

A vintage bicycle with a basket of red flowers is parked in a lush garden. The garden is filled with various plants, including yellow and pink flowers, and a wooden fence is visible in the background. The bicycle is the central focus, with its basket overflowing with bright red flowers. The overall scene is vibrant and colorful, capturing the essence of a well-maintained country garden.

THE LUXURY OF

COUNTRY gardens

BY MOYA ANDREWS * PHOTOGRAPHY BY JAMES KELLAR



Country gardens share many common attributes, among them spaciousness, privacy, and tranquility. The three country gardens showcased here (all within 35 minutes of downtown Bloomington — two in Brown County and one near Lake Lemon) share those attributes and more. All are designed to meld with adjoining undeveloped land. They are built on sloping sites and have benefited from human engineering to make them safer to navigate. Each includes multiple areas for entertaining. Yet these gardens are unusually personal and reflect the passions and lifestyles of their owners. And though they are quite different in style, each garden is in harmony with its surroundings.

(left) One of the many old bicycles integrated in the garden of Beverly and Michael deFord.

A GARDEN FILLED WITH
MEMENTOS—
SWEET & Bittersweet



Michael and Beverly deFord.

Beverly and Michael deFord's garden chronicles their life together. Like an outdoor gallery, the garden on North Tunnel Road showcases their eclectic collection of folk art and is steeped in family history.

The flowerbeds are edged with fieldstone from the garden of Bev's great grandfather, Thomas Campbell, who was the first settler in Nashville, Indiana. The deFords met at Binford Junior High when they were both 15 years old, "and this November we will celebrate our 50th wedding anniversary," Bev says. Mike remembers their first date: "I rode 15 miles on a single-speed bike on a gravel road to her

father's farm. Our date consisted of us riding around on my bike with her sitting on the handlebars." The deFords have been riding bicycles together ever since, and 16 of their bikes are displayed in the garden. There are antique bicycles, a tricycle that Bev rode as a small child, and two tandems.

The home was built for the deFords in 1970 and remodeled according to Mike's design in 2014. The spacious front lawn with island plantings slopes gently away from the house. The rear garden, which backs onto a nature preserve, has mature trees and shade-loving plants. The preserve's trees have now grown so tall that, in the

summer, Lake Lemon is no longer visible from the back porch that Mike built. But his 15 custom-made birdhouses, with license plates for roofs, draw birds from the preserve into the garden.

Repurposing is the overarching theme in this garden. One of Mike's old boots makes a comfortable nesting spot for a Carolina wren; a bicycle serves as the gate to the daffodil/daylily garden; and bicycle baskets are lined with moss, filled with soil, and planted with annual flowers. Wooden frames on artists'



easels hold floral pictures composed of live flowers. The frames are filled with screening through which the roots of *Impatiens* and *Begonia* are inserted. The frames are then backed with landscape cloth to contain soil.

High summer brings bright-hued perennial flowers to the yard near the front driveway: Asiatic and Oriental lilies, an entire bed of pink *Phlox*, and solid blocks of red *Crocsmia* and orange butterfly weed. Stately white *Yucca* blooms create vertical accents. In shaded areas, cranesbill geraniums weave between plantings, knitting the garden together. Favorite annuals also spill out of containers made from a variety of small wagons and carriages. To deter hungry

deer, the deFords installed motion sensors hooked up to a hose. They also have a Deer Chaser radio producing intermittent sound.

Bev and Mike do all of their own gardening. They also pay homage to family members in the garden. Their late son's motorcycle helmet and the sled he used as a child are planted with flowers. "The rock garden is dedicated to Doug's memory," Bev says. "Gardening is therapeutic when one has lost a child. We are comforted to feel that Doug's spirit and those of other family members and friends are still alive in our garden."

