you place your subject off center, look for interesting lines or texture in the "empty" space for added impact.

Vertical, Horizontal, Long Shot or Macro?

The beauty of shooting digitally is that it doesn't cost you any extra to capture multiple variations of your subject. Shoot horizontal and vertical shots of the same scene. Some subjects demand

one orientation or the other. For instance, if you're photographing a tall sunflower, you might immediately choose a vertical orientation to get the entire plant in the frame. Get that image, but then move in closer and get a horizontal shot of just the flower head. Position the flower center in the middle and get a closeup of the seeds. Move the subject off center and capture part of the flower and then the blue sky to the right or left. Shoot it again vertically, cropping tightly and placing half the bloom at the bottom with a bright blue sky above it. Turn your camera at an angle and see if that creates a striking image. Don't get stuck with just one orientation. The process of composing a great shot is always fluid for me, even if the orientation may be obvious at first.

Beware the Background

What is in the background is as important as your actual subject. Keep your backgrounds clean and simple and your subject will shine. Adjust your

When possible, consider a bird's eye view of a garden, such as this shot I took of my friend Debbi's townhouse garden. Shot from her back deck, it begins with a birdhouse that reflects her Tennessee roots overlooking a lush garden below. This image was shot on an overcast day, which saturates the already-vibrant colors.



angle so you can exclude distracting "hot spots" of light or dead foliage and stems. Isolate your flowers against a bright blue sky or backdrop of darker foliage. Let your background fall out of focus by shooting with larger apertures.

In cases when I can't control the background (i.e., cars, a parking lot, people or spent foliage), I put a black or white sheet of foamcore board or a collapsible reflector behind my subject.



Look up! I captured these brilliant yellow ginkgo branches against a crisp blue October sky, making for a dynamic image with contrast color and lots of energy.



Be sure to capture the whimsical elements of a garden, such as this overhead shot of a birdbath filled with inspirational words on rocks.



When it rains...grab your camera and photograph raindrops on foliage and blooms, or make your own with a spray mister or watering can.

This gives my shot a studio-like quality and eliminates a distracting background.

Beauty Really is In the Details

Sure, you can photograph a beautiful tulip or a group of Shasta daisies, but don't stop there. Move in closer and capture dramatic textures and patterns, such as pollen-covered stamens, veins in

continued on page 102

leaves (especially beautiful when backlit by the sun), or a cluster of raindrops on a petal. I always shoot overall views and then move in closer for tighter compositions. If you pay attention to composition and lighting, even weeds and dried flower heads and seed pods can be photo-worthy.

The Sum of the Whole

Remember to photograph all the parts of a flower, from a fuzzy stem (you'll often find tiny bugs clinging to them!) to a curled leaf to a single petal. Move in closer and crop tightly for more dramatic images and texture. Shoot from different angles, too—top, sides and below. Looking down over the flower is a great place to start, but also consider shooting a side view of the flower, or get under the flower for a shot from the ground looking up.

Water, Water, Everywhere

Photographs taken after rainfall will be more saturated in color and the light will be clearer and more even. And if Mother Nature won't provide it, create your own drama by watering your garden and photographing closeups of petals covered in water drops.

Color Play

Some of my most dramatic images are of a brightly colored flower against a contrasting background, such as hot pink coneflower against a lime green shrub. Look for striking color combinations, such as purple and yellow, white against dark green, or orange against purple. When I planned my garden bed, I intentionally chose plants that would contrast against each other for photographs.

Consider the Critters

To me, there is nothing more rewarding than having an insect in my composition. Since I use a tripod, I am prepared when a butterfly sweeps in or a bee comes to pollinate the bloom. The addition of an insect will elevate your image beyond a standard "record" shot. Photograph the flowers as they are, then if you wait long enough, a critter will meander in to enhance your composition!

Identification

If you're photographing a plant in a public garden and it has a label, get a shot of the plant label before and after you shoot the plant or flowers. I always do this so that I have the information at hand not only for blogging purposes but also for my archives. The more you do this, the more you'll be able to identify these plants in the future. Most of the plants I photograph are labeled, but when they aren't, I do some sleuthing on the Internet to narrow down the possibilities. I also ask fellow gardeners for help in identification. You may think it's extra work and isn't important, but I promise you that you'll thank me for this advice one day!

As far as identifying insects, some are obvious (bumblebees, ladybugs, certain butterflies), while others are not. Sometimes all it takes is an online search for something as simple as "yellow and black striped beetle" to find out that your latest image is a Striped Cucumber Beetle. Then the next time you photograph this insect, you'll know exactly what it is (an added bonus—you can astound and amaze your friends with your newfound knowledge!).

Sharing Your Work with the World

I highly recommend that you start a (free) blog to showcase your work. It will serve as a chronicle of your photographic journey and you'll get feedback from nature lovers and fellow photographers. I use WordPress and pay an inexpensive fee to have additional storage space.

There are other free sites that can showcase your portfolio such as **Picasa Web Albums**, **Flickr**, **Tumblr**, **Wix** and **Pinterest**. Fee-based portfolio sites include www.zenfolio.com, www.photoshelter.com, www.squarespace.com, www.foliolink.com and www.pbbase.com, to name a few. If you have a **Facebook** account, post photos there or start a Facebook page just for your images.

My final advice is to practice, practice, practice! Photographing gardens and the natural world has been enormously rewarding for me. Read your manual, shoot regularly, learn how to process your digital images and above all else, always stay curious! **CHM**



In this image, placing the dragonfly off-center with an out-of-focus Sacred Lotus bud to the left creates a bit of tension and drama.



I shot this Love-in-a-Mist bloom with an overhead angle and created an off-center composition under diffused light.



Off-center composition, three elements, tight cropping and brilliant color make this a strong image.



I was rewarded for my patience when a dragonfly landed in this shot of a water lily.



Learn how to stop down your camera's aperture to create striking silhouettes like this moody twilight shot of a Praying Mantis.



Look for interesting patterns of light and shapes for your backgrounds. Here, I diffused the subject against a stained-glass pattern created by the sunlight.

HOW-TO



Watch for curving lines that lead your viewer's eye into the photograph, such as this shot of a verdant lawn abutting a beautiful perennial border at Green Spring Gardens in Alexandria, VA.

When I visit botanical gardens or private gardens, I always start with overall images of garden areas, then move closer in to capture the details of individual plants, flowers and insects.

I initially explore a garden, looking for interesting lines and curves of flower beds. My goal is to not only tell a story, but to invite my viewers into my photos.



Harness the sunlight by capturing images that are backlit, such as this translucent Morning Glory bloom, which glows in the afternoon sun. Notice the woman holding a baby in the center of the flower?



Radiating lines, bright color and a summer shower make for a striking image of a Lady's Mantle leaf. The addition of a handheld LED light adds sparkle to the raindrops.



An overhead shot of a Red Spider lily makes for an abstract image. Because of the height of the plant, the dark shaded ground fell to black, increasing the drama.



Look for interesting curves in your compositions. These Jones' Bluestar blooms formed a pleasing "S" shape and lead your eye through the photograph.



Something as simple as foliage veins backlit by the sun can make for a dramatic and abstract image.



Here's my take on a cornucopia of the harvest from my garden. Enlist a friend as a hand model for shots like this.



Create beautiful still-life images with your harvest. Although my backyard harvest was meager the year I shot this image, what it did produce made for some colorful images.

HOW-TO



Try putting your subject off-center. Be sure the other two-thirds of your photo have visual impact as well, such as the pattern of the lily leaves here.



Who doesn't love the beautiful Morning Glory? For an unexpected shot, photograph the blooms from the back. The radiating lines create a beautiful pattern and make for a more abstract image.



As simple a composition as there is—bright color, radiating lines, center line at a diagonal, overcast light. Simple, elegant and graphic—my three favorite elements in composition!



In this shot of Agapanthus, I used a diffuser to soften the light on the flowers, but allowed the bright sunlight to create a luminous glow in the background.



Patience, a tripod and backlighting make this Halloween Pennant dragonfly image one of my favorites. Be patient—dragonflies tend to come back to the same stalk numerous times, so don't give up!



Look for repeating patterns. The repetition of these Speedwell blooms gives the appearance of a stadium crowd and adds whimsy to the image.



Isolating a portion of a flower, backlit by the afternoon sun, created this abstract image. A large aperture ensures that the background would be out of focus, allowing the subject to shine.



Patience, steady hands and a wide aperture were the requisites to create this image at a local butterfly exhibit where tripods were not allowed.



