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## Brenda's Secrets For Turning Castaways Into Flowering Assets

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Food And Family  
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EPHRATA (Lancaster Co.) — A bathtub in the front yard? An ironing board in the side yard?

That's exactly what passersby see and much more when traveling past Ed and Brenda Sensenig's home, 188 S. Market St., along a rural road in Ephrata.

Always on the lookout for novel flower containers to incorporate into her landscaping decor, Brenda snatches up mundane castaways from yard sales and auctions.

The old adage that one man's junk is another man's treasure is certainly proven with one glance at Brenda's yard.

Except in this case, much more than a casual glance is required to capture the full magnitude of Brenda's ability to turn junk into flowering assets.

The yard and home of this bubbly "over 50" woman has been featured on numerous house tours, and in newspaper and magazine articles. These days, she is digging into dirt from sunup to sundown to plant and get things in order on the couple's 1½-acre plot.

Brenda said her adventure with the unusual began eight years ago, after things had settled down from having four new grandchildren added in one year.

That's when she dug out a pond using a rototiller and shovel.

"Things sort of evolved ever since then," Brenda said. First she picked up rocks to add to the

landscape. She built a stream, a patio, and had a wooden bridge installed across the stream.

At yard sales she kept seeing items that she envisioned would make great containers for container gardening.

"I just kept buying things. They cost only a few dollars—it's a lot cheaper than buying new planters and containers. I mean what could hold more flowers than a bed?" she asked.

So that white-painted iron bed bursts with color during the summer season.

The bathtub makes an ideal water garden. Circulating pumps



There's more than one way to use an ironing board.

keep the shower running throughout the outdoor season.

If she had a bathtub and a bed, Brenda figured she might as well turn that spot in the yard into "a bed and bath." She added a washbowl planted with petunias,

and a hamper, washtubs, and a few other items.

It seemed only natural to hang a pair of her husband's jeans nearby. She stitched the pant legs shut, filled them with plastic peanuts, and fastened a plastic pot inside the waistline with twistie ties. Voila! A unique container to hold flowering geraniums.

The ironing board was Brenda's mother's. Now it's covered with cat and kitten plants.

Another area, dubbed "Maw Maw's Nursery" features a toddler bed, pedal car, and swing covered and multiplying with flowers.

Although the landscaping ideas mostly flower from Brenda's imagination, she said her husband Ed helps out by painting many of the objects and assists with the layout of an outdoor railroad. That's right. In the front of the house is a wonderful train chugging along through the miniature village.

"I do the landscaping. I don't use any weed killers and sprays. I use lots of mulch — four dumploads, in fact."

Under the mulch lies a secret weapon against weeds. Brenda buys old sheets at garage sales, tears them up, lays them in position, and covers them with mulch. The sheets keep weeds from popping up but allows the moisture to seep through and eventually disintegrates into the soil.

"If I want to plant a flower, all I need to do is cut a hole in the sheet," Brenda said.

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"Bed and Bath" is what Brenda designated this area of the yard. It features an iron bed, washbowl, hamper, and a clawfoot tub with a circulating pump that keeps the shower running throughout the summer. Visitors inspect a pair of jeans that hold a flower pot, which will burst forth with colorful blooms later in the season.



This outdoor railroad can be admired by motorists traveling past the Sensenigs' home and from inside the home's sunroom.