1. The daffodil and daylily garden, two perennials that are a carefree combination.

2. A yellow bike is used as a gate.

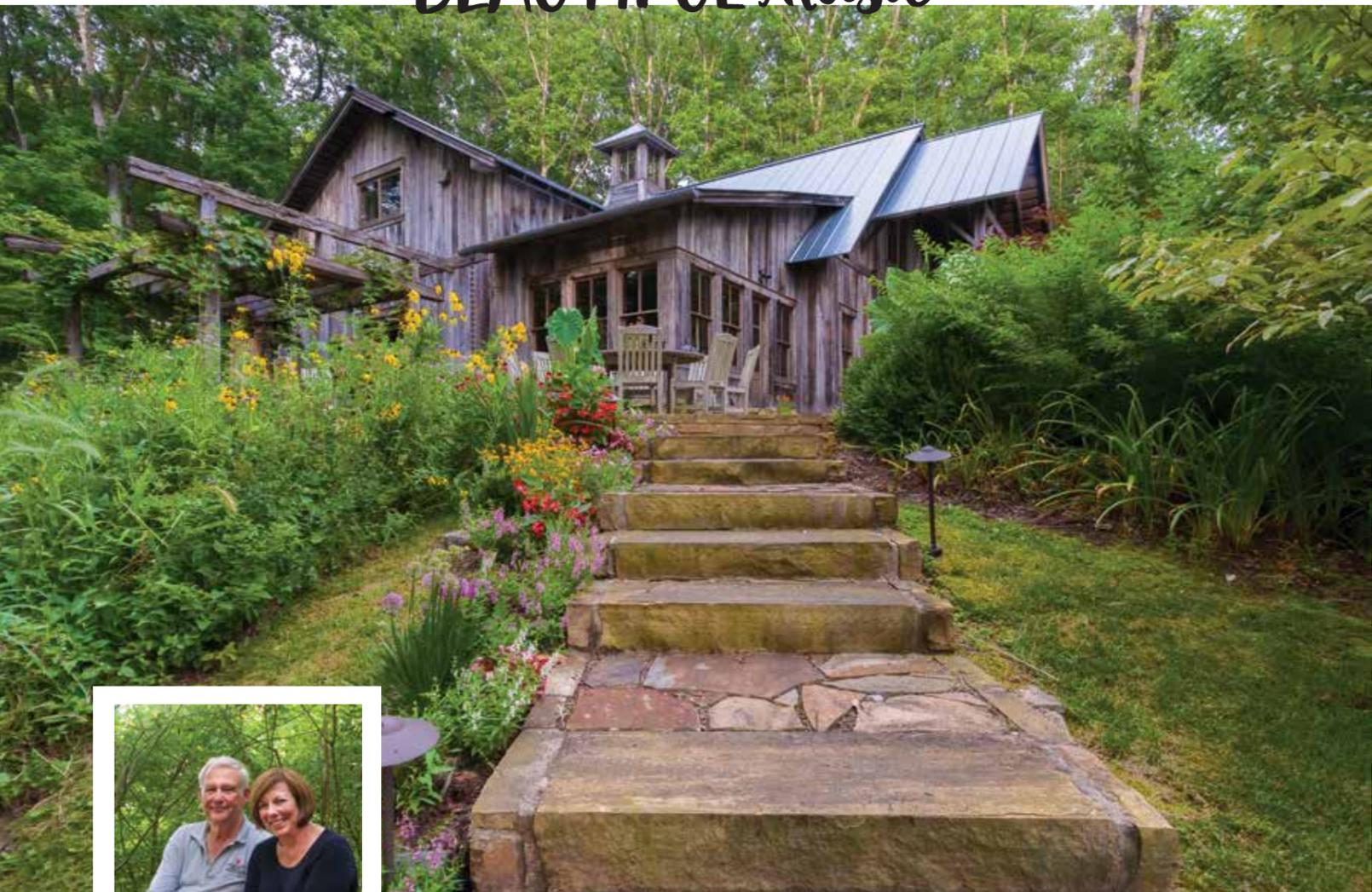
3. An easel holds a floral picture.

4. The fence provides a backdrop for the couple's folk art, including this patriotic bicycle.

5. Island beds grace the front lawn.

6. Variegated *Hosta* and pink *Begonia* provide focal points in the shade garden.

A **BEAUTIFUL GARDEN**
FOR **BEAUTIFUL Music**



The weathered wood of the barn and the stone steps leading to it are softened by flowers and lush greenery. (inset) Gary and Kathy Anderson.

Kathy and Gary Anderson purchased 60 acres in Brown County, including Serenity Lake, in 2005. After living in Philadelphia for many years, the Andersons came back home to Indiana where Kathy had first worked as a nurse and Gary had been on the Indiana University School of Medicine faculty. “The Jacobs School of Music was a big draw also,” Gary says. “I have played piano and composed since childhood, and Kathy has ballet in her soul.” Their five children and four grandchildren, who visit often, enjoy the garden and lake, and hike in the wooded ravines.

In addition to the main house there is a guest cabin built circa 1880, a fishing cabin, and a large barn with an apartment and Gary’s office above. The barn, with its

massive walk-in fireplace, was built in 1872 and moved here from Seymour, Indiana, in 2008. Though rustic in décor, the barn has excellent acoustics, and with two concert grand pianos, it is a fine performance space for musicians from the Jacobs School. Dean Emeritus Charles Webb and numerous faculty and students have performed here. Beyond the barn there is a grape arbor that mimics a Japanese torii gate, a bocce ball court, and stunning lake views.

A pleasing variety of shrubs, annuals, and perennials surround all of the buildings. Dan Gluesenkamp from Designscape



Horticultural Services was hired in 2006 to design the garden and to build the trails, water features, and paths, including the steep path from the lake to the house.

Many textural contrasts throughout the garden, such as maidenhair fern growing among the rocks, help blend the planted areas and the natural surroundings. In high summer, bottlebrush buckeye adds color accents. Gardener Bernard Waldheir, who has maintained the garden since its inception, planted a large number of *Hydrangea*, such as ‘Endless Summer,’ ‘Tardiva,’ and ‘Oakleaf’ cultivars. He sprays weekly

to deter nibbling by deer, but the low-maintenance dwarf boxwoods and variegated *Liriope* near the guest cabin are deer resistant.

