

English Garden Tea Parties Delight Young And Old

LOU ANN GOOD

Lancaster Farming Staff

MARIETTA (Lancaster Co.) —

"Women today are so high geared, they need to take time in which to be catered and pampered," Marian Miller said of the reason for the English Garden Teas that she prepares in her home.

Her parties do exactly that as she flits between kitchen and garden serving delicacies such as scones with lemon curds, lemon wafers,

fresh fruit drizzled with tea syrup, peach parfait, and elegant finger sandwiches interspersed with edible flowers and opera fudge.

Marian greets guests with a nosegay made from flowers and herbs that she grows in her garden.

Tables draped in layered tablecloths are set up on the patio and in her English garden ablaze with scents of lavender and late summer blooms. She uses her finest china, Depression glass, and silver

spoons to serve her guests. Bouquets of fresh flowers depend on the offerings of her gardens, but are gracefully arranged in heirloom containers.

It's this touch of class that appeals to many women who know that food tastes better, spirits are lifted, and life is more enjoyable when surrounded by beauty.

While Marian seeks to help women slow down and savor the lifestyle of a bygone era, she her-

self exudes unstoppable energy.

"I thrive on staying up all night and preparing this," she said of nasturtiums stuffed with cream cheese and chives, the dainty sandwiches of cucumber and watercress, and the heart-shaped lemon wafers.

She also offers children's tea parties, complete with games from the Victorian Era or a contemporary pool party in the swimming pool next to the garden. An English

playhouse is also part of the garden and a place for children to play after the tea.

"Tea parties show children the fun way of doing grownup things, yet at the same time kids can still be kids," Marian said.

She showed the children how to make sunflowers by arranging freshly sliced peaches around a scoop of ice cream and sprinkling blueberries on top.

(Turn to Page B3)

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