An extreme closeup of the petals of a Sacred Indian lotus bloom shows the delicate texture and color gradation.



When shot from underneath, this Star Hibiscus, against a brilliant cornflower blue sky, is an image that packs a powerful punch.



Photograph clusters of blooms, like this overhead shot of Love-in-a-Mist flowers. Pay attention to the curving lines and be deliberate with your composition, eliminating past-prime blooms.



Move in close and crop tightly—you don't have to show the entire bloom to capture a compelling image. In this diffused shot, the background fell to black, resulting in a studio-like shot.

HOW-TO



A solitary Sacred Indian lotus petal fell onto the lotus leaf. An off-center composition and the radiating lines of the leaf elevate the petal, which glows in diffused morning light.



Contrasting backgrounds allow your subject to pop. I photographed these hot pink tulips against a bed of bright yellow daffodils in a conservatory. Diffused light saturated the colors.



This photo of Siberian iris showcases one of my favorite contrasting color schemes—purple against lime green.



Repetition, radiating lines and an odd number (seven) of elements made this image of water lily leaves graphic and compelling.



An off-center composition, diffused lighting and the contrast of white against dark allow these tiny flowers to take center stage. Note the visual interest in the "blank space" above.



Brilliant color, off-center composition and the radiating lines in the leaf make this shot of a Nasturtium one of my favorite images.



Don't limit your point of view from just the top of a flower. The radiating lines of this bloom and the wavy curl of the petals at the top create a graceful image softly lit by the late afternoon sun.



I strive for an odd numbers of flowers in many of my compositions. Here, the three New England Aster blooms create a crescent-shaped curve downward.



Capture the anticipation of a bud just before it unfurls. The background was quite a distance away and I used a wider aperture, so there was ample "bokeh" (out-of-focus shapes) created.



Move in close to show texture and detail like I did in this image of the head of a White coneflower bloom. Experiment with different angles—off-center, centering, on the diagonal.



Sometimes it is simply the color that makes an image sing! These bright red Cardinal flower blooms are radiant against a sunlit foliage background. The angle of the stem also creates some energy.



Although I rarely photograph flowers in direct sunlight, here I made an exception. Dappled sunlight added drama and emphasized the shape and texture of these Daffodils.

HOW-TO



The background behind this Bearded iris in my front yard was an asphalt road, so I placed a black fabric collapsible background behind the stalk and further darkened the background in post production.



I used a wide-angle lens close to the sunflower in the foreground. The field retains sharp focus and the off-center composition adds to the composition—sunflowers on a sunny summer day!



We found this bright green Praying Mantis on my husband's sleeve and carefully moved him to a bed of purple Sweet Potato vines to get this shot. Serendipity!



The background behind this Bearded iris was a parking lot. I used my diffuser as a solid white background, then brightened the white section in post production.



Visual interest is created with the curving lines of this bed of Pansies. Repetition and pattern also play heavily and the pastel tones created a more subdued palette.



Beauty is everywhere—even in a median strip on a busy street! Backlighting made this Gladiolus stalk glow in the late evening sun. It really is all about the light!

Resources and Inspiration

FREE TRAINING SITES

www.beyondmegapixels.com/
www.strobist.com
www.digitalphotographyschool.com
www.digitalphotopro.com
www.lighting-essentials.com/
www.photoshoper.com/
www.diyphotography.net

SUBSCRIPTION TRAINING SITES

www.lynda.com
www.kelbytraining.com
www.steeletraining.com

GARDEN PHOTOGRAPHY

www.davidperryphoto.com
www.saxonholt.com
www.robcardillo.com
www.professionalgardenphotographers.com

INSECT AND MACRO PHOTOGRAPHERS

<http://photo.net/photos/siwanowicz>
<http://myrmecos.net/>
<http://www.mplonsky.com/photo/>

RECOMMENDED READING

Macro Photography for Gardeners and Nature Lovers: The Essential Guide to Digital Techniques by Alan L. Detrick

Macro Photography: Learning From a Master by Gilles Martin and Ronan Loaec

Nature Photography Close-Up: Macro Techniques in the Field by Paul Harcourt Davies

Small Things Big: Close-Up and Macro Photography by Paul Harcourt Davies

Better Picture Guide to Flower & Garden Photography by Michael Busselle

The Art of Garden Photography by Ian Adams

Close Up & Macro: A Photographic Guide by Robert Thompson

Close-Up on Insects: A Photographer's Guide by Robert Thompson

Photographing Plants & Gardens by Clive Nichols

The Art of Flower & Garden Photography by Clive Nichols

Digital Macro & Close-up Photography by Ross Haddinott

Photographing Flowers: Exploring Macro Worlds by Harold Davis

What's in My Bag?

I shoot a variety of subjects (events, products, stock, travel and people), but I outfit my garden photography bag with only the items I'll use for this specialized subject.

GEAR

- Nikon D300 or Nikon D7000
- Nikkor 105mm micro 2.8 VR lens
- Nikkor 18-200mm 3.5 ED VR zoom lens
- Tamron 11-18mm IF 4.5 wide angle lens
- Tamron AF 180mm IF 3.5 macro lens
- Nikon Speedlight SB-700 or SB-900 (for fill or bounce off a white card or handheld reflector)
- Nikon remote cord for using flash off-camera
- Rotolight Interview LED Lighting Kit
- Benro C298EX Flip tripod (can quickly switch from vertical to horizontal center column positions)
- Manfrotto 322RC2 Joystick Head

ACCESSORIES

- Microfiber lens cleaning cloth and bulb blower
- Extra camera and flash batteries
- Think Tank® Pixel Pocket Rocket to hold SD and CF cards (8gb/16gb)
- Fancier Studio Tri-grip Diffuser
- Business cards
- Cell phone
- Collapsible sun hat and sunscreen
- Small notebook and pen
- Plastic garbage bag to sit on

Furthering Your Education

If you're in the D.C./Virginia/Maryland area, I'm available for private instruction. E-mail me at dyerdesign@aol.com for more information.

Photography Portfolios

<http://www.cindydyer.zenfolio.com>

<http://www.cindydyerphotography.com/>

Main Blog

<http://www.cindydyer.wordpress.com>

Garden-Only Blog

<http://www.gardenmuse.wordpress.com>

Garden Muse Show Exhibit Site

<http://www.gardenmuseshow.com>

How to Grow Your Garden Photography Skills

<http://www.nikonusa.com/en/Learn-And-Explore/Article/gr35ffdt/How-To-Grow-Your-Garden-Photography-Skills.html>

Rampant Biblioholism

Interview with **Cindy Dyer** by **Marisa Sarto** • Photography by **Marisa Sarto**



Books have played an essential role in the development of our culture—so pivotal a role in our lives, that it would seem ungrateful not to simply acknowledge this contribution with a collection—and Cindy Dyer has one worth noting. When I took my first steps through her front door, my mouth dropped at the sight of her library. Normally, libraries are known to be quiet, but her library wasn't the least bit quiet. Her shelves are clamoring with the voices of many authors, calling out their ideas, themes, stories, morals, and lessons. I sat down with her to learn more about her passion for books.

Tell me what you think of when you hear this aphorism by Edward Bulwer-Lytton: "Do you want to get at new ideas? Read old books. Do you want to find old ideas? Read new ones."

Books have informed me for most of my life. I've learned skills in so many different areas because of books. I've become a better artist, photographer, writer, traveler, craftsman, gardener and cook—mostly because of the information I have gleaned from books. I love that quote because books inspire me and they really are a constant source of ideas and inspiration.

No doubt, books have been an influence on you—but what kind of books and how much of an effect did they have?

My parents always had books, magazines and the daily newspaper in our house when I was growing up. I loved reading *Newsweek* and *Time*. For years my father subscribed to *National Geographic Magazine*. That magazine was so inspiring that it fostered a love of exploring and travel.

I haven't traveled nearly as much as I want to, but the magazine was the impetus for my curiosity about the world.

As my love of art morphed into a love of photography, I fantasized about being hired by the National Geographic Society to go out and record the world for their readers. I still fantasize about it and ironically, I now live less than 20 minutes from their headquarters in Washington, D.C.!

I have always been a zealous consumer of information of any kind, on virtually any topic. My newfound motto is "Always stay curious!"

Are you influenced solely by the look of a book?

