



The Ferrans enlisted help with their waterfall when, Alice says, "It was clear we had bitten off more than we could chew."



Coneflower and other perennials surround the pond, the centerpiece of the Ferrans' woodland oasis.

Landscape artists



Alice and Bert Ferran, with their dogs Abby and Molly, pose at the edge of their prize-winning woodland garden in Wells, which features a waterfall, pond and perennial flowers carefully selected to coexist with a dozen varieties of ferns and other naturally occurring growth.

Alice and Bert Ferran of Wells are the winners of our Great Garden Contest. See how they turned an overgrown ravine into a showy, eco-sensitive, frog-friendly oasis.

By STEPHANIE BOUCHARD
News Assistant

WELLS — "Honey!" Bert Ferran hollers to his wife, Alice, across the garden. "She likes the dead tree!"

As the garden begins its bend back toward the house, Bert escorts his visitor to the dead tree, greens sprouting jauntily around its base. Shorn of limbs, and nearly completely stripped of bark, its gray remains make it seem like a weathered woodland sentinel silently guarding the garden and its occupants.

Alice Ferran doesn't like the tree, but Bert loves the natural beauty of it.

The Ferrans' garden took first place in the Great Garden Contest, sponsored by the Portland Press Herald/Maine Sunday Telegram. It is a 150-foot by 30-foot

ABOUT THE CONTEST

READERS SUBMITTED more than 125 entries to the Great Garden Contest, sponsored by the Portland Press Herald/Maine Sunday Telegram. Rules required them to send three photos and an essay on what made their gardens special. Entries were ranked for: creativity; degree of difficulty; design; beauty; originality; and workmanship. A winner and three runners-up were chosen. For profiles of the runners-up and a complete list of entrants, please see Page G4.

water garden encircled by perennial patches bursting with coneflowers and pink astilbe. The pond is eco-friendly, with water-filtering plants, such as water celery and mini-cattails.



Frogs love what the Ferrans have done with their yard.

Small disagreements aside, the Ferrans take pride in their woodland garden. It looks more like an idealized natural habitat that just sprang up rather than a garden that is always tended.

Maple, birch and fir trees trim the property lines. Beyond the tree borders, the land slopes to the Merriland River.

The centerpiece of the garden is a pond graced by waterlilies, populated by frogs and visited by herons.

There seems little of the human touch in it.

But looks are deceiving. The Ferrans' home in Wells is in suburbia, not some magical fairyland. It's close, though, to a fairyland, because even though there are homes on wooded lots on their quiet street, the Wells Reserve is on the back side of their property — no danger of

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Great Gardeners



"No grass to mow" exclaims Maryann Blaisdell of her Thomaston gardens.

Here is the list of readers who entered the Great Garden Contest:

- Carole T. Luce, Bath
- Robert and Nancy Hodge, Biddeford
- Regan McPhetres, Sanguenville
- James and Donna Boyles, Pownal
- Gail Cinelli, Yarmouth
- Community Garden, Yarmouth
- Carolyn Broad, Kennebunk
- Dorothy Roberts, Gorham
- Summer and Barbara Berkovich, Cumberland
- Susanna Walsh, North Yarmouth
- Elizabeth Edwards, Saco
- Jean K. Todd, Portland
- William and Joan Mitchell, Buxton
- Tori Kornfield, Bangor
- Charlotte Carnes, Yarmouth
- Cheryl Libby, Falmouth
- Thomas Hanley, Portland
- Rosemary Boissonneault, Biddeford
- Robert and Nancy Hodge, Biddeford
- Ann-Fontaine Fisher, Portland
- Sue Garrard, Gorham
- Sarah Robey Hall, Woolwich
- Valerie and John Razza, Gray
- Barbara Zahara, Scarborough
- Deborah Jabine, Portland
- Patricia E. Sundik, Portland
- Tatiana Fischer, Port Clyde
- Kathleen Martin, North Yarmouth
- Susan and Erik Greven, Falmouth
- Timothy Carr, South Portland
- Nancy Guimond, Portland
- Alice and Bert Ferran, Wells
- Bev MacMillan, Buxton
- Nan Morrell, Brunswick
- Jessie Hemphill, Waterboro
- Ruth Gibson, South Portland
- Paulette Chermack, York Harbor
- Thomas Lynch, Ogunquit
- Susan Jensen, Portland
- Joyce Jones, Norway
- Anne Normandeau, North Berwick
- Michael and Lynda Leavitt, Westbrook
- Burke and Judith Long, Brunswick
- Jean Lunt, Yarmouth
- Elizabeth Andrews, Portland
- Rhonda Millett, Scarborough
- Chris and Carson Craig, Durham
- Lynn Ann and Krister Rollins, Casco
- Elaine and Fred Ayer, Portland
- Barbara Archer, Brunswick
- Joan Wood, Gorham
- Kay Miller, South Bristol
- Andrea Brownstein, Orono
- Joy Giroux, Westbrook
- Kathleen Rummier, Portland
- Janet Plouffe, Industry
- Maryann Blaisdell, Thomaston
- Chris Crawford, Gorham
- Roger and Stephanie Greenwood, Harswell
- Mark and Lisa LeGasse, Brunswick
- Roxanne Wheeler, Cumberland Foreside
- Nancy Brandt, New Gloucester
- Rachel Bennett, Bath
- Maurice Mercier, Kennebunk
- Judith Logan, Lyman
- Thomas Schofield, Standish
- Joan Russell, Falmouth
- Bob Ackley, Ogunquit
- Elizabeth Pope, Portland
- James Albright, Bristol
- Jace Trickey, Westbrook
- Scott Arnold, Alfred
- Fern DiPietro, Portland
- Rick and Rhonda Sanborn, Parsonsfield
- Linda Swanson, Freeport
- Carole Forbes, Springvale
- Clara Ross, Brunswick
- Patricia Sundik, Portland
- Leslie Miller Kmiec, Porter
- Penelope Schwartz Robinson, Cape Elizabeth
- Mary Jane and Glenn Perry, Falmouth
- Nancy Mineart, Portland
- Sande Updegraph, Brunswick
- Richard Chase, Scarborough
- Julie Washby, Westbrook
- Judy Priddy, Windham
- Petry Kasilowski, Raymond
- Beth Tablerman, Portland
- Christine Brunette, South Portland
- Martha and Peter Olove, Scarborough
- Gloria Luce, Cape Elizabeth
- Christine Slader, Yarmouth
- Destry Oldham-Sibley, South Portland
- Ethel Turner, Otisfield
- Martha Friberg, Cape Elizabeth
- Nancy and Harold Hopkins, Portland
- Beth Chagrasvis, Standish
- Eugenia Gregory, Hiram
- Lynda McCann-Olson, South Portland
- Dorrie Roedner, Saco
- Susan Olson Gwozdz, Gorham
- Mary Zachary-Lang, Kennebunk
- Donald Miller, Saco
- Vicki Vadas, Gray
- Elaine Adams, York
- Scott and Mary Kay Sells, Cape Elizabeth
- Larysa Locapo, Acton
- Edward and Julia Smith, Wells
- Patricia Fiske, Portland
- Guy and Debra Paulin, Limington
- Therese Blais, Portland
- Kenneth Brownstein, Orono
- Susan Pickford, Lyman
- Carol Saucier and Michael Hanson, Limington
- Sherry Morin, Saco
- Donna O'Connell, Sanford
- Carol Perkins, Otisfield
- Pauline Ainsworth, Sanford
- Suzanne Brown-Pelletier, North Yarmouth
- Patricia Lockard, Gray
- Elizabeth Lucy Forrester, Portland
- Tracy Hessel Libby, North Yarmouth
- Karen Dominguez Brann, Bath
- Harold Butts Sr., Scarborough
- Ann Murphy, Yarmouth
- Robert Bouchard, Brunswick
- Don and Cliff Sawyer, Limington



Densely grow the day lilies in the Portland garden of Patricia E. Sundik.

On busy Munjoy Hill, a tranquil getaway

By STEPHANIE BOUCHARD
News Assistant

When you think of living in the city, you think of crammed apartment houses with little or no land around them. Certainly on Munjoy Hill in Portland, there'd no place to have a dream garden.

But Nancy Guimond does live on Munjoy Hill with such a garden. Her garden, which came in second in the Portland Press Herald/Maine Sunday Telegram's Great Garden Contest, is an oasis in a 25- by 15-foot area.

Stepping into her small city garden, you feel like you aren't in the city at all anymore. You'll be enchanted by the sounds of birds, the soothing cascade of water falling into a small pond from a gargoyle with a water spout, a brick patio and paths — and green everywhere. She has a variety of hostas, Joe-pye weed, ferns, snake root, bee balm, phlox, balloon flower and honeysuckle.



Nancy Guimond, second-place finisher in the Great Garden Contest, escapes to her "pocket garden" on Munjoy Hill in Portland.

A special feature of her garden is her great-grandmother's peonies.

You'd think that Guimond's "pocket" garden in the city would be a rarity, but, actually, she says, there are many such gardens on the hill. The Munjoy Hill Association is planning a tour of the area's pocket gardens next June so these hidden jewels can be shared.

Instead of going with a plant with solid green leaves, go with a plant with variegated leaves.

Guimond, who tends bar at her sister's watering hole, the Wine Bar, has no formal gardening training. She simply plants what she loves and reads books and watches television programs on gardening. Her favorites include Solomon seal and her all-white Rose of Sharon.