In one leafy glade seen from the path to the barn stands an ancient stone statue with ferns at her feet that Kathy found in the Netherlands. “She is probably about 250 years old,” Kathy says. “Although she is headless, I just love the fluid grace of her dancer’s pose. When our youngest son was married here, I had fun dressing the statue for the event.”

The Andersons lead active lives. Kathy was chair of the



(clockwise from left) An ancient statue stands among delicate ferns; the Andersons’ spacious home is surrounded by *Hydrangea* and other flowering shrubs that bloom in succession through the year; boxwood and *Liriope* are repeated in a pattern in front of the guest cabin; yellow *Canna*, green elephant’s ears, red ‘Dragon Wing’ *Begonia*, and pink mophead *Hydrangea* creates a colorful focal point near the barn.



board of the Pennsylvania Ballet before moving to Brown County and in celebration of their 35th wedding anniversary, Gary created the Kathy Ziliak Anderson Chair in Ballet at IU. Until her recent death, the chair was held by renowned professor Violette Verdy. Kathy is currently president of the Brown County Playhouse and a member of the Indiana Arts Commission. In addition to numerous other volunteer activities, Gary is chair of the Jacobs School of Music Advisory Committee and on the IU Foundation Board. Their Brown County garden is a refuge to which they are always

eager to return, savoring the tranquility and the music that is made there.

REIMAGINING A WATERSIDE Garden



A lake surrounds the garden on three sides, and the reflections add an extra dimension to the seasonal changes on the wooded banks.



Gabriel Gluesenkamp designed and executed the recontouring of this site.

The tip of Deb and Mark Gillen's back garden is a peninsula jutting out into a 16-acre lake, providing shoreline views on three sides. The second-level back deck of their house, which features a custom-built metal railing with spindles made to look like tree branches and handrails neatly etched to resemble bark, commands the same panoramic vista. Near the water's edge, large boulders for seating surround a fire pit on a patio, all made of Cumberland County sandstone. A fishing boat moored nearby contributes to the tranquility of the waterside scene.

The Gillens purchased their 1980s' cabin in 2005. As in many areas of Brown County, the topography near the home was challenging. The house, on a gentle hillside, always had excellent views, but water rushed down the slope during heavy rain and poured along the outside of the foundation. In addition to the drainage issues, the sloping garden was unsafe for walking and inhospitable for plantings. So the Gillens contracted with Designscape Horticultural Services in 2012 to reconfigure the site. It was a major assignment involving heavy

equipment for grading and contouring, a new front driveway, stone walls to prevent erosion, steps for accessibility to the lower level, and raised beds for plantings. The original two-story rustic cabin is now nestled between stone retaining walls. In the back, there are huge blocks of Shoals, Indiana,

sandstone that are perfectly in scale with the cabin and the mature oak and beech trees that surround it. A dry creek bed lined with sandstone boulders runs under the circular front driveway and eventually empties into the lake, where the Gillens spend many hours fishing.

Designscape's Gabriel Gluesenkamp, who reimagined the site and supervised the installations, selected plantings that complemented and enhanced the hardscape. New trees include three Japanese maples: two 'Inaba Shidare' that flank the stone steps and one 'Viridis' near the shade garden steps.



There are also two new beeches: a 'Red Obelisk' and a 'Purple Fountain.' Shrubs include panicle hydrangeas ('Tardiva,' 'Little Lime,' 'Quick Fire,' and 'Pinky Winky'), 'Green Mountain' and 'Green Velvet' boxwood, bottle-brush buckeye, purple *Rhododendrons*, *Juniperus procumbens* 'Nana' to drape over the walls, 'Gro Low' sumac, *Fothergilla gardenii*, *Callicarpa*, and 'Miss Kim' lilac.

The new hardscape is softened by the groundcover *Mazus reptans* along the steps and the small ferns and other creeping perennials that have been encouraged to insinuate themselves into cracks and between rocks and boulders. Lichens and mosses also provide patches of subtle color on some stone surfaces. Plants with leaves that are lacy (*Astilbe*), variegated (Solomon's seal), gray (Japanese fern, Russian sage, *Baptisia*), and bronze or red (Japanese maples and shrubs that have fall color) form an attractive plant tapestry. Perennials (coral bells, Lenten roses, white daisies, Joe-pye weed, *Echinacea*, Culver's root, and *Stephanandra incisa* 'Crispa') also adorn the multilevel planting areas and create an undulating rhythm and flow by repetition of contrasting shapes and colors.

All parts of this well-drained garden are now easily accessible with many options for entertaining. The garden has been recontoured so well that it blends seamlessly with the adjoining natural landscape. ✨



(clockwise from top) Blue spires of Russian sage, bright pinkish-red *Monarda*, and white *Hydrangea* are eye-catching; shallow stone steps connect the lower and upper levels of the garden; huge blocks of Shoals, Indiana, sandstone were positioned with a crane to create a retaining wall, with terraced beds for plantings, at the back of the Gillen home.