

Themes for the flower garden

By Debra Lee Baldwin
Copley News Service

Even a small yard can be a series of outdoor "rooms," each offering different pleasures to the senses.

The following describes intriguing themed beds that can be included in any garden; for those who like to dig first into beautifully illustrated books, new ones are mentioned.

THE SCENTED GARDEN

Stephen Lacey's "Scent in Your Garden" (Little, Brown) is, unfortunately, not a scratch-and-sniff book. But it does contain 250 color photographs and mentions nearly 1,000 plants.

To enjoy scent to the fullest, Lacey advises, the air must be fairly still. If possible, surround your scented garden with windbreaks of evergreen and deciduous shrubs and trees. You might want to include a bench so you can sit and enjoy the pleasant aromas.

Ideally, scented plants grow at nose height and/or release their fragrance as you brush by them. Consider filling pots with aromatic herbs and placing them on a stairway or along a narrow garden path.

THE BUTTERFLY GARDEN

According to Jerry Sedenko, au-

thor of "The Butterfly Garden" (Willard Books), a sunny, sheltered area will welcome winged guests

— especially one surrounded by a hedge composed of lilacs, firethorn, mock orange, ceanothus, viburnum, cotoneaster or (not surprisingly) butterfly bush.

Include shrubs and trees for shelter from predators, and plant flowers that provide continuous bloom. Classic "butterfly plants" include ageratum, sweet alyssum, cosmos, verbena and pincushion flower.

Butterflies need a water source, but a birdbath or pond won't do; create a sunny, damp spot — sandy or muddy — surrounded by a few rocks for "butterfly perches."

THE ROSE GARDEN

"A garden without roses is almost inconceivable," says Allen Lacey, author of "The Glory of Roses" (Stewart, Tabori & Chang).

If you agree, you'll be happy to know that growing roses is really quite easy. Like pets, they thrive with proper food and grooming.

Plenty of sun and water (plant in soil that drains well) is essential; several readily available commercial fertilizers provide a perfect diet. These often contain systemic insecticides — a big help in the battle against aphids and

other pests. It's best to plant roses in a separate bed; they're more prone to disease if other plants crowd them. If the barren look of pruned bushes bothers you, plant bulbs in the rose garden — early spring bloomers, such as narcissus, are ideal.

THE WILDFLOWER GARDEN

Antique flowers are in vogue, perhaps because they lend a free-spirited look to a meadow or garden.

A definitive source of information on "wild classics for the contemporary garden" is "Country Flowers" by Rob Proctor (HarperCollins).

The author cautions against digging up natives and transplanting them in the garden; "the rarest of wildflowers are protected by law, so digging or picking them is not only immoral, it's illegal."

Occasionally a wildflower that grows like a weed in one area may refuse to grow in another, but most are adaptable.

"Scarcely an American or British gardener cannot grow sea pink, black-eyed Susan or New England aster," says Proctor.

Most nurseries stock cylindrical containers or labeled packets that contain seeds of assorted hardy and beautiful wildflowers.

GARDEN TIPS Poisonous plant precautions

Among children under 5, poisoning from plants is second only to medicinal poisoning. Know some common poisonous plants around your home.

- Some common poisonous flowers are bleeding heart, daffodils, delphinium, foxglove, henns and chickens, lantana, lily of the valley, lupine and sweet pea.
- Some common poisonous shrubs: azalea, mountain laurel, oleander, privet, rhododendron and yew.
- Some deadly houseplants: caladium, dieffenbachia, philodendron.
- Some poisonous wildflowers: buttercups, jimson weed, autumn crocus, mayapple, poison hemlock, moonseed berries and water hemlock.
- Some noxious weeds: nightshade, pokeweed (at certain times) and various mushrooms.

