





A JOYFUL GARDEN

Some gardens just make you smile from the first step you take through the last. This garden planted by a serious gardener is full of the joy of growing and nurturing.

Sue Terveer-Mullins, a master gardener, designed her garden using every space available and created a cohesive, flowing landscape. She does small garden design and installation in Iowa City.

When she and her husband, Sam Mullins, bought their 1921 house, the yard included lawn and a few trees. The garage, accessed by an alley, sat in the center of the backyard. Their first step was to move the garage to one side of the yard. Sue, then, began planting gardens in 1991. Eventually, they added a deck to the house and a potting area outside the side door.

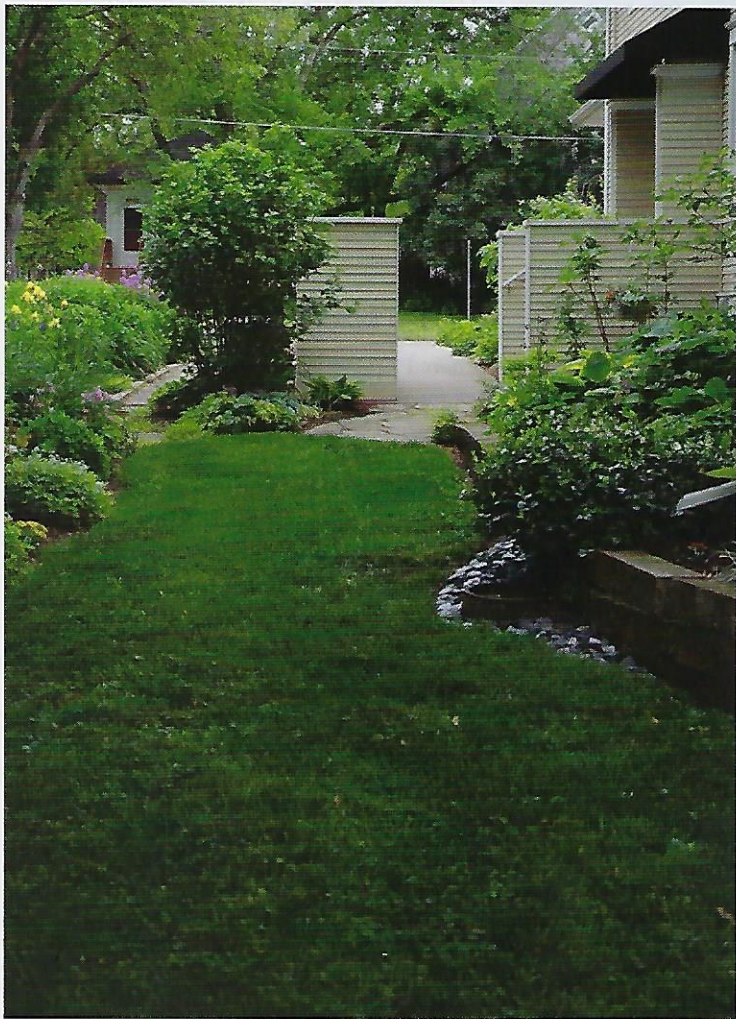
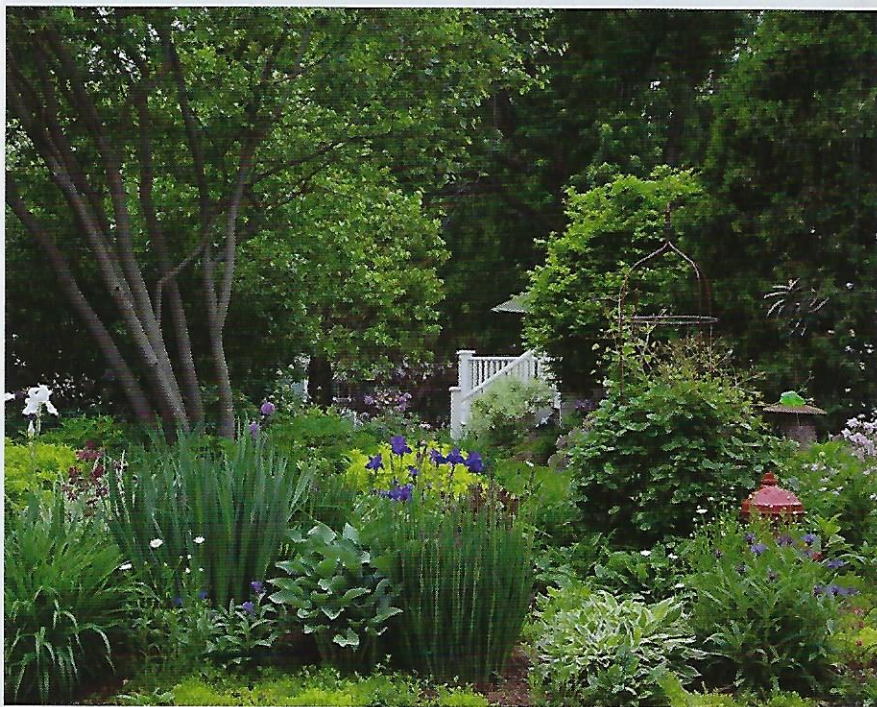
The vibrant boulevard planting functions as a complex perennial bed and visually enlarges the front yard. A red fire hydrant adds color to the tightly planted bed. Tall perennials partially screen the hydrant: sweet autumn clematis (*Clematis ternifolia*) on a 9-foot tall iron support, blue false indigo (*Baptisia australis*) and 'Husker Red' penstemon (*Penstemon digitalis* 'Husker Red'). In the foreground catmint (*Nepeta* spp.) and sedum (*Sedum* spp.) fill the role of hardy plants along with daylilies (*Hemerocallis* spp.), bearded and Siberian iris (*I. x hybrida*, *I. siberica*), and ornamental grasses in this bed bordering the street.

