

A Hands-On *Garden*

A designer collaborates with an antiques collector to create this beautifully personal cottage garden.

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Turning your yard into a space that feels like you is no easy task. Diana Smith, an arid decorator and antique collector, had designed her interior with ease, but when it came to transforming her backyard into a space tailored to her tastes, she was at a bit of a loss.

The yard she inherited had a pool that was never used and in bad condition. She knew she wanted more space to entertain and room for lush blooms, but she didn't know where to begin or what direction to go.

"I had never had a designer before," Diana says. But when her contractor recommended Kathryn Rue of Rue Group, Inc., she was ready to try something new. The pool was filled in, and Kathryn worked closely with Diana to create a cottage garden that fit her needs.

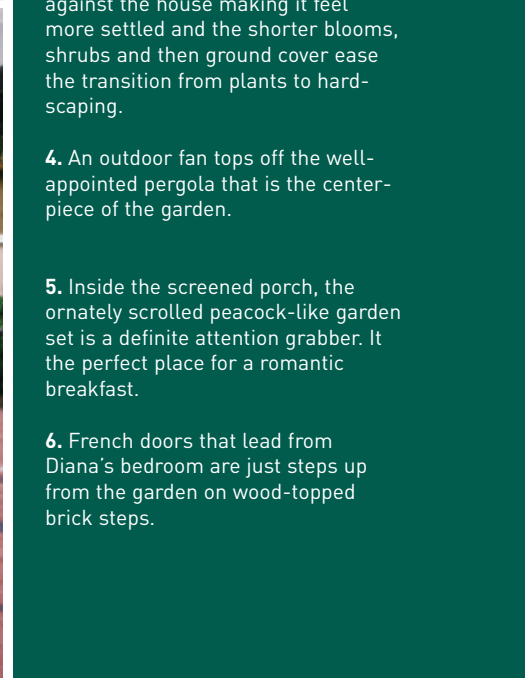
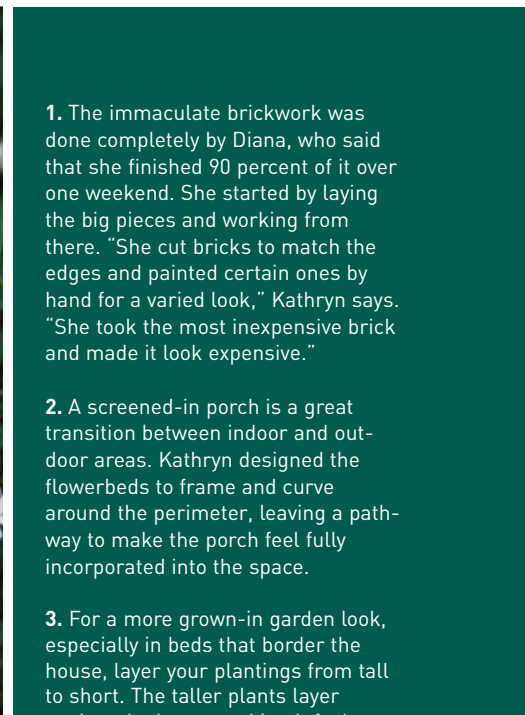
"IF YOU DON'T HAVE THE VISION, I WOULDN'T BE AFRAID TO TRY A DESIGNER," DIANA SAYS OF KNOWING WHEN TO DO IT YOURSELF AND WHEN TO **CALL ON A PRO.** "KATHRYN WAS THE RIGHT FIT, AND SHE LET ME EXPLORE WHAT I WANTED TO DO AND MET ME HALF WAY, AND IT WORKED OUT VERY WELL."



« **A SHED IS AN ESSENTIAL STORAGE OPPORTUNITY** that could add charm to your garden. "It was challenging to add a shed that looked at home in the space," Kathryn says. "I made it to look like a house. If you have a small yard and a small budget, you can still include your shed in a way that look likes it belongs." The croquet set propped against the side is inviting and adds another entertaining element. Diana uses this shed as a "holding tank" for her antiques side-business.



WHY NOT USE YOUR BEST EVEN FOR OUT-DOOR ENTERTAINING? The lace tablecloth is a family heirloom, and the dishes are her wedding china from 40 years ago. Diana also has antiques and decorative finds placed all around the garden, adding a one-of-a-kind touch.



1. The immaculate brickwork was done completely by Diana, who said that she finished 90 percent of it over one weekend. She started by laying the big pieces and working from there. "She cut bricks to match the edges and painted certain ones by hand for a varied look," Kathryn says. "She took the most inexpensive brick and made it look expensive."

2. A screened-in porch is a great transition between indoor and outdoor areas. Kathryn designed the flowerbeds to frame and curve around the perimeter, leaving a pathway to make the porch feel fully incorporated into the space.

3. For a more grown-in garden look, especially in beds that border the house, layer your plantings from tall to short. The taller plants layer against the house making it feel more settled and the shorter blooms, shrubs and then ground cover ease the transition from plants to hard-scaping.

4. An outdoor fan tops off the well-appointed pergola that is the centerpiece of the garden.

5. Inside the screened porch, the ornately scrolled peacock-like garden set is a definite attention grabber. It the perfect place for a romantic breakfast.

6. French doors that lead from Diana's bedroom are just steps up from the garden on wood-topped brick steps.

BASIC POINTS OF INTEREST


Starting with a blank slate, Kathryn began by envisioning the garden in zones. She kept in mind Diana’s wish list, but balanced it carefully with her budget, allocating costs where it made the biggest difference. “I did really effective spatial planning for the area and her budget,” Kathryn says. “The bigger planting beds were more eye-catching and very important to creating the impact for the cottage garden.”

Then she set her sights on where she could center the entertaining space and set the tone for the yard. “I created the focal point with the dining area covered by a pergola,” Kathryn says. The large-scale structure was situated slightly off center for better flow in the wide but short garden. In essence, it pulls visitors out into the space rather than cutting the space in half.

A GARDEN THAT SPEAKS TO YOU

Diana had always been in love with brickwork in the classic cottage garden style, and when it came to executing her vision, she wasn’t afraid to roll her sleeves up.

“Diana said she’s always wanted brick that made a clinking sound,” Kathryn explains. “Her contractor quoted her a price that was too high for her budget, so she said if I designed it, and her contractor could lay the concrete sub-base, then she would actually lay the brick herself.”

Not only did the modified DIY approach work best with her budget, it also afforded her a chance to get even more creative. “She came up with the idea to paint the darker bricks to add to the design and ended up painting several hundred bricks,” Kathryn says. “She did a beautiful job, and that’s how she could afford it.” 

KATHRYN INCORPORATED circular shapes into the rectangular yard to soften the space and create zones within a zone.



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