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## Secret Garden

Suzy Moore loved the challenge of creating a welcoming but formal city garden ablaze in color.

*Written By Kathy Hudson*

*Photography By Celia Pearson*

As their annual Easter egg hunt approaches, Annapolis residents Suzy and Don Moore once again ready their elegant city gardens for the onslaught of their assorted nieces, nephews, and grandchildren—including placing a towel at the ready for the one who inevitably falls into the fish pond.

The creation of the ornamental spaces behind their 1875 Italianate Victorian home began not long after they bought the historic house in 1998. But the existing garden lacked an open, inviting space that Suzy was looking for. "It was lovely, but, from the house, it looked small because it was broken up with hedges," Suzy remembers. "I knew immediately what I wanted: a formal, city garden."

The former interior decorator called Annapolis-based architect Wayne Good, who also designed their home renovations—including an octagonal breakfast room—to create exterior architectural features such as a wide, brick terrace, a pillared fence with rounded gates for the garden entrance, a pergola in the rear of the garden, and a carriage-house garage, complete with potting shed.

The couple also brought in Stratton Semmes, a landscape architect from Annapolis (now in California), to create a master layout, as well as local landscaper Tom Flaherty of Rivendell Landscaping to implement it. Semmes designed three distinct areas: a central, formal parterre or ornamental garden, the driveway gardens, and the lawn panel on the north side of the house. Suzy, who loves to garden, participated as a full partner in the design and construction process, which took more than eighteen months to complete. Now the entire expanse, fully visible from the house, offers a wide vista that flows from the brick terrace to the carriage house at the back of the yard. "We moved here from a sprawling country garden on five acres in Cazenovia, New York," says Suzy. "I thought that this would be a lot less work. Ha!"

A classic four-square design makes up the parterre, the geometric beds edged with twelve-inch-high English boxwoods and connected by gravel paths. "I call it controlled chaos," says Suzy, "and the boxwoods are the control." At its heart is a brick-edged fish pond, filled with lotus, water hyacinth, iris, exotic goldfish, and koi. Variegated ivy winds up its wall, mixing with creeping thyme and dianthus at the base. Dozens of mature trees—foster hollies, crepe myrtle, hemlocks, and magnolias—were planted alongside the winding gravel paths to form the vertical structure of the formal section. "The large hollies came down the street one-by-one in a front-end loader. Each one was so big, with a huge root ball, that it took four men riding on the other side for balance. And the neighbors had not yet met us!"

Suzy's favorite colors—pinks, lavenders, silvers—show up in a changing seasonal display. Come spring, hundreds of daffodils followed by bright pink tulips, set off with an underlayer of grape hyacinths and white snowdrops, blanket the entire garden in color. In the summer, fragrant viburnums, oakleaf hydrangea, nandina, cyclamen, and dwarf deutzia continue the show. The brick walkway leading to the garden on the shady north side of the house is lined with rhododendron, hosta, and toad lilies. Astilbe and ferns are scattered throughout. The driveway gardens, on the house's south side, feature pink camellias and peonies. "When the allium blooms in the spring, with those big globes," says Suzy of the two-foot-high stems with the four-inch-plus purple flowers, "it looks like Oz!"

Suzy looks to Annapolis garden designers Nancy and Pierre Moitrier of Designs for Greener Gardens to help her maintain the space. They came up with a lot of the ideas for inclusion of the perennials, especially those filling in the two rectangular beds on either side of the parterre as well as the borders around the brick terrace. "We have been working to make the existing design more intricate," says Nancy Moitrier. "What makes Suzy's garden special is that she's passionate about it. There's a different warmth to a garden that's lived in and used."

"When spring comes," says Suzy, "the minute I enter the garden center, I start getting ideas. I do 'seat-of-the-pants' gardening: if I like a plant, I just tuck it in and see if it works." This spring she plans to add more roses—including some disease-resistant varieties—to her favorite section of the garden, where purple clematis and pink roses entwine along the fence. She's been training a row of hornbeam to develop into an aerial hedge (a process known as pleaching).

While the formal space is meticulously maintained, it's a welcoming space, perfect for relaxing. But it's hard to catch Suzy sitting still. This consummate gardener and budding photographer always sees something to do. "If I go out into the garden for five minutes, it's an hour and a half," she says, pinching off a piece of winter kill from the boxwoods.

## Resources

Good Architecture  
410-268-7414

Rivendell Landscaping  
410-827-3242

Designs for Greener Gardens

410-626-6122

*Kathy Hudson writes from her home in Baltimore, Md.*

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