▼ From the street, the boulevard strip appears to be part of a larger garden, creating a sense of depth in the landscape. Again, the burgundy columbine with a pink variety as well, show their spring blooms. The verticality of the iris contrast well with the rounded shape of the 'Krossa Regal' and 'Fortunei Albomarginata' hostas.

Planted Strip

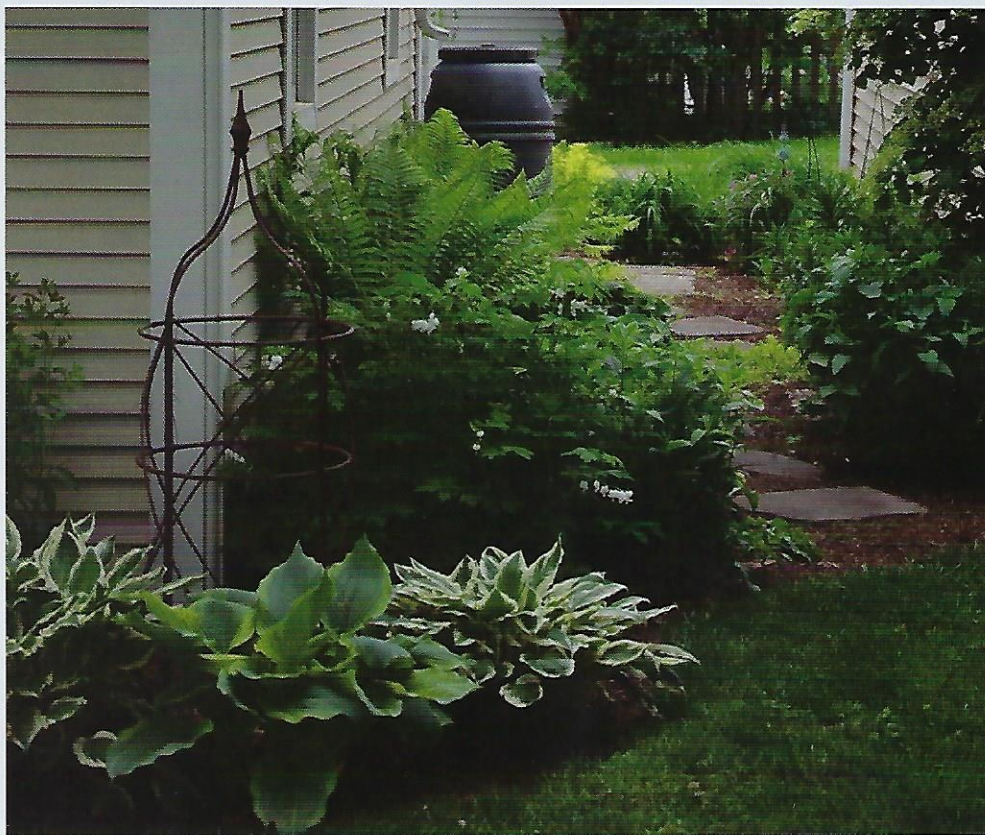
The boulevard strip in front of the house (the area between the sidewalk and the street) now provides an introduction to the garden. With all of the grass removed, the resulting bed is comfortably crammed with colorful plants that share the space with a red fire hydrant. One tree, a Cleveland select pear (*Pyrus calleryana* 'Cleveland Select') provides some shade to the garden and the front porch.