Her city garden has been under development for about 20 years. It got started with just a little patch of orange daylilies, lily

of the valley and iris along the property line, and gradually grew.

"I keep it over-planted," Guimond says. "It cuts down on the weeding."

Due to the harsh winter, Guimond lost a lot of the plants, such as her lavender, oregano, thyme and her Jackmanii clematis ("but that gave me an excuse for buying new stuff"). She has replaced some of what she lost and added some small trees.

Primarily created as a shade garden because of a 45-foot maple tree next door, the garden

will undergo more changes soon, as the tree has been removed due to the construction of a condominium.

With more neighbors moving in so close to her, Guimond values the tranquility of her garden even more. "I can't tell you how wonderful it is to listen to the water and watch the birds," she says. "It's (the garden) very important to me. It keeps me sane."

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At three acres, the Woolwich gardens of Chris and Sarah Hall contain too many flowers and vegetables to count.

Dream home, dream gardens

Twenty-five years ago, Chris and Sarah Hall began transforming a woodlot at the end of a dirt road in Woolwich into their dream home.

Chris built their timber-frame house using wood from their property, and the couple spent countless hours creating a remarkable garden.

Now nearly three acres, the Halls' gardens include a Japanese-inspired shade garden

On the Buxton property of Joan and William Mitchell grow more than 350 varieties of day lilies.

Here's a dilly of a lily garden

William and Joan Mitchell have been developing their garden in Buxton for more than 25 years.

Among the tall trees on their nearly two-acre wooded lot grow more than 350 named hybrid day lilies.

In fact, the Mitchells maintain an official American Hemerocallis Society (day lily) display garden.

Of the 10 most wanted day lilies, the Mitchells have eight, including Strawberry Candy (a pink-red), Barbara Mitchell (pink), and Siloam Double Classic (pink).

The Mitchells buy their day lilies locally. They have both new and old varieties and spiders and miniatures. They have day lilies in every color except true white and true blue, which don't exist.

By selectively cutting trees, the Mitchells have created a garden that retains its woodland setting but features walkable grassy paths lined with hosta and other shade-loving plants, such as ginger, fern and ligularia.

The wooded garden, complete with birdhouses and birdbaths, is also a haven for birds, bees and other wildlife.

Stephanie Bouchard

CONTEST

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development disrupting their garden sanctuary.

The Ferrans view their garden as an evolving project: They recently bought a lot next to their property where they plan to create a woodland walk that winds along the Merriland River. And once the ecosystem of their pond stabilizes, they'd like to add fish.



Waterlilies bloom in the Ferrans' pond, sharing space with pickered weed, bog beans, water celery, water lettuce and mini-cattails.

The Ferrans have been working on their garden only for a short time, but they have accomplished so much.

When they bought their home in Wells four years ago, it was winter. Their yard was a rolling stretch of snow. They thought the big groove running through the middle of the yard was just a dip in the land.

Staff photo by Jill Brady

Spring uncovered not a dip but a runoff-filled ravine; the banks were overrun by honeysuckle and barberry.

"This (garden) basically started out as a mess," Bert says. Alice nods, saying that the only ones able to cross through their yard were their dogs, Abby and Molly, who would return to the house covered in deer ticks.

"We thought if we're going to have it into a water garden," says Alice.

For starters, they removed the honeysuckle and barberry, thereby allowing the 12 varieties of fern on their property to flourish.

Then they enlisted the expertise of Chris and Terri Paquette of Robin's Nest in Hollis to help with the building of a small bog pond and gently cascading waterfalls.

"We were doing it all ourselves," says Alice. "It was clear we had bitten off more than we could chew."

The water-filtering plants and the bog pond and waterfalls were put in a year ago.

"They (the Robin's Nest crew) spent a whole summer with us," says Alice. With only one season of growth, the plants are flourishing. "With water gardening," says Alice, "things grow really fast."

The Paquettes shaped out the bog pond and stream and put in the rocks and pebbles that line them. The crew from Robin's

Bert points out a not-so-beneficial burst of growth they had in the pond that happened after they fertilized the lawn. "We had algae so thick the frogs could

'Motion-sensor' faucet now affordable

The Associated Press

A running faucet wastes thousands of gallons of water annually when it runs longer than actually needed, or if it runs unattended (even briefly).

One solution is the slick automatic "motion-sensor" faucet you see in airports that only runs when motion is sensed below. They reduce water usage by up to 70 percent. The cost has been prohibitive for home use — until now.

The new E-Z Faucet adapter makes any home faucet automatic and hands-free in just five minutes. Just remove the existing aerator tip, screw on the E-Z Faucet head, and the compact infrared sensor unit is ready to flow.

For about \$70, you can save dough and go run with the bulls if you wish.