I have been known to purchase a book based entirely on its design. One of my favorite books is *Quiet Pride* by photographer Robert Alan Clayton. It stands out in my collection first because of its size—it is 9" x 12" in landscape format, which isn't common for books. The photographs are all black and white and the paper has a beautiful, tactile matte finish. The color palette is sage green, tan and black, giving it a very soft and earthy look—the design is actually "quiet," a literal reflection of the book's title.

On the flip side, I have turned away many books simply due to their poor design and poor illustrations or photography (or poor writing and editing). I love thoughtfully-designed, expertly-illustrated, and beautifully-written books and I feel my library reflects that.

When you were younger, did you have someone or something that motivated you to read, and in turn inspired you to start your collection?

Because my parents always had books on hand, I would say that they instigated this lifelong addiction to books. My mother was an avid consumer of current information (newspapers, magazines, news programs on tv), although she did enjoy reading biographies and autobiographies. I share her love of reading magazines, too.

My father is probably most to "blame" for my biblioholism, though. He has never met a book or bookstore he didn't like. He has a wonderful collection of books on myriad topics and I suppose my collection is a not-so-silent nod to his. I'm also a constant recipient of books he has purchased

over the years, my favorite being a signed copy of Ansel Adams' *Yosemite and the Range of Light*.

Have you ever felt the presence of an author coming to you through the words?

I'm going to answer that with a quote by Diane Setterfield, author of *The Thirteenth Tale*, that explains my passion for words better than I can: "There is something about words. In expert hands, manipulated deftly, they take you prisoner. Wind themselves around your limbs like spider silk, and when you are so enthralled you cannot move, they pierce your skin, enter your blood, numb your thoughts. Inside you they work their magic."

Another quote that I love is by John Green, author of *The Fault in Our Stars*. "Sometimes, you read a book and it fills you with this weird evangelical zeal, and you become convinced that the shattered world will never be put back together unless and until all living humans read the book."

There are several books I feel like sharing with anyone who loves to read and appreciates being moved by the written word. These include *Words of Wisdom for Women* by Rachel Snyder; *When Elephants Weep: The Emotional Life of Animals* and *The Pig Who Sang to the Moon: The Emotional Life of Farm Animals* by Jeffrey Moussaieff Masson; and *The Power of the Powerless: A Brother's Legacy of Love* by Christopher de Vinck.

I also love the late May Sarton's poetry—her words inspire my own poetry. In the humorous books genre, I especially appreciate the happy childhood memoirs of Haven Kimmel, author of *A Girl Named Zippy* and *She Got Off the Couch*. I relate to her humorous outlook on growing up in the 60s and 70s.

My younger sister, Kelley, introduced me to Amy Crouse Rosenthal, author of the irreverent *Encyclopedia of an Ordinary Life*. On books, Rosenthal writes, "To get a true sense of the book, I have to spend a few moments inside. I'll glance at the first couple pages, then flip around to somewhere in the middle, see if the language matches me somehow. It's like dating, only with sentences...It could be something as simple yet weirdly potent as a single word (tangerine). We're

continued on page 114

THE COLLECTOR

meant to be, that sentence and me. And when it happens, you just know.”

You probably own more books than you'll ever have time to read. Do you have a strategy or schedule for getting through your books?

The majority of my books are reference books on every topic imaginable—writing, gardening, photography, crafting, art, painting, cooking, sewing, nature, travel. I do read novels as well, but I gravitate toward books that teach me how to do something or do something better—whether it is a creative endeavor or a self-help book on how to deal with difficult situations or people. I look for books that inspire me. My favorite question from a first-time visitor to my library is “Do you actually read all these books?” My response is always, “Yes, simultaneously!” Do I read all of them? Eventually, yes. Novels, definitely. But most of my books are referenced as needed.

Do you have a certain way you read? In bed, a special chair, time of the day, or with tea?

I am rarely without a book nearby. The stack next to my side of the bed frequently grows to the height of collapsing and regularly requires culling. If I'm eating by myself, I always have a book on hand. My husband, Michael, and I had a well-loved ritual when Borders Books was still open. Sometimes we would go to Borders first, followed by

dinner. In those instances, we would both bring in a magazine or book and flip through it while talking and waiting for our order to arrive. We would joke about how onlookers might think we disliked conversing with each other.

There are always books and magazines tucked into the driver's seat back pocket in my car, for those times I'm waiting to pick someone up or waiting in line somewhere. On road trips, I bring a tote bag with craft or photography how-to books.

With so many books, what kind of filing system do you have? Do you keep inventory?

I jokingly call my system, “The Cindy Decimal System,” partly because there isn't a file card system like in the libraries of my youth and second, decimals require numbers and, like water and oil, numbers and I don't mix!

I group my books by subject. Though the number of times I cook reads in only the double digits (yes, you read that right), my cookbook collection spans more than 10 shelves (careful, no judging!). They are grouped by discipline: baking, entertaining, vegetarian, desserts, soups, etc. For me, a cookbook must be as appetizing visually—both photographically and in its design—as it is culinary. Now that I'm photographing food, I use them as reference for styling and lighting. See there? One of the hallmarks of a biblioholic is justification. I'm a master at it!

THE COLLECTOR

My garden book section spans about the same amount of space and is grouped by tasks and types of plants. Books on garden design, planning, seed-starting and composting are all in one section. I love reading essays written by other gardeners, so there's a section just for those books.

Photography books are grouped by sections on lighting, posing, business and specialized photography subjects (fashion, macro, travel, product, nature and weddings, post production). My section on writing has its divisions, too, such as poetry, blogging, editing, publishing, and so on. The system works well for me. Years ago, when the collection was more manageable, I had an online database started, but I've neglected that for some time. I even bought one of those gadgets that you use to scan the barcode of each book to automatically compile a list of acquisitions. That would have come in handy many times—especially yesterday when I was putting away the books on writing that I bought at a book fair last weekend. Turns out there's a reason that one book on crafting essays looks familiar. I already own it. Presto—it would make a great gift for a fellow writer. You can't get more serendipitous than that!

Do you have a book about books?

I'd like to respond with a definitive, “Of course not! That would be a complete waste of money.” I must confess that I do have a few books related to

book collecting and my favorite is titled, *Biblioholism: The Literary Addiction*, by Tom Raabe. Until I stumbled upon this book in Sedona, Arizona, I didn't know my affliction even had a name!

Others in my library include *The Art of the Bookplate* by James P. Keenan, *The Book on the Shelf* by Henry Petroski, *A Passion for Books* by Harold Rabinowitz and Rob Kaplan and *The Know-It-All* by A.J. Jacobs. I know I have a coffee table sized-book about the libraries of the elite, but apparently my Cindy Decimal System is on the fritz—I have no idea where I tucked that volume!

Have you ever read a 'bad' book? What makes a book 'bad' to you?

Oprah's Book Club enticed me to part with money on a few books. I read James Frye's book, *A Million Little Pieces*, before the controversy about whether his memoir was truthful erupted (most parts were, some were fabricated). It was originally touted as a memoir, but after the controversy, it morphed into a semi-fictional novel.

The story was a riveting account of the author's drug and alcohol abuse and rehab experience, but the half-truths and embellishments weren't what bothered me most. I was put off by the formatting of the text—flush left, no quotation marks around dialogue, capitalizing of nouns for no apparent reason, heavy repetition of words

continued on page 116



and no paragraph indents or breaks. Forget the controversy; it's the unusual formatting that makes this a 'bad' book to me!

When spring-cleaning time arrives, how do you choose which books to get rid of?

In a three-level townhouse, there is only so much room to house books, although I have done a splendid job of finding space, haven't I? I donate books several times a year, and this process comes as a result of several events. For instance, while watching episodes of *Hoarders* or *Buried Alive*, I will glance around my library, silently mutter to myself, "I'm not like *that* woman, right?," then pause the program, grab a paper ream box, and start pulling less-favored books off the shelf.

When books start going in sideways on top of upright books, it's time to cull some more. Old ones are donated or sold to a used book store to make room for the new. Now our problem is, once we found out they give you more in-store credit than cash, we've built up a sizeable stash from which to purchase more used books!

When I started gardening, I went a little crazy collecting books on the subject—everything from seed-starting to building a greenhouse to square-foot-gardening to composting to beautiful books paying homage to just one type of flower. As I've grown as a gardener, the beginner books are donated to my favorite local place to photograph flowers—Green Spring Gardens in Alexandria, VA. They are happy to see me coming with boxes of books, which they incorporate into their library. If they already have a particular book in their library, my duplicate books are sold in their gift shop to raise money for educational programs.