Foxglove

Copley News Service/Dan Clifford

Styles and color for window dressing

By Karen Cooksey
Copley News Service

If eyes are the windows to the soul, your home's windows are its eyes to the world outside. Your window dressings determine how much you will see and be seen. They also allow you to change the quality and quantity of light you let into your lives.

In addition to color and style, consider these factors when selecting window treatments:

- Privacy.
- Light.
- Insulation.
- Protection from the sun.
- "Windows conduct heat and cold and let in the fiber- and wood-damaging sun. Even if you don't need privacy, you may still need coverings on your windows, depending on your climate and how much direct sunlight you get," says B.J. Peterson, ASID, owner of Peterson Design Plaza in Los Angeles, Calif.

DESIGNING WINDOWS THAT WORK

Knowing the form and function of various window treatments will allow you to make choices that look and feel right for each room and its decor.

DRAPERIES

Traditional full-fabric draperies cushion the intrusion of temperature and sound from the outside. They also provide privacy and elegance.

The more fabric there is at the window, the more traditional the style. Tassels and valances may be used over draperies; laces or sheers work underneath curtains.

When shopping for draperies, look for:

Polyester and poly/cotton combinations won't deteriorate in the sun.

Lining helps protect the fabric and makes it hang better.

Stable construction: Balance in density and thickness of horizontal and vertical fibers will help maintain shape.

If you're considering hanging draperies that you've only seen flat, gather the fabric in your hands, hold it up and see how it falls.

FAUX DRAPES AND VALANCES

A valance — a treatment at the top of the window — can be as simple as a fabric swag looped around a pole.

Faux or side draperies are decorative additions that frame the

window but don't draw closed.

These treatments let the sun shine in and are ideal when privacy and insulation are not your main concerns. Combine them generously for a voluminous, classic look or sparingly for a tailored, contemporary look.

"A valance combined with faux draperies can add color and pattern to give a room a finished look," says Adrienne Dale, ASID, owner of Whardale International in Seattle, Wash. "A creative couple can make these treatments themselves using a pattern and some basic sewing skills."

BLINDS & SHADES

One of the most economical ways to cover a window is with metal mini-blinds. They offer maximum privacy at minimum cost and come in a wide range of colors.

Vertical blinds offer form and function that complement contemporary looks.

"Look for tempered metal that will return to its original shape when bent, and check for sturdy draw mechanisms," says Dale.

Pleated shades come in a variety of colors, styles and fabrics and are an up-to-date option. However, if shades are layered with other treatments, they can fit in with a more classical decor.

Horizontal shades that drop from the top of the window are commonly referred to as Roman shades, which come flat and austere for a spare look or full and ornate for a romantic look.

To really dress up a window, try combining treatments.

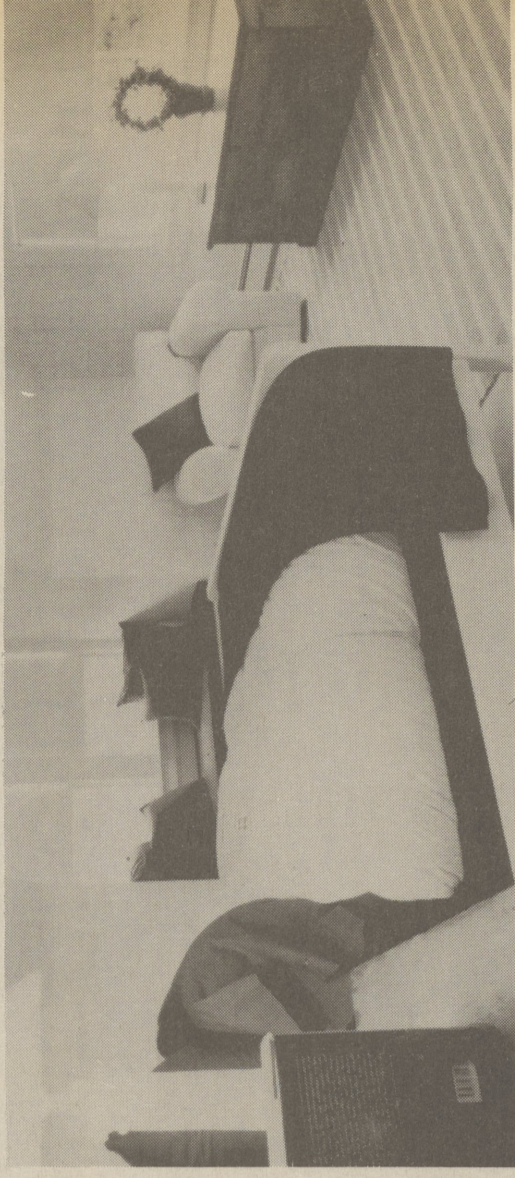
"Hang blinds or shades for privacy, and when the budget allows, add a valance or side draperies to soften the look," says Jim Marsteller, ASID, manager of Gabbert's Design Studio in Dallas, Texas.

