

# Lilly Hershey Finds Herself

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LEBANON (Lebanon Co.) —

"When our five children grew up and moved away during the 1970s, it took me a while to find myself," Lilly Hershey said. "But I finally did."

Much to her surprise, Lilly discovered that she had a whole lot of formerly untapped creative ability that has resulted in her winning numerous blue ribbons at flower shows and has enabled her to teach crafts at Lebanon Extension programs.

"I thought I couldn't do anything when I first joined the Flower Club," she said.

For many months, she went to meetings as an observer, always staying in the shadows, never intending to become involved. But Lilly found that the Flower Club members were a friendly group and when a workshop on making pine cone wreaths piqued her interest, she made one. Her completed pine cone wreath earned a blue ribbon in the club's competition.

"That was a big incentive to me," said Lilly, who then made numerous wreaths for gifts and even instructed others on how to make the wreaths.

"Life took off again," Lilly said of those years in the 1970s. And, it has not slowed down since then.

After the pine cone wreaths, Lilly began designing pictures made of dried materials. Two of those pictures also captured ribbons and created within her an admiration for the beauty of natural materials. Soon she was drying flowers and picking weeds to use in arrangements.

"It took a while for me to do flower arrangements good enough for the judges to give me a blue ribbon, but I've gotten a few through the years," Lilly admitted.

In 1991, Lilly was elated that one of her arrangements got the Award of Distinction, which means the best over all categories.

One of Lilly's favorite materials

for decorating is using fresh greens. "With greens, there is so much you can do for your own home and for gifts," she said. Much of her expertise in using greens in arrangements came from working at Royer's Garden Center for 10 years during the 1980s. It was there that she learned to appropriately use insecticides and herbicides and now treats the hundreds of trees and bushes that grow on the grounds.

When Lilly retired from the Garden Center, she found that she missed the greenhouse. When her husband put up a large shed to house his 35 antique cars, Lilly told him that if he needed a shed that size for his hobby, she needed a greenhouse for her hobby.

Her husband good naturedly agreed and Lilly got her greenhouse in the backyard. In it, Lilly grows plants that are difficult to find locally. She refers to the greenhouse as her therapy. On some bitter winter days, she finds rejuvenation by just sitting inside the greenhouse.

She starts cuttings from unusual plants of friends. A rosebud geranium is one in which she has found hundreds of people like a cutting.

"Anyone can go to a garden center and buy a big beautiful plant," Lilly said. "I prefer to take a small cutting and see what becomes of it."

She pointed at a profuse pot of healthy ivy and said that it was a pitiful piece when she first nursed the cutting into becoming a beautiful plant.

"I talk to my plants every day and I think it helps," she confessed.

Lilly's garden is quite a distance from the house and lays next to the creek that meanders through the meadow.

To reach the garden, Lilly hops on a golf cart and steers through an assortment of ducks, chickens, dogs, and cats, that wander compatibly on the property.

In addition to vegetable staples, Lilly's garden is profuse with



Lilly Hershey tends her garden planted with vegetables and flowers.

flowers to use in her projects or just to enjoy pampering. She grows 150 varieties of iris and a peppering of mint teas. Because the garden is bordered by woodland on two sides and a creek on the other, wildlife is profuse so the garden is fenced in on all sides. If the gate is left open, the horse, 50 chickens, 25 turkeys, and 60 ducks that roam the property, sometimes wander in and feast on the growing vegetables.

To keep the weeds from growing, Lilly lays newspapers between the rows. She prefers newspaper over plastic as it allows rain to soak through and keeps the ground moist. Because the paper is biodegradable, it rots into the soil or can be tilled into the soil at the end of the season.

"It's another way to recycle newspapers, Lilly said.

At one of the garden is a compost barrel where Lilly disposes of all weeds and table scraps.

"In the spring, I empty the compost barrel and you wouldn't believe what rich black soil comes out of it," Lilly said.

Three years ago, Lilly became president of the Lebanon Flower Club. Now, she is concentrating on fresh flower techniques and has joined a Herb Club. She happily reports that three of her granddaughters are interested in her drying flowers and growing straw-flowers and statice.

Lilly has invested money into purchasing a good dehydrator for drying herbs, fruits, and vegetables. She also uses the herbs to make seasoned mustards and herb vinegars. The mustard is made by drying herbs and grinding them into a powder.

"Mix the ground herbs into the cheapest mustard you can buy because the brand name mustards do not mix as well," Lilly advises those who want to add their own seasonings to mustard.

About the same time that Lilly joined the Flower Club, she also became interested in doll collecting. She now has 50 dolls.

"I was told that I collect dolls because I grew up during the

Depression and my parents couldn't afford to buy dolls for me," said Lilly who surmises that aspect probably has a bearing on why she prefers the older dolls with sleepy eyes.

Some of the dolls she purchases are in pieces. She learned to fix the dolls herself when she took one to a doll hospital and was told that it could not be repaired. She had paid \$30 for the pieces and was offered \$100 after she put it together again.

A trick of the trade that Lilly shares with those interested in

cleaning up dolls is to wash dolls' hair in false teeth cleaner. "It works better than anything else," she said of the unorthodox use.

Lilly's husband, Melvin, collects antique cars and has the distinction of owning the first fire engine used in Lancaster County. It is a horse-drawn model with hand carved wood and is estimated to date back to the 1700s before the Revolutionary War. Melvin's car collection focuses on unusual cars such as Packards, Sears, Hubmo-

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Lilly Hershey shows off some of her favorite doll collection. She collects older dolls with sleepy eyes. Most of the 50 that she has collected needed extensive repair, which Lilly enjoys doing.



In her one-person greenhouse, Lilly likes to grow things that cannot be purchased in local greenhouses. "Sometimes during the long winter months, I just like to come here and sit in the sun," she said.



Lilly Hershey suggests making a spice necklace. You need strong thread and two needles. Thread a 36-inch piece of strong thread with a needle at both ends. Soak 2 tablespoons of whole allspice and 1 teaspoon of cloves, some pieces and one to three whole anise, 4 tonka or vanilla beans, and some cinnamon sticks. For eight hours, soak dark and light pieces separately. Start at center front of necklace and interchange spices as you go along. You may use rose hips, small red peppers, dried ginger, whole nutmeg balls, and other favorite spices.



These pressed flowers on a round plaque is only one of the many projects for which Lilly captured top awards in Flower Club competition.