Would you say your exposure to books has inspired your work as a graphic designer and photographer for Celebrate Home Magazine?

Most definitely! Because I'm a person who certainly "judges a book by its cover" (as well as its interior), I think I have developed a refined eye and taste for clean, simple and elegant design. Before embarking on the magazine project, I hadn't photographed food (except for the occasional blog post about beginning bread-baking or look-at-what-I-just-grew-in-my-garden essays). Tasked

with photography duty for the magazine, I've perused home, decorating, craft and cookbooks to see what current photographic styles are trending for those subjects. I now own several reference books on food styling and food photography.

Are books making the endangered species list by electronic media?

I'd like to say that printed books will remain relevant, at least in my lifetime, but you can never be too sure. With the advent of computers for desktop publishing, entire staffs of typesetters and paste-up artists were eliminated in the publishing world. Never say never, I guess. While I do own a Kindle (that I rarely use), the cost of electronic books is still higher than I pay when buying remainders in a book store or even online. But for me, it's not just a matter of cost. I love the look, feel and even the smell of a book in print.

Do you have plans to write a book of your own?

That is definitely on my bucket list. I have put together several publications of my botanical photography and had them printed at www.magcloud.com, a print-on-demand site. It is truly magical seeing your work in print, whether you are a writer, artist or photographer!

Most bibliophiles are always more than ready to suggest favorite books to their friends. If I wanted to learn more about gardening with a particular type of plant—let's say, succulents—what would you recommend?

Well, funny you should ask about this topic, but I actually own 13 books pertaining to cacti and succulents (yes, I counted!). My newest favorite is *Succulents Simplified: Growing, Designing, and Crafting with 100 Easy-Care Varieties*, which was written by Debra Lee Baldwin, a fellow gardener, blogger and Facebook friend of mine. Tied for top position is *Succulent: Nature's Sculptural Wonders*, by Steven Hammer, with beautifully artistic photographs by Béla Kolman. Two more practical books about the care and feeding of these plants is *Growing Cacti and Other Succulents in the Conservatory and Indoors*, by Shirley-Anne Bell and *Cactus & Succulents: A Care Manual*, by Tom and Suzanne Mace. Now do you think I'm a biblioholic? **CHM**

Why I Love Books

Written by **Michael R. Schwehr**

For some of us, books are as important as almost anything else on earth. What a miracle it is that out of these small, flat, rigid squares of paper unfolds world after world after world, worlds that sing to you, comfort and quiet or excite you. Books help us understand who we are and how we are to behave. They show us what community and friendship mean; they show us how to live and die.

—Anne Lamott, *Bird by Bird: Some Instructions on Writing and Life*

skill, I was required to read an hour each day. There wasn't a limitation on what type of books I wished to spend my time with, just a requirement to read books for one hour each day.

I considered it a labor until I discovered science fiction and eventually expanded my horizons to include most fiction and some biographies. After that, nobody could stop me from reading! My parents had to set a rule that I could not take a book into the bathroom because I would take too long. I loved the

privacy, a good seat, and great reading light, but in a family of five children with two common bathrooms, this rule was probably necessary.

I don't think that I can ever thank my stepmother enough for the time and dedication it took to teach me to read and to get comfortable with reading. More than any other skill I have ever learned, reading changed my life. Reading opened the door to learn new skills, be exposed to new thoughts and opened my mind to new perspectives. I never "walked a mile in someone else's shoes" until I began to read. I could travel in my mind to other countries, other ages, and other realities.

Alfred Hitchcock introduced me to suspense and the perfect plans that fall apart in the face of life. Rod Serling showed me the human condition in improbable circumstances, and just how human we all are. Stephen King explained how the end of the world was exactly the time and place to stick to your principles, and how good might triumph over evil for those who toughed it out. I once read a non-fiction book of essays by science fiction writers where I

continued on page 106

was tutored by L. Ron Hubbard on how one could create a religion for the purpose of getting wealthy. Little did I know that he would found Scientology.

Traveling Through the Pages

No other medium but books could affect me so strongly. TV shows were spoon-fed stories, but books forced me to open my mind and imagination and consider the perspectives of others that I might never have considered otherwise. The ability to read and absorb information has allowed me to chase my curiosity to the limits of my imagination. Need to repair a faucet, lay tile or fix a flat tire? Reading has allowed me to pick up a tool and do what I didn't know how to do only a few short hours before. Need to drive to Texas? Before GPS was even an idea, I was reading road atlases and street signs and made the trip out and back because I could read. Need to operate Microsoft Word on the home computer? I read how to do so and did it.

Need to cook up salmon for dinner in a new and exciting way? I read from a recipe book and tried steaming fish in parchment paper. I didn't even know such a thing was possible until I read it in a book! I've brewed beer and taught wilderness survival to Boy Scouts and discovered that the obelisk of the Washington Monument is topped with an aluminum pyramid, a material more expensive than gold at the time it was created. All of this infor-

mation was revealed in books. I can converse with anyone on almost any subject, or at least find a common point of interest because I have remembered a fact here, a tidbit there, and I can spout these items at will.

Without the ability to read and study books, my life would be a pale shadow of what it is now. My teachers led me down prescribed paths of instruction. Where I went from there was determined by my access to books, my motivation, and my imagination. Gaining the abilities to shape my life depends on a large part on books and where they can lead me, and that access is something that we should all hold dear.

When you stand in a library and see the rows of shelves of books, do you think of dusty tomes, or do you see the voices

of thousands who felt that their voice was important enough to put down on paper? I see instructions and knowledge and philosophies made manifest over generations. I see the accumulated knowledge of scores of people who labored months and years to put pen to paper and write out the stories of their hearts and give voice to the churnings of their minds. Without books, these ideas would remain mute and possibly unknown.

The ability to read coupled with the vast resources to be unleashed through books can change a life, a community, the world. I see nothing but promise and hope for a better life and the ability to give those goals a voice. This is what I like about books. Visit your local library and help keep those resources alive. **CHM**

Alas, poor Borders, I knew you...

Written by **Cindy Dyer**

On a balmy November morning in 2011, I was at a Home Depot, parked in the upper level garage, when I noticed this guy in a cherry picker removing the last vestiges of our local Borders bookstore. The last evidence that it ever existed. We frequented this Borders for so many years. It was our place to go after dinner on Saturday nights. Sometimes we would be out riding around and we would say at the same time, "Wanna go to Borders?" When our friends Carmen and George still lived in Virginia, we would go to dinner (usually Mexican at El Paso) and straight to Borders afterward—scattering in four different directions, then returning with an armload of books.

Borders enticed me to part with my money many a time, but I have a confession to make. More often than not, I only purchased when I possessed a 40 or 50% coupon or if there was a discount book that I simply had to have off their remainder racks. Okay, I confess all. I'm a magazine junkie, too, so it was not uncommon for me to go in and spend \$40 on photography, craft and gardening magazines in one visit—until I buckled down and learned that subscribing to them was much cheaper. I was just one of the many bookstore regulars who would occasionally look at a book, write down the title and price, then go order it for 25-40% less on Amazon. For this, Borders, I apologize. However, I talked to one of your loyal salespeople



and she told me it was poor management that got you in the end. That relieved me of at least some of my guilt. (Although truth be told, I contributed to your success for many years—it's not my fault you chose to squander it recklessly!)

So, as a tribute to you, dearly departed Borders, I offer my Top 10 Memories (in no particular order) throughout the years.

Memory #1: Borders in Tysons Corner, one summer evening. Scores of coffee table books stacked up against the windows. Each marked with that lovely red triangular-shaped sticker—\$1. \$1? It can't be. Gorgeous color books on every subject imaginable (some interesting, some not so much). I promptly buy one of each. Yes, you read that right. One of each. It takes four trips for me and Michael to carry my loot out of the store. Most topics were of interest to me; those

that were not could surely be gifts for someone else, no? It is my fondest moment shopping at Borders. We would go on to find other instances where beautiful books were marked that low, but this excursion was magnificent in its quality and range of subjects. It certainly doesn't help that in my profession, I've actually designed books. On numerous occasions, I've been known to buy a book solely for its brilliant presentation. Besides, who doesn't need an oversized book about the history of the John Deere tractor for just \$1? I still have dents in my forearms from holding overstuffed plastic carts while standing in line. Truly good management would have provided those mini-grocery carts for bibliophiles like me.

