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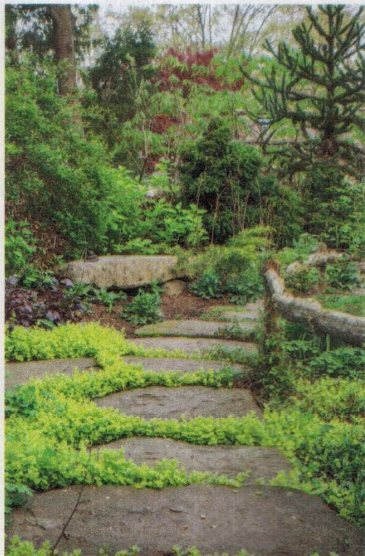
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TWO GARDEN DESIGNERS BRING
JOIE DE VIVRE, VIBRANT HUES, AND
FRENCH FLAIR TO THEIR SPRING
GARDEN IN ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND.

'Ballerina' Tulip



ABOVE Pierre and Nancy Moitrier, owners of Designs for Greener Gardens, bring complementary talents to their garden design projects. Nancy offers the horticulture knowledge, while Pierre adds the stonework and hardscapes experience. **RIGHT** The couple's signature look combines stone paths, walls, and accents with structures of reclaimed wood in gardens filled with expertly blended foliage textures.



Nancy and Pierre Moitrier don't shy away from color.

In and outside of their suburban Annapolis cottage-style home, they painted the walls in goldenrod, moss green, and terra-cotta, earthy colors reminiscent of Pierre's rural French homeland. And they continue their passion for color outdoors with a multitude of vibrant spring bulbs in their 1/3-acre, corner-lot garden. Orange-red tulips push through swaths of chartreuse forest grasses. Creeping blue forget-me-nots stretch beneath layers of scarlet-and-blush tulips along a stone walkway. And marigold-orange fluted tulips pop beside stacked-stone walls. "We've always loved rich colors, especially the harmonious color schemes found in nature," Nancy says.

"It all started on the inside," she says, when she and Pierre hung a Turkish silk shawl in the glass front door. They liked how the shawl's terra-cotta color looked from the outside,





The Maitriers added a swale to the side of their garden to allow spring rains to percolate on the property rather than run off into their neighbor's. They fill the space with contrasting golden Japanese forest grass (*Yakonechloa macroaureola*), a mix of conifers, fluted 'Ballerina' tulips, and two-tone 'Avignon' tulips.



Potted tulips create portable color anywhere it's needed. Nancy added purple tulips to a grouping on the patio.

so they repainted the home's exterior in terra-cotta and moss green then filled the front garden with plants to match.

The couple met 22 years ago in England, where they discovered shared interests in garden hardscapes and landscape design. Nancy, who grew up in a family of plant-lovers and had a horticulture degree from Penn State University, was starting a design business. Pierre loved the outdoors and had a passion for building with natural materials. Nancy invited Pierre to return with her to Maryland, where they took on a labyrinth garden project and a custom stone wall. "It was my first time to play with 50 tons of stone," says Pierre, whose name comes from the French word for stone.

For two decades, the couple has continued learning and working together in clients' gardens as well as their own. Nancy focuses on plants, and Pierre, who studied landscape design at George Washington University after moving to the United States, crafts stone paths, cairns, and walls as well as rustic furniture, fences, and follies of eastern red cedar. In their backyard, he even built a fanciful tree house 16 feet up in a sweet gum tree.

"You have to have both structure and plants in a landscape," Pierre says. "Structure without plants would not be very pretty, and plants without structure would be just a jumble."

'Dynasty' tulip



TULIP DESIGN TIPS

PLANT IN ABUNDANCE. "Some people think planting 25 bulbs is a lot," Nancy says, "but you really have to plant hundreds to make a statement." Last fall, she and Pierre added 368 new tulips to their existing troves of daffodils, grape hyacinth, and species tulips. They plant bulbs 6–8 inches apart in clusters of six or eight.

MIMIC NATURE'S DESIGN. Nancy says she studies natural roadside vegetation and imitates the curving swaths peppered with outside stragglers for her bulb plantings. "Nature doesn't put things in a straight line," she says.

SPOTLIGHT FEATURES. Nancy and Pierre use bulbs to define walkways, mark an entry, and create focal points outside a window.

LAYER IN VARYING HEIGHTS. They line their front walk with low forget-me-nots, 18-inch 'Suncatcher' tulips, and 24-inch 'Blushing Lady' tulips. The forget-me-nots were originally planted in 2001 with seeds from the couple's wedding favors and have been self-sowing ever since.

