

Mary-Anne Poole's enormous rural garden near Campbellville features long borders of colourful perennials, variations in elevation, neat pebble edging and plenty of birdhouses. Landscape cloth underneath the pebble edging helps keep it free of weeds.

**DETERMINATION AND HARD WORK:**

# The Country Garden of Mary-Anne Poole

Not every garden begins with a carefully mapped design. Some gardens unfold a few feet at a time, with the gardener's creativity as the design element that keeps the whole space cohesive. Such is the case with the garden of Mary-Anne Poole.

WRITTEN AND PHOTOGRAPHED  
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LOCATED on a quiet country road near Campbellville, Mary-Anne's garden is 12 years in the making. She began the process of landscaping her property by addressing a neglected area that needed her attention. "I started at the side of the house. There were a lot of old shrubs that needed to be removed," she recalls.

Once the old shrubs had been cleared away, the next task Mary-Anne faced was replacing old plantings with ones that were more appropriate. Even though she

was an experienced gardener, deciding where to put new plants was a challenge. In the end, it became a matter of trial and error. "If I planted it and it grew, I left it. If it didn't, I dug it up and tried something else," she says.

At the front of the house, towering evergreens presented yet another hurdle: shade. Here Mary-Anne planted hostas, with a pleasing variety of leaf shapes, textures and colors. In an adjacent flowerbed that follows the long arc of the driveway, she planted Japanese ferns, succulents and Heuchera

in shades of burgundy, deep rose and peach. Where sunlight peeked through the trees, daylilies, Echinacea, tall Siberian iris and richly scented Dianthus were mixed in.

#### Popular Pond

One of the first things Mary-Anne did in the back garden was to have a landscape company help her with the installation of the pond. "The birds love it. And I love the sound of the water when I am out there gardening." Water emerges from a small reservoir, half-hidden by Ostrich ferns,

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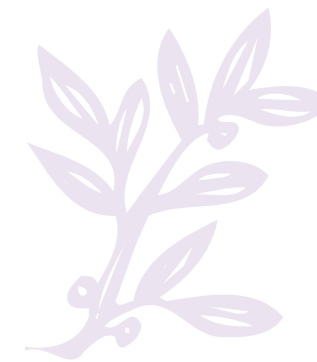
and tumbles over a mix of beach pebbles and stone, down to a pond covered with waterlilies. Standing tall like sentinels on either side of the pond are two weeping beech trees and a triangular birdhouse sitting high on a pole. Planted around the

perimeter of the pond there are iris, peonies, hosta, Lady's Mantle and ornamental grasses.

Originally the pond had koi, but a heron flew in and feasted on the lot. When Mary-Anne replaced the fish the following summer, the heron appeared again, as if

answering a dinner bell. So she gave up on the koi. These days the pond is a haven for frogs, birds and other wildlife.

Framing the view to the pond is a large arbor that Mary-Anne designed and installed herself. Wisteria twists and turns its way up



▼ At the front of the house, where towering evergreens cast shade, Mary-Anne planted a variety of hostas. Every inch is neat and tidy.



▼ In the back garden, the pond was one of the first creations. Water trickles down stones into a waterlily-covered pool appreciated by birds.





▲ Heuchera or coral bells with leaves in shades of peach, burgundy, green and rose grow in a flowerbed near the driveway.



▲ Deep purple, pink and white Lupins self-seed in the large flower bed, sometimes being transplanted to better locations.



▲ Mary-Anne grouped tree roots to create a stumpery, tucking in potted plants where they can be held. Birdhouses throughout the garden result in plenty of bird song.

the sides of the rustic timber and provides a leafy canopy, which is a welcome respite from the sun on a hot day. A pea gravel path guides the visitor under the arbor to the pond and through the adjacent flowerbeds.

Over the years the flowerbeds have stretched out in both directions from the centrally located pond to run the full length of one side of the backyard. An edging of grey beach pebbles accentuates the undulating curves of the flowerbeds and creates an attractive separation between the green lawn and the flowers.

In the sunny area nearest the house, there are Gaillardia, bearded iris, peonies and more daylilies. Deep purple, pink and white-coloured Lupins

have self-seeded among the other perennials. If the Lupins happen to pop up where Mary-Anne doesn't want them, she lifts and transplants them somewhere else. Toward the back of the property, deciduous trees create another spot for foxgloves, hosta, ferns and other shade-loving plants.

#### Cactus Flowers

Siting at the foot of a tall birdhouse in the grassy centre of the backyard is an interesting feature that always manages to astonish and surprise visitors: a hardy cactus garden. "People don't realize that some varieties of cactus can overwinter here in southern Ontario," Mary-Anne says. Her passion for cacti began with a few plants

and expanded slowly into a small collection. Apart from the novelty, it's the flowers that have stirred Mary-Anne's passion for these plants. "They have the most gorgeous blooms," she says.

When taken as a whole, Mary-Anne's garden is expansive, yet it is tidy and meticulously maintained. One might easily imagine that an entire crew of landscape professionals is responsible, but it's Mary-Anne alone who cares for the garden. If you were to ask for her tips or strategies for keeping a large garden manageable, Mary-Anne won't have any shortcuts to share. Instead she will tell you it is sheer determination and hard work that keep the garden looking good.

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▲ Wisteria winds up the sides of the rustic arbor that Mary-Anne designed and installed herself. A pea gravel path beckons the visitor through the arbor and along the pond and flowerbeds.



▲ *Campanula* or bellflowers glow in the sunlight.



▲ A garden of hardy cacti surprises visitors. These can overwinter outdoors and produce beautiful flowers.



▲ Beneath some native Ostrich ferns, *Matteuccia struthiopteris*, striking new shoots of a Copper Beech trail across the ground. The tree appeared to have died, so was cut down.



It's routine for her to begin at one end of a flowerbed and work until she reaches the other end. Then it's on to the next. Always Mary-Anne strives to keep on top of deadheading and weeding. "If I let it get away from me, I'll never catch up," she says with a laugh.

Undertaking the landscaping of such a large property can be an intimidating prospect for many homeowners, but as Mary-Anne's garden proves, you can tackle a large space bit by bit as time and money permit. A little creativity and a bit of hard work is all you really need to create a beautiful outdoor space. **NEV**

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◀ Peony perfection. Mary-Anne also grows dark red varieties.

### Mary-Anne Poole's Core Plants

#### SHADE:

Hosta  
Japanese Fern, *Athyrium niponicum var. pictum*  
Heuchera  
Ostrich Fern, *Matteuccia struthiopteris*  
Foxglove, *Digitalis*  
Solomon Seal, *Polygonatum*

#### SUN:

Peony, *Paeonia*  
Daylily, *Hemerocallis*  
Blanket Flower, *Gaillardia*  
Lupin, *Lupinus polyphyllus*  
Bellflower, *Campanula*  
Bearded and Siberian Irises

