

Seeds of Inspiration

A well-designed garden that inspires year round



When the Shorts moved from a historic house in downtown Franklin, they wanted to take with them the feel of age, mixed with the convenience of new. Becky Short has a knack for combining antiques with new ideas and is well known for her interior design skills. Her garden shows her abilities don't stop indoors.

Becky designed and built this garden to be an extension of her home and the

things she loves. By combining solid hardscape of brick walkways, water features and stone walls with plenty of evergreens, antiques and pots of seasonal plants, she created a garden that looks good any time of the year. The garden was done in phases over a seven-year period. To build the hardscape and install the larger shrubs and trees, Mrs. Short had a little help from her friend Mike Hayes, a local landscaper.

▲ In this winter scene, a fountain of old granite millstones bubbles in center of the courtyard. Boxwoods frame the garden accentuating plantings in every season. Pink Knock Out® roses (center top) add leaf color and texture in winter. The foster holly behind and the boxwoods in front make the spring through fall Knock Out® blooms really stand out.

The garden consists of evergreen viburnums, rhododendrons, spruces, hollies, junipers, pines, magnolias, cypress, cherry laurels, nandinas, arborvitae, azaleas, yews and boxwoods. These evergreens give key structure or “bones” to the garden and accentuate the many deciduous trees, shrubs and perennials. This retained sense of structure is important in any season but especially is appreciated in winter and early spring when tree trunks, stems, seed pods, berries, fat buds and new blooms really stand out against a green backdrop.

Perennials, annuals, bulbs and herbs, many of them passed along heirlooms, are tossed into the mix to give a continual flow of color month to month while also providing cut flowers. For gardeners like Becky, who love to bring the outdoors inside with incredible arrangements year round, having a variety of plant materials at hand is important.

Statuary and antique pieces are tucked in here and there throughout the landscape and add surprise and whimsy. Old pots, imaginative containers and urns overflowing with colorful blooms, and a variety of foliage complete the garden canvas.



▲ The garden gate beckons with a hint of what's to come just around the bend. Hostas and astilbes in a setting of fresh spring green welcome one and all.

◀ Climb the stairs to find an English courtyard. Boxwoods, potted plants and statuary point the way.

A splash of seasonal color makes a nice transition from home to garden. ▶



Pink floribunda roses are accentuated by the framework of boxwoods. “Passalong” red poppies are getting ready to steal the show with their annual bloom. ▶

The “bones” of boxwoods and arborvitae of this corridor garden are stunning even in winter, piquing your curiosity to see what is at the end. Lavender, rosemary, thyme, ferns, ivy and tufts of moss between the bricks soften the pathway. ▼



Along with annuals, Becky plants unusual evergreen and deciduous shrubs, herbs and perennials in containers. When she tires of them in the pot or they are no longer pretty, she plants them out in the garden. She admits this is one of her favorite things to do and that she can't wait to see how they grow.

Curving brick pathways through gates and up stairs hint but don't give away what horticultural treats are in store ahead, surprising visitors each time they discover something new just around the bend.

Just off the back porch is a small brick courtyard skirted with boxwoods, roses, vines and perennials. In the center, water bubbles over old granite mill stones, soothing family and visitors relaxing on the porch swing. This courtyard has such an English garden feel that, if not for the Tennessee heat and humidity, one could imagine sipping a cup of afternoon tea with the Queen herself!

This garden party doesn't end when temperatures wane and the cool winds blow. The landscape is a refuge for colorful birds and other wildlife who use the evergreen shrubs and trees as a cover for warmth and protection. Overcast skies, early morning frost, fog, and occasional dusting of snow only enhance the splendor of this well designed garden. ♡

Cindy Shapton is a Master Gardener, freelance writer and the former owner of Hyssop Hill Herb Farm in Franklin.