GO MONOCHROMATIC. The Moitriers plant orange tulips in varying sizes and shapes like double, peony-style Sunlover; fluted 'Ballerina'; and classic, egg-shape 'Daydream' and 'Avignon'.

FIND A BACKDROP. The Moitriers position tulips along a contrasting backdrop, whether it's a hand-carved stone cairn or colorful foliage plants like deep green spreading English yew, golden Japanese forest grass, or 'Autumn Bride' coral bells. These foliage plants also cleverly disguise tulip leaves as they fade.

COMBINE BULBS AND PERENNIALS. Nancy's favorite combos are 'El Nino' tulips and Japanese sacred lily (*Rhodea japonica*), and 'Little Beauty' tulips and grape hyacinth. (To create a carpet of these smaller bulbs, use a garden knife to make six 3-inch slits per square foot; fill each slit with one or two bulbs.)

REPEAT COLORS THROUGHOUT THE GARDEN. "You've got to find some repetition so the whole creation makes sense," Pierre says, noting the chartreuse and orange reiterated throughout their garden.



Layering tulips in varying heights—even in pots—keeps the display lively. The Mōitriers accent their front walk with 'Suncatcher' (18 inches tall) and 'Blushing Lady' (24 inches tall) tulips. Other perennials and annuals, such as blue forget-me-nots, orange and burgundy pansies, and Early Bird purple-and-white columbines fill in as accents.



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DETER DEER

In spring when bulbs begin to emerge, spray the leaves with deer repellent weekly and after rainfall. "It's better to be safe than disappointed," Nancy says, explaining that one evening of deer browse can ruin an entire tulip display.

A few Japanese maples are planted throughout the garden, their spring leaves echoing the warm colors of the tulips and the exterior color of the house.

PHOTOGRAPH BY DAVID PATTERSON
STYLED BY ELAINE ST. LOUIS
WRITTEN BY JAM KENICK

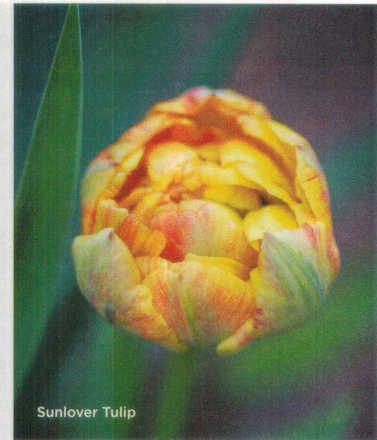


Pierre creates custom fences and furniture, like this charming bench, using eastern red cedar branches. The shed is framed with 'Ace of Hearts' redbud (*Cercis canadensis* 'Ace of Hearts').

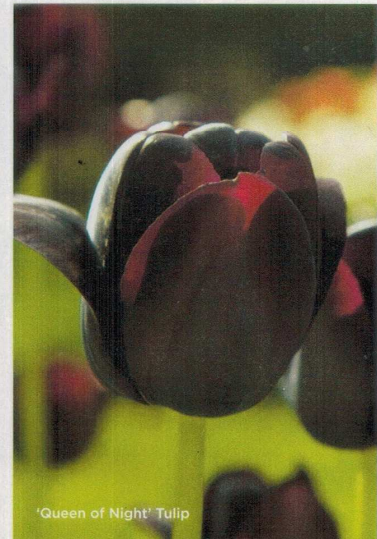
On spring evenings, Pierre and Nancy enjoy returning home after work to tour their own paradise. As they step out the front door, they might spot a resident fox running across the street. He's a regular thanks to the Moitriers' commitment to a richly diverse plantscape. After it rains, they watch from the arched bridge as water percolates through the stone swales and admire the Triumph tulips planted in nearby ridges, perhaps making mental notes to plant more.

"We love to walk around to see what's coming up, what's not quite right, and how we can make things better," Pierre says. "It's a great passion of ours." And, no doubt, this daily practice is a key to the couple's garden's success.

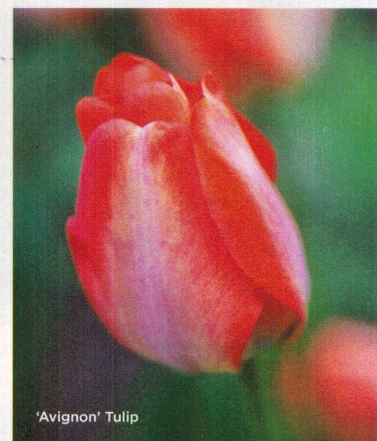
For more information, see Resources on page 103.



Sunlover Tulip



'Queen of Night' Tulip



'Avignon' Tulip