Enhance window treatments using the wide range of available trimmings, including tie-backs, braids, fringes and tassels trims.

HAND IT TO HARDWARE

Available in bronze, brass, silver, opal and black, decorative hardware can create an exciting look without breaking the bank.

Give a lot of thought to what window coverings you select. They'll help keep you cool when it's hot and warm when it's cold. When well chosen, they can provide impact and beauty from the inside and the outside.



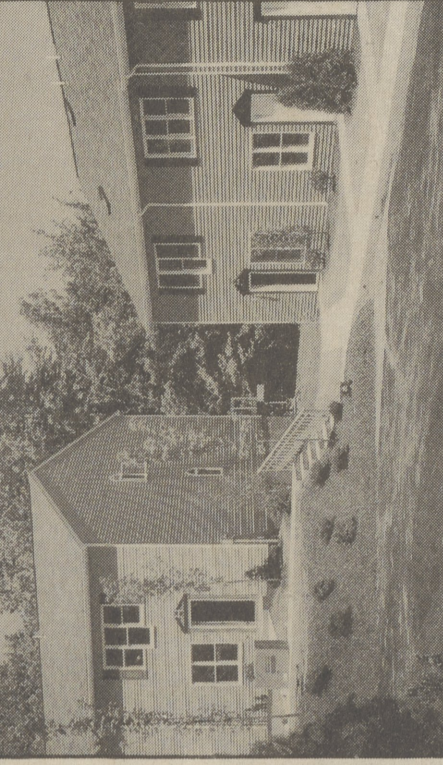
WINDOW DRESSING - Pretty windows and window coverings control light and privacy, as well as frame the view from outside.

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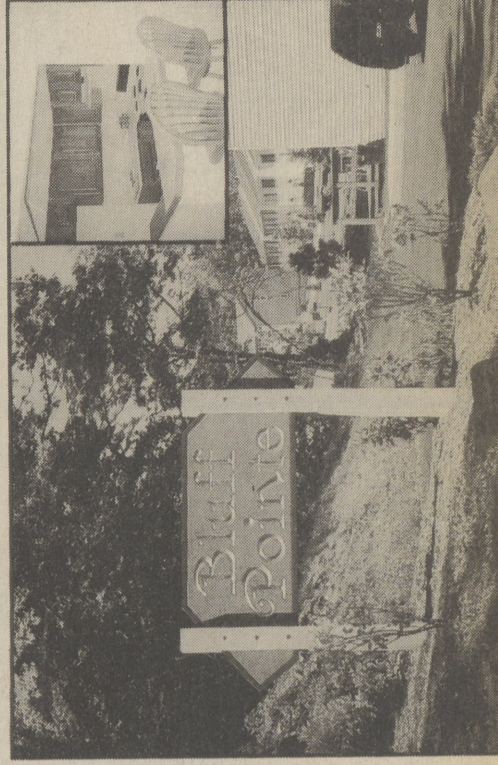
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