Beginning to explore the garden on the south side of the house, I entered a curvy lawn flanked by thriving shrubs and perennials. The lines of the bed edges encourage the visitor to stroll, eagerly anticipating what is around the bend. At the end of the side yard the landscape opens up into a large shady back yard. When I turned around to look from where I had come, the view is totally different, ending in a circular space with the boulevard garden and a borrowed view beyond.



▲ Looking back toward the boulevard garden, a totally new landscape appears. The borrowed view of the neighbor's house and garden across the street gives the landscape a sense of enclosure and timelessness with the stone façade. A pedestal and birdbath in Sue's garden lead us back and forth from the front to the back.

◀ Walking through the north side yard toward the street and a parking area, we pass between a shade garden and a sunnier garden shared with the neighbor. On the right by the steps to the side door, an oak leaf hydrangea (*Hydrangea quercifolia*) grows. A viburnum (*Viburnum* spp.) screens Sue's potting table, which is across from the side door.



▲ No lawn in the front yard provides space for a deep perennial bed with a path through the center. A tall burgundy columbine (*Aquilegia* spp.) rises in the center of the bed. The pink flower in the foreground is fern-leaf bleeding heart (*Dicentra eximia*) that blooms three seasons. Sue repeats it throughout the garden. A Lenten rose (*Helleborus* spp.) blooms and 'Goldflame' spirea (*Spiraea x bumalda* 'Goldflame') picks up the yellow color in the variegated *Hosta*.

◀ A planting of ostrich fern (*Matteuccia struthiopteris*), white bleeding heart (*Lamprocapnos spectabilis* 'Alba'), Japanese painted fern (*Athyrium niponicum*), 'Fortunei Albomarginata' hosta, and a sport of another variegated hosta, thrive on the north side of the garage. A rain barrel and an iron plant support the balance of the bed design.



▲ A view of the house and deck from the backyard easily convinces us to climb the stairs and sit under the pretty umbrella. A silver maple (*Acer saccharinum*) provides shade for the west- and south-facing deck. A white to light pink French lilac (*Syringa vulgaris*) sends its fragrance over the deck while a Korean spice viburnum (*Viburnum carlesii*) perfumes the kitchen. A purple leaf sand cherry (*Prunus x cistina*) adds deep color to the garden.

➤ A white privacy fence screens the backyard from the alley. Lattice and fence posts with finials screen a three-bin compost pile and white chairs offer a view of the garden. An arbor and trellis attached to the garage support a honeysuckle (*Lonicera* spp.) vine whose orange flowers balance a pot of orange annuals. Sue and Sam recycled their children's old playset to construct the trellis, arbor, and side garage entryway landing.





Seen from the back corner of the house, a circular bed becomes a focal point. Notice the wren atop the globe garden art. The terraced bed holds a dense shade garden including foam flower (*Tiarella cordifolia*), 'Gold Regal' hosta, and purple annual Petunia. Winter creeper (*Euonymus fortunei*) cascades over the stone wall. The down spout empties into a bowl filled with pebbles.

Colorful Beds

White trim on the house and garage and a white deck, white fence panel to screen the air conditioner, and white privacy fence brighten the gardens. White flowering plants and white foliage continue the theme and draw one around the landscape. The beds in May held plants with the additional deep colors of blue, red and purple. I look forward to visiting this garden in the summer and seeing a different palette.

Many creative touches include garden art, trellises, and pedestals along with

practical rain barrels and a compost bin screened by white lattice. Plant combinations encouraged me to stop and look closely. Sue uses combinations of leaf shape, texture, size and color to draw the visitor into the yard. Her gardens show many examples of plants that thrive in the Midwest and provide a source of inspiration for other gardeners. ♡

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