



Green and red Japanese cutleaf maples in Judy Brandenburg's garden are an elegant backdrop for flowers—blue bugle, primroses, and pansies—that edge the path.

A Gift of Time

While turning her Cincinnati woodland garden into an all-seasons landscape, Judy Brandenburg found her inner peace.

WRITTEN AND PRODUCED BY JUDI KETTLER PHOTOGRAPHS BY KRITSADA



The curved path in Judy's garden (left) makes the yard seem larger and leads visitors to focal points along the way—an evergreen around a bend, a Japanese cutleaf maple, or layers of blue wood hyacinths and irises.

Judy (below) is always looking for ways to link her home with her garden. She planted small evergreens close to the house for winter color, then added pots and beds of seasonal flowers and a place to sit.

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Some gardeners use the winter months as an opportunity to ease aching backs and sore joints. Judy Brandenburg sees it differently: The 72-year-old prefers to lift weights and attend weekly spinning classes to keep herself in shape for the mulching, digging, and hauling that will be her life when spring returns to the garden. In fact, gardening is a full-time endeavor for this mother of four and grandmother of eight. "I have to dig," she says. "I am a gardener in my soul."

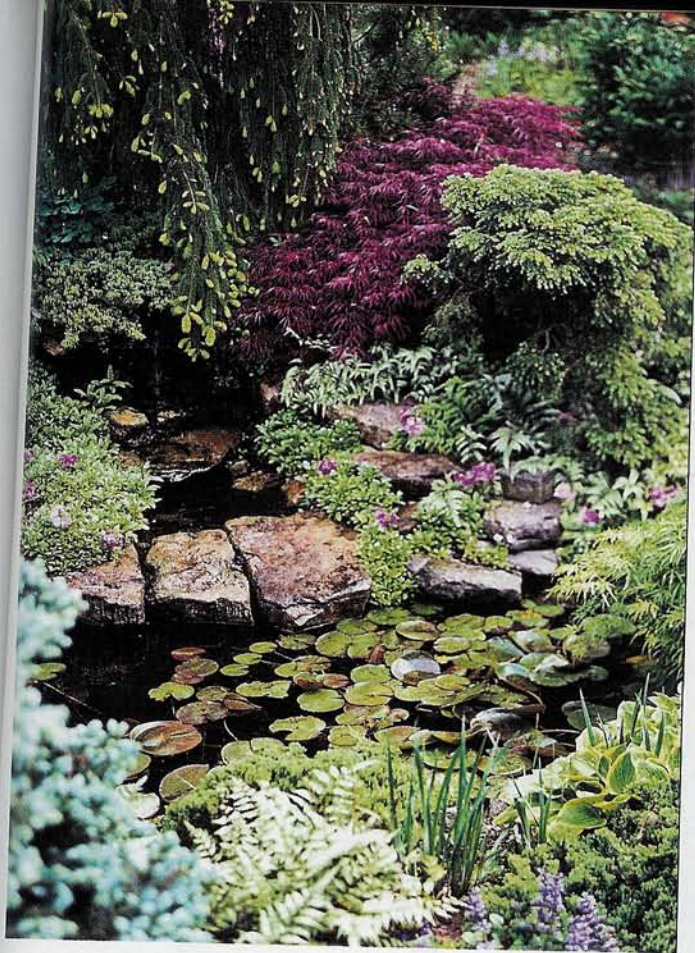
Judy has always enjoyed gardening, but it became doubly important after her husband, Pic, died suddenly seven years ago. After a time of grieving, her creative energy returned. "I became a woman possessed," she says. "My son showed me how to use a rototiller, and I worked morning, noon, and night in the garden."

Judy approaches her plantings artistically, using color, texture, and leaf contrasts—such as mixing tree peonies with the bold purple globes of allium. Tall plantings are underplanted with shade dwellers: hostas, ferns, and forget-me-nots. Judy anchors garden spots with dogwoods, conifers, and Japanese maples. >> on 71



JUDY SAYS...

"Once you've sketched your garden design onto graph paper, translate the plan to the site by using landscape spray paint, an orange extension cord, or garden hose to mark pathways and beds."



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At the time the Brandenburgs built their home 14 years ago, Pic was building custom homes and Judy was creating the architectural drawings and landscape plans. They had designed their own home to showcase the garden.

The Brandenburgs began their landscaping by clearing the land of weeds and Judy investigated which types of plantings would work in partial shade. She laid stone paths around the back hillside, then set about turning their acreage into bloom-filled gardens.

After Pic's passing, Judy expanded the garden with a series of walkways through the upper yard. She lined them with striking plant combinations and anchored them with her signature plants. The effect is a spring wonderland: Beginning in early May, the first pinks, whites, and yellows of azaleas and rhododendrons begin to appear, thriving in the acidic soil. Later, Asiatic lilies, astilbes, peonies, and irises add to the flower show in early June, and perennials bloom all summer. ♪ >> on 72

For success with both plant and animal life in and around a pond, Judy recommends a site that is flat and sunny. "I found it simple to build and had fun adding rocks, evergreens, and cascading plants such as ferns and lady's mantle," she says.

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WOODLAND PATHS

Walkways provide structure and make the garden an inviting place to explore.

WATER LILIES

These pond essentials are easy to grow and keep algae in check.



UPWARD SWEEPS

Judy's woodland garden is full of dogwoods and evergreen trees that draw the eye skyward.

PLACES TO REST

Move benches and chairs to take advantage of the best views, which change with the seasons.

WINDOW VIEWS

Create garden displays that are visible from inside. Judy's floor-to-ceiling windows make the outdoors seem like an extension of the living room.

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