Memory #2: Michael catches up on his zzzzzz's in a public forum—ah, fond memories of finalizing my (seemingly random) selection for the evening, then heading to find Michael. Where would I find him tonight? Battling cyborgs in the science fiction aisle? Woodworking? Contemplating learning more about the harmonica, lap harp or guitar? Considering hydroponics or welding as a sideline? Pondering on whether we already owned this particular one-pot cookbook? Honing his wilderness survival skills in the nature section? Having an overpriced coffee and skimming through books he didn't plan on purchasing in the coffee shop? Wherever

continued on page 110

Celebrate **HOME**
MAGAZINE

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Celebrate Home Magazine free at
www.celebratehomemagazine.com

he was, he would invariably be nested in a comfy chair, head bowed, an open computer book in his lap. Asleep.

Memory #3: When we first learned just a few of our area Borders were closing, we took advantage of the closing sales. As usual, the discounts came painfully slow, seemingly like this: Now going out of business—everything in the store—10% off (Really Borders? 10%? How bad do you really want to close?), then week after week, finally progressing to 60, then 70% off. Thank you for finally breaking the 70% barrier and filling in those gaps on my shelves (as if there were any gaps).

One would think there wouldn't be much to choose from at that point. Au contraire! We are fascinated by virtually any subject (just call me a bower bird). Of course, there are exceptions—anything mathematical immediately sends me back to painful days in college, wondering how I could finagle a diploma without passing math that final year. I did manage to graduate, much to my relief. I am fairly adept at many things; aptitude with numerals isn't one of them.

Memory #4: My father was the bearer of the bad news: all Borders were closing. Deep down, I subconsciously knew it was coming. Mercy, I was in such denial. No Borders? Where would we buy an overpriced hot chocolate with yummy foam, white chocolate shavings and that cute little chocolate stick in the middle (even in the summer)? Where else could I buy yet another obscure cookbook for just \$1.99? I still possess *A Taste of Eritrea*

I was just one of the many bookstore regulars who would occasionally look at a book, write down the title and price, then go order it for 25-40% less on Amazon. For this, Borders, I apologize.

(really, Cindy?) among my culinary tomes. This is particularly funny, given that I cook maybe once a month and only if you can catch me in that kind of domestic mood.

Michael and I hit every single Borders once the discount got to 60% and higher. Our best purchases were three short chrome bar stools covered in black pleather. Now we have some of the Borders coffee shop ambiance in my craft room.

And you know those black plastic divider labels with the circular tags that stick out from each section? I scored a complete set for my own library—one for each letter in the alphabet. Just 25 cents each! (You do the math; you know how I am with numbers.)

Memory #5: Borders was one of the first stores (to my recollection) that let you listen to the music of select artists. I fell in love with Eva Cassidy's voice when she was a staff selection and I eventually bought everything she recorded in her short life. Thanks for introducing me to Tingstad and Rumbel, Cheryl Wheeler, Katie Melua, Lara Fabian, Christine Kane and Tina Arena as well.

Memory #6: Free coffee grounds for my garden. Thank

you for enriching my little paradise for so many years, Borders.

Memory #7: Lindt white chocolate balls, impulse buys at checkout. Three for \$1. I was visiting my family one Christmas and my dad and I went to a Borders. I bought three and handed him one. He hadn't ever had one and the look on his face when he bit into one was priceless. All he said, with his voice trembling, was "ooooooooohhhhhh." I only had one complaint, Borders. When you sell them three for \$1 and there are two people involved, it's virtually impossible to evenly split that third one without getting greedy with the oozy (and best) part!

Memory #8: Ah, love me some 40-50% off coupons in my e-mail. And Borders Bucks. And Borders Rewards Plus. And free drink coupons. They may have been part of why you went out of business, Borders, but they did not go unappreciated. These were the times when I could justify buying that lovely coffee table book about fancy chickens or one of Martha Stewart's many visually arresting "look what I have that you don't" books.

And, oh, how you discounted those gardening books. You're the main reason my shelves are overflowing with hundreds of books on that very subject (and no, I will not tell you just how many). Although you are gone from my life, Borders, I will always love you more than Barnes & Noble. They are now the only game in town, and although I am forced to frequent them now, I will do so with a wee bit of disdain. And by the way, I know you probably profited

by selling them that membership list with my name on it, but unless they're going to start sending me 50% off coupons, I am ignoring their repeated attempts to lure me in completely.

Memory #9: When the periodicals hit 80% off, I could afford one issue each of those \$15 craft and foreign Photoshop magazines I always avoided!

Memory #10: And my final memory...my very last visit to a Borders. It was in Woodbridge, VA, at the end of summer. I drove by and saw "last day" on the storefront. (How could I not stop?) As I got closer, I saw "everything 2 for \$1." Then the "2" was crossed out and "4" was written over it. Everything was 4 for \$1. Really? Surely there wasn't much left at that bargain, right? Think again. After passing over the romance novels and books written entirely in Spanish, I scored enough books to spend \$4.50 total. At those prices, I even considered a book on math (but only for a nanosecond).

Thank you to my husband, Michael, for all those wonderful \$50 and \$100 Borders gift cards he begifted me throughout the years on various occasions—birthdays, anniversaries and Valentine's Days. These cards are the reason why my library is topped off with oversized, gloriously illustrated books whose sole topics are snowflakes, penguins and succulents (to name an obscure few). Though some might find it an impersonal gift, he is a man after my own heart. Only a biblioholic would truly understand. **CHM**

Biblioholic Playgrounds

We have the **Green Valley Book Fair** (and my friend Karen Byer-Storch) to blame for **most** of our acquisitions. Karen introduced me to this attraction more than 25 years ago. Located just south of Harrisonburg, Virginia (we drive 2.5 hours each way to buy discount books several times a year), the Green Valley Book Fair is a discount book outlet store featuring more than 500,000 new books at bargain prices (up to 90% off retail) on more than 30,000 different titles in more than 60 different categories—including fiction, history, health and self-help, children's books, religion, science, sports, cooking, home and garden, crafts, art, reference, nature and outdoors, and more. The Book Fair is only open during their scheduled dates; check their website for more information. www.gvbookfair.com

One of our favorite chains is **Half Price Books, Records & Magazines, Inc.**, the largest family-owned chain of new and used bookstores in the United States. Founders Ken Gjemre and Pat Anderson opened the first store in 1972 in a former laundromat in Dallas, Texas, filling the shelves with 2,000 books out of their personal libraries (*Is that all it takes to open up a store? I confess we possess more than that in our townhouse!*). The company operates more than 100 stores in 15 states. I make a beeline to the clearance section, which accounts for the multitude of \$1-3 cookbooks, gardening books and various other genres that fill our shelves. Alas, the closest location is more than three hours away in Pennsylvania. Trust me, I make up for it when I'm in Texas, where there are 43 locations (five of which are in San Antonio, where my family lives). www.hpb.com

When I watch *Hoarders* or *Hoarders: Buried Alive*, I find myself pausing the recording and packing up a few boxes of books to trade in at **2nd & Charles**, a used bookstore in Woodbridge, Virginia. When I cull down my gardening section, I always donate them to Green Spring Gardens' horticulture center library. It's my way of giving back to a place where I've created some of my best botanical photographs. www.2ndandcharles.com

When Michael and I travel, we search for local bookstores. Some of our other favorites include:

Powell's Books is a chain of bookstores in Portland, Oregon, and was founded in 1971 by Walter Powell. In 2002, Powell's was cited by *USA Today* as one of America's 10 best bookstores. I especially love the cooking and gardening specialty book store near their Hawthorne District location. www.powells.com

The Elliot Bay Book Company is an independent, family-owned bookstore, founded in 1973 by Walter Carr. Located in the heart of Seattle, Washington's Capitol Hill neighborhood business district, this full service bookstore is home to more than 150,000 titles, set on cedar shelves in a multi-level, inviting unique atmosphere. www.elliottbaybook.com

David Hutchinson owns and operates the tiny **Flora and Fauna Books** store, a treasure trove of hard-to-find-new, rare, and out-of-print books dealing with the life sciences. A master birder, gardener and naturalist, Hutchinson opened the business in 1983. Store hours are by appointment, although every time we've popped in, he was open for business. www.ffbooks.net

The **Tattered Cover Book Store**, a Denver literary landmark, began as a small independent store with only 950 square feet in the Cherry Creek district of Denver, Colorado. It has grown for more than 40 years to include three expansive locations in the greater Denver Metro area. This indie bookstore has nooks and crannies that offer the intimacy and comfort of smaller bookshops, furnished with sofas, overstuffed chairs, free wi-fi in the cafe; and a world-class newsstand in each location. We hit all three locations when we're in the area. www.tatteredcover.com

Written by **Ginger Garneau** · Photography by **Elizabeth Garneau**

So Charming

I am not sure when or how it began—my fascination with vintage charms and charm bracelets, I mean. Ever since I can remember, I have been spellbound by those small gold or silver trinkets that mark the special occasions in a person's (usually female's) life. For a child of the sixties, a charm bracelet was one of the things every girl wanted. I recall the "richest" girl in my sixth grade class had a real gold bracelet, complete with a spinning globe charm that cost \$5. Back then, that was big spending!

Charms from the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s were not as mass produced as they are now. They were small masterpieces, many of which were multi-dimensional and finished by hand. My sister and I each had a smallish sterling silver bracelet to which we added as we travelled with our parents. My charms included a maple leaf from Niagara Falls, Canada; a small train from the Strasburg, Pennsylvania, railroad tour; a Wisconsin Dells horse; a Williamsburg carriage, and others. I can remember my parents looking for the hallmarks "Wells" or "Beau Sterling" before they added to our collections as they felt the quality of these charms would last us a lifetime. They were right, of course.

Still Lusting

When my husband and I were looking for a home to buy in Orlando, Florida, in the early 1980s, it was hard for me to concentrate because our realtor had a gold bracelet with gargantuan charms commemorating her outstanding sales. I couldn't stop staring at it. Around this time, I purchased a small, affordable, 14k gold heart-link bracelet and began adding not-too-expensive charms. Somehow, this just did not have the same appeal as the large vintage ones I had seen in my earlier years. Even though I was glad to have my own bracelet to build on, it just lacked the "charm."

Bracelet of My Dreams

Imagine my thrill when I inherited my mother-in-law's double-link, heavy, gold bracelet, complete with a special charm my father-in-law had made to celebrate the opening of one of their early restaurants in 1965. I count this bracelet as one of my most treasured pieces of jewelry. I have slowly been adding charms to this treasured bracelet as I find them at auctions, mainly on eBay (a whole other addiction for me).

continued on page 112



One Woman's Lifelong Passion for Vintage Charm Bracelets

THE COLLECTOR

I've since added to my mother-in-law's bracelet with charms that have meaning for me: a palm tree Florida charm, because we have lived there a few different times; an "I Love You" charm (I pretend it is from my dear hubby); a heart with little seed pearls and a ruby; and of course, a Christmas charm. I hope my sisters-in-law realize how grateful I am to them for allowing me to have this special keepsake.

Eight Bracelets and Counting

I decided to count the number of charm bracelets in my jewelry box. I now have eight. One is a beautiful, sterling snake-chain piece made in India. The charms have the Bali design with a gemstone in the center of each one.

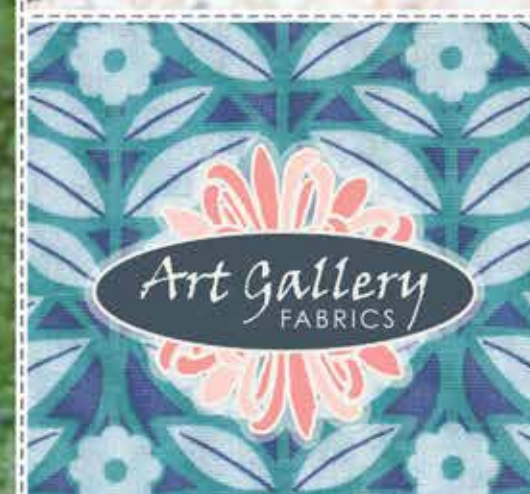


I also have a sterling Christmas bracelet that has enameled theme charms. Another is a sterling heart "girlie" charm bracelet with a shoe, hat, purses, cappuccino maker, and more (shown at left). I have a large vintage sterling bracelet that I bought on eBay, full of large, vintage, jeweled charms. I still found room to add more, of course. I also count the above-mentioned small gold bracelet and childhood sterling bracelet. I recently bought a bare, heavy, sterling bracelet at a charity auction, just coaxing me to fill it up. My treasured inherited bracelet is the most charming for me, however, and its lustre will never fade, no matter how many others I may find. **CHM**

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a pair of scissors!

Tranquillity Scarf



1. For a double-wrap scarf, use a men's XL white shirt in 100% cotton or a 50/50 blend. Cut beneath the armholes across the width of the shirt. Discard the top part and use the bottom part for your scarf. Cut the hemmed edge off the shirt bottom as well.



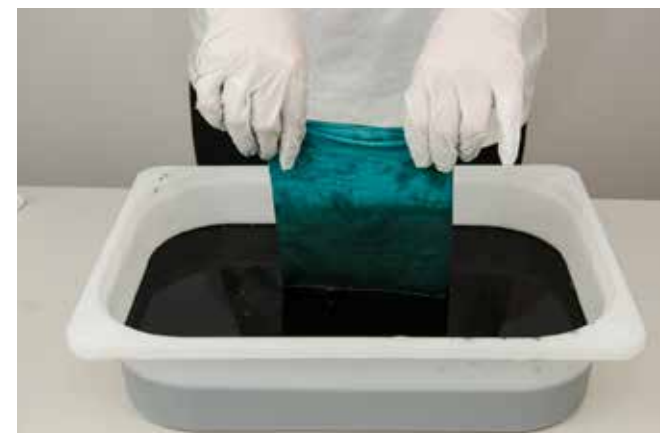
2. We used a plastic storage tub from IKEA for our dye bath tray. Be sure to wear gloves to avoid staining your hands. For our base dye, we used Rit® Liquid Dye in Teal. Mix dye and water according to the instructions on the bottle and submerge t-shirt fabric into dye for the suggested time.



3. Pull fabric out of dye and wring well, squeezing out excess liquid.



4. Have an old towel handy to use as a drying-off base. We didn't wait for the piece to entirely dry; we just lightly patted it to get more moisture out.



5. Fold the fabric in half to make it easier to dip into your second dye bath. For this dyeing round, we used Rit® Tint and Dye in Dark Green in powder form. Mix according to the instructions and dip one end of the scarf into the dye bath. Submerge the fabric to the desired height of the second color. We planned to have two separate color bands (teal and dark green), but after the darker dye splashed onto our lighter band, we decided to continue that pattern and make it mottled instead. We finger-painted the darker dye in a random pattern onto the lighter band.



6. Pull fabric from the final dye bath and pat dry again. Hang to dry over another towel or a tray to avoid dripping onto the surface below. Note: Colors will be lighter when fully dried. Once dry, tug on both ends of the scarf (like pulling taffy!) to stretch it. Wrap around your neck twice to make a double-loop scarf. You can also fringe one end or fringe and knot one end for a different look (see page 135 for instructions on how to create these two effects).

Camo Cami



RIT® Liquid Dye in Teal and RIT® Powder Dye in Dark Green

We used a 50/50 Route 66 brand white sport tank/cami from Kmart for this project, but you can use a white tank or white t-shirt instead in either 100% cotton or a blend.

We dipped the top portion of the cami into Rit Liquid Dye in Teal, leaving it in according to the package directions. We dipped the cami into the dye until it stopped just below the bust line. Remove it from dye bath and squeeze out excess liquid. Use an old towel to further dry the dyed portion.

We then dipped the lower two-thirds of our cami into our Dark Green dye bath (left over from our Tranquility Scarf project, and allowed the darker dye to graduate into the lighter color just below the bust line. Using the same dappling technique, we flicked and finger-painted the darker dye into the lighter area, creating a camouflage effect. Squeeze out excess and pat dry on a towel. Hang to dry over a towel or tray to catch any drips.

Don't worry about tiny imperfections and little splatters—they add to the handmade look of your wearables!



We used a Hanes 50/50 blend XL white t-shirt from Michaels to create this scarf. We dipped one end in Rit Liquid Dye in Apple Green and the other in Rit Liquid Dye in Teal, leaving a 1.5" band of white in the middle. See page 133 for our how-to photo. After drying, we stretched the scarf so a double loop could be made.

We used a Hanes 50/50 blend XL white t-shirt from Michaels to create this scarf. We dipped one end in Rit Liquid Dye in Purple and the other in Rit Liquid Dye in Violet and allowed the two colors to blend into each other in the middle. After drying, we stretched the scarf so a double loop could be made.



Color² Scarf

Summer Ombre

RIT® Liquid Dye in Apple Green and Evening Blue

Dyed, fringed & Knotted



RIT® Liquid Dye in Teal



Experiment with leaving a white band at the center or just dye one end of a shirt in a single color (RIT® Liquid Dye in Teal) like we did with the tank top at right.

I got the idea for this shirt from one of my favorite stores (which shall remain nameless). Their simple short-sleeve t-shirt with a similar ombre banding was \$44! Our version was less than \$10, including the shirt and dye bath.

An added bonus—the darker banding at the bottom has a slimming effect!

Graduated color band



RIT® Liquid Dye in Apple Green

RIT® Liquid Dye in Teal



Create a two-tone look by dipping each end of your scarf (or an entire t-shirt) into two different colors. Play with your color combinations—there are 20 colors in the RIT® collection and they come in both liquid and powder forms.

Other dye brands include Dylon®, Tulip®, Procion® and iDye®. See the list of resources on page 135.

Keep in mind that colors will vary depending on the fabric content (100% cotton versus a blend) as well as how much water is added and how long you dye the piece.

Fringe Benefits

We cut each fringe about 4" in length and approximately 3/8" to 1/2" in width. The beauty of this project is that it doesn't have to be perfect!



To dye or not to dye? To fringe or not to fringe? To knot or not to knot? To bead or not to bead? There are no set rules, so let your creativity decide!

Both patterned and solid t-shirts make great scarves. You're bound to have t-shirts in your closet that you no longer wear. Rather than tossing them, consider repurposing them. Although we worked with XL t-shirts in most of our projects (to allow for the double-loop effect), you can use smaller sizes. Teen tanks and t-shirts will make a single loop scarf. The great thing about t-shirt material is that you can stretch it to adjust to your preference, whether you want a single or double loop.

Add beads for a tribal effect (beads must have holes with a fairly large diameter in order to fit the fringe through them). For the fringed scarf (opposite page), we used a men's XL print t-shirt, cut 4" fringe lengths, knotted each fringe, then added beads at alternating heights to distribute the weight (both visually and physically). The striped tank (middle, right) was fringed but not knotted. Simple, inexpensive and quick to make, these scarves can be worn in any season and make great gifts.



We loosely knotted most of our scarves at the top, but you can tie knots along the length. When you add beads, position a knot above and below the bead to keep in place. If you make the fringe narrower than 3/8", you can fit beads with smaller diameters.

Resources

Dharma Trading Co.

www.dharmatrading.com

Dharma Trading Co. carries their own lines of pro dyes as well as dye products from Jacquard and Alter Ego.

Jacquard Products

www.jacquardproducts.com

Jaquard Products manufactures 50 shades of iDye, a dye for both natural fibers and polyester/nylon.

Joann Fabric and Craft Stores

www.joann.com

Joann's carries Dylon, Jacquard iDye and Tulip fabric dyes.

Michaels

www.michaels.com

Michaels carries several brands of dyes in-store.

Rit Dye

www.ritdye.com

The Rit Dye site showcases projects, dyeing techniques, a color formula guide and an online shop.



Living Spontaneously, Finding Roots

One of my big goals in life was to own a house so I could make it my own home. Why was that so important to me? Probably because I grew up in a house in upstate New York, a condemned 24-room, 1870s farmhouse that my parents transformed into a gorgeous labor of love. I witnessed their blood, sweat and tears over a span of 18 years, of their doing the work themselves during evenings and weekends. What a lesson that turned out to be. Today I am the operations manager of a high-quality residential renovation company (www.crossconstructions.com)! I have come full circle and am again able to witness other houses being transform into gorgeous homes for others.

My goal came true 12 years ago when I purchased my first home in San Antonio, TX. After spending 15 years renting in Boston, relocating to Texas made it possible, financially, for me as a single mom to buy a home. I bought a three-bedroom, three-bath, two-story home, with a fireplace, detached garage and landscaped yard. I thought I was in heaven. Every single day when I would arrive home, I would pause and realize how lucky I was to have a home. I never took it for granted. I could put nails in the walls wherever I wanted, and build a cool "gift wrapping station." I could paint the walls any zany color I wanted. It was our home.

It didn't take long, compliments of a hefty income, to quickly fill my home with "stuff." I was finding everything I ever wanted, and then some. Artwork, furniture, plants, curtains and linens, hot tub...it didn't seem to stop and I found a home for all of it.

One of my traits is living spontaneously. Foolishly, I thought I had found "the one" and decided to relocate to Shreveport, LA. Unfoolishly, however, I kept my home and its contents, not sure what my future held.

After only one month in Shreveport, it was crystal clear that it was time to leave, so I headed west back to Texas. Along the way, I called a friend and asked her and her husband if I could spend the weekend at their house. En route, I was doing some seriously deep soul-searching. I realized that everything I needed I had with me and it all fit in my Volvo S60! The "stuff" that I felt was so important in my life and house was really not. It was a light-bulb-going-off moment.

I stayed in Argyle, TX, for two-and-a-half months, renting a hangar house at a regional airport. It was by far the most unique, quaint, well-designed, funky, fun place I had ever lived in. But, it wasn't home.

With a clear head, I returned to San Antonio. I had accepted a new job, and I put my house on the market. With my daughter in college, I did not need that much

space, nor all of the "stuff" that I thought was so necessary and fun. I sold pretty much everything, as I did not know where I would be living and I didn't need all the "stuff" any more.

I was lucky. The house sold quickly and I was in rush mode to find a rental house. I found another quirky, unique, nice house. Having lived with minimal contents, it felt refreshing and clean. Over the two-and-a-half years I lived there, I did not unpack much. I knew in my heart that I needed and wanted another home of my own.

As the end of my lease began creeping up, I knew that it would be wise to begin looking for a house. For more than two months, I looked, and looked, and looked, and almost put an offer in on a "compromise" house and then...I found it!

I knew from the minute I set foot in the 1953, two-bedroom, one bath, 1,025 sq. ft., garaged, landscaped, adorable house, it was exactly what I was looking for. It had "me" written all over it. It has character, gorgeous hardwood floors, a great outside space for entertaining, and a lovely backyard. I just knew it had to be my next home. My offer was accepted!

Many friendly neighbors have filled me with the history and stories about this house and the couple who lived here for 50 years. They are described as having integrity and an impeccable love for this house. It was their home, and it is very obvious how much it meant to them. I was told by one neighbor, "that house has amazing Karma." And, she was right—it does. I am honored to be the newest homeowner and will do everything I can to treat it with the same respect and love because it means that much to me also.

When unpacking, I was rejuvenated and elated at rediscovering those things that mean so much to me and bring me so much joy, both inside and outside. Since my sister passed away in 2002, I have traveled with a corkscrew willow tree that was grown from a small branch from her full tree in Seattle. I am reminded every moment that I am in or outside why it is my home. My new space is filled with an amazing amount of love and friendship, and that makes me smile and sometimes cry. I love showing off my home; explaining to guests the history of certain pieces—including the great deals I got on Craigslist!

Home to me is where I am completely comfortable and it makes me happy. It can be my place of reflection and peacefulness, or it can be party central. Either way, it is mine. It is my home, and I love it! **CHM**
—Martha Bizzell / San Antonio, Texas

Celebrating Life at the Table

When I think of home, my thoughts immediately go to the dinner table. I've always believed mealtime served up far more than just food. Although food can take center stage, forging relationships might be a close second.

Making more meals than I can count for a large family was only trumped by the relationships we fostered around the family table. Nourishing the stomachs and minds of my five babies was really a loving gesture and one of the blessings I carried with me from my maternal and paternal family. It's a tradition carried on today as my children provide for theirs. I can't say I did everything well as a young mother traveling around the world but, I feel reasonably confident this was my very best gift to my kids.

We not only ate, we shared thoughts, ideas, and daily experiences. It was an opportunity to teach life skills and habits. Before growing to counter height in stature, my children were expected to help in small ways according to their abilities. Kids love to be includ-

ed in shopping, meal preparation, setting the table, and serving up their contributions. Clean-up may be an issue, but even that can be executed with a fun twist.

There are many peripheral benefits of getting your children involved, including socialization, expanding their palates, discussing economic limitations, utilizing mathematic calculations and sanitation, to name a few.

In retrospect, I can see how cooking and dining together opened a space to exercise creativity and a sense of belonging. One of the most powerful reminders of the importance of family mealtime is when I'm in the kitchen with my grandchildren, watching as they beam with pride over their contributions.

Some tips would include keeping it simple and positive, taking pictures (for remembrance), acknowledging their help, and inviting friends to join the activity. All of this will be appreciated even more, later.

Celebrate life at the table with food, love, and the essential ingredient—communication! **CHM**
—Gina Waterfield / Austin, TX,

The Home of My Dreams

About 12 years ago, I decided I needed to find a "home." Yes, I had what most people would call a home—an apartment in a large city. It was a triple-decker place on the third floor with a clawfoot tub in the bathroom and diamond-pane windows that dated back to the early 1900s.

But I was looking for something more: a sense of place, a sanctuary that not only provided a refuge from the stress of the outside world but a home that had my stamp of identity—"me" written all over it. One where people would gaze upon it and murmur, "Ah, that's Steph's house, I just know it." Coincidentally, I had taken up gardening for the first time, so I was obsessed about creating a cottage garden.

As things seem to happen in threes in my life, I was also looking for a new job. I interviewed in a place I had long dreamed of moving to—Cape Cod. My interview went well and I was sure I had the job. On a whim, I looked at what I thought would be apartments. I just hoped to get a lower-floor unit instead of being on top, and that there would be green space nearby.

We turned the corner to the units and the apartment lease manager pulled into the driveway of the most darling, adorable duplex I had ever seen. It was a cottage surrounded by woods. When we went inside, the rooms were bathed in a bright light. There was no electricity and I was amazed how shiny everything was. The magnetic pull was irresistible. Just breathing in it felt wonderful.

Before we left, I had already imagined where 80% of my furniture would be going. I had already made it mine. I signed the lease and moved in six weeks later. I lived in that duplex for six years. It was actually the third building I had ever lived in as an adult, but for me, it was my first real home. In my first cottage garden, I planted hollyhocks, coreopsis, daisies, day lilies, hydrangeas and fragrant peonies.

Home, for me, is where you live out one or more of your dreams. Home is where you create a space that's sacred and healing and is like no other place. Home is where you fantasize and live out that fantasy with your space. Even when you leave that place, you take parts of it with you. My current home is filled with treasures from that first place. I rarely think about the buildings I lived in the past but I will never forget my first home. That's where I truly became an adult. **CHM**
—Stephanie Simpson / Queenstown, MD

Saying Goodbye

I didn't know where I was going, but I couldn't wait to get there. It was 1979, and I was leaving the place where I had grown up. It was 1965 when my mother and us five kids moved in. The place was already 30 years old. It was a duplex made out of cinder blocks, owned by the government.

But there I stood, 34 years later, knocking at the door of my old homestead. Nothing moved, nothing changed, and nothing lived. I walked out into the yard and stood next to a tree—a tall white pine with branches reaching up towards the sky like open mouths, ready to be fed by the rain and embraced by the sun. I planted that tree when I was just nine years old. The sapling was just four inches tall when I plucked it from the ground and planted it in its final spot. Now it towered over the house, shading it from the hot Texas sun.

That corner bedroom is where I started my first rock 'n roll band. People from the neighborhood would fill the front yard with their lawn-chairs and blankets, just to hear this little kid play "Johnny B. Goode" and "Smoke on the Water."

I am fortunate today to still keep in contact with a few people that lived in my neighborhood. We try to get together every couple of years. We enjoy each other's families and sharing stories of our lives. Every once in a while, we'll remember something from the old days: sometimes happy, sometimes sad. But we'll look at each other and we know what that look means. We're sharing the same memory. An unspoken law. Too painful to talk about. So we pack it and place it in our memory banks, marked as "forget me nots."

I have lived in many places since that cinder-block home, but I will always have a special place in my heart for that house. So the old saying rings true—"Home is where the heart is." I carry it with me every day. It shaped who I am today and I have the scars to prove it.

As I drove away from my old home that day, I watched it disappear in the rear-view mirror. I don't think I'll come back here again; my visit was bittersweet. I returned just to say goodbye. **CHM**
—William Lee / San Antonio, TX

Home Is...

Home. Home is a sunroom, reflecting yellows and golds in early morning light. Home is sitting on a patio overlooking an arroyo, resting after a long day of work in the desert, relaxing as twilight slips into night and dark skies become brilliant with starlight. Home is grandmother's kitchen, the soup pot bubbling, the aroma of vegetables and seasonings blending and tempting until supper time arrives.

Home is standing on a high river bluff, overlooking the Mississippi River. Home is standing on a rocky shore overlooking Lake Michigan. Home is camping on the shores of Lake Roosevelt, flute music in the background, campfire glowing, orange and red ribbons of a lingering sunset reflecting still in the quiet waters.

Home is a kitchen, in the gentle routine of dish washing or chopping vegetables while enjoying the view of the garden from the window. Home is a backyard garden, with the weeding, the tending of a few vegetables, the flowers in bloom. Home is the walk around the neighborhood pond, watching the nesting egrets and wood duck families, and noticing the American lotus emerge from the rippling waters.

Home is the phone call with news you didn't want to hear, with news that gathers family closer together. Home is the wedding, with solemn vows and joyous feasting, to celebrate the new connections in life. Home is tossing a baseball back in forth in the grassy field behind the house.

Home is the back room, newly-painted and filled with second-hand baby furniture, awaiting the arrival of the first grandchild.

Home is the studio in the sky islands, far from loved ones, where the joys of inspiration delight. Home is the glider on the porch at day's end, sitting with one's beloved, holding hands, content.

Home is a container for a life, well-lived. Home is a container for dreams, hopes, prayers, memories. Home is a container for the past, the present, the future. **CHM**
—Bo Mackison / Madison, Michigan

Respect for Home

What does home mean to me? Several interesting essays have been published in previous issues of *Celebrate Home Magazine*, and I can relate to all of them. My own perspective is a flashback to my childhood home, which was based on strictly aesthetic values and concern about materials and their potential. I learned to see the value of simplicity, but also how strong a discipline it requires to achieve it.

I grew up with four siblings in a big and very beautiful house, mainly built by my parents in the early 60s. It was a house made in the Japanese style, with a flat, built-up roof. It was simple and elegant, made out of cedar wood, yellow bricks, and had large windows from floor to ceiling. The entire house had dark hardwood floors. The ceiling was covered with light wood, and the walls were rough inside as well as outside. There was no wallpaper or any other fragile materials used in building or decorating the house.

The big windows brought nature inside, and the changing light from the early morning sun until the late evening would change how everything looked, and made it a place that never that looked the same. The furnishings were designed to match the house, and except for changing small carpets now and then, everything had its place and remained that way.

Every decision concerning the house was thought over and analyzed, finding the optimal and most elegant solution in an attempt to let the materials come to their full potential. Nothing was just so-so.

After more than 50 years, when both my parents had died and the house was put up for sale, people were amazed to see how beautifully everything was made and how natural materials can age with grace.

We all came to love that place deeply and felt connected with it in a special way. This was absolutely "home" to us, but what was it that made it so special?

There were, of course, several natural advantages to being a child in a big house. First of all, there was a lot of space for ourselves and our playmates. (I wonder how our friends ever found their shoes and coats when they left the house—there were so many!). Secondly, there were lots of places to hide when daddy came to order us to do gardening or housework. Cleaning the garden and the house was not up for discussion, and the expectations for perfect results were very high.

I doubt that many children enjoy housework or cleaning gardens, especially not if their playmates are having fun doing other things. We were no different, not the least because the requirements were so strict. Every job had to be done well, and with the utmost respect for the work and the tools.

One would think that such demands would not lead to good memories, but I believe that our participating with keeping the house and garden in shape probably connected us more to this special place.

The expectations and guidance from my parents on how to achieve the best result in any endeavor had been an education. They taught us what is essential and what truly matters. I admit that we did always not agree with them back then, when we were crawling under bushes to tidy the garden, but time has helped us to see things differently.

To me, home is where responsibility and respect are, where there is a will and open mind to look for potential and let it grow to its very best—and that includes everything from houses, to furniture to design or behavior. It means stretching to the limits and making the effort. **CHM**
—Birgitte Tarding / Copenhagen, Denmark

Always Growing

My favorite place in my house is my porch, where I grow beautiful Knockout® roses, ivy and tropical plants. I love to watch them grow and observe what my neighbors are growing as well. I believe that God made plants and flowers for all of us to enjoy, and that each plant is special in its own way. I think that loving and caring for a garden is a good skill to learn, and it's wonderful when you can pass along plants so other can enjoy them. What a special gift we have when we can grow plants, share our bounty and care for the natural world. **CHM**
—Lisa Westfall / Bryan, Texas

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