

The Baby Boomer Retirement Garden

The Baby Boomer Retirement Garden is a dense yet low-maintenance garden designed to meet the needs of lifelong gardeners who have chosen to simplify their lives by downsizing to a smaller property. Described as a "retirement garden," the property serves to minimize tasks such as weeding, mulching, and staking. In setting the framework for the garden, the view of the surrounding landscape was a guiding principle. An old apple tree, named the "Iconic Apple Tree," is the focal point of the large lawn, which leads the eye to the mountain vista beyond. The renovation of the house included the addition of glass windows and doors so that every room's west facing wall would have a view of the landscape. The garden area is compact but features great variety. It includes elements of five different gardens, including a rock garden, an herb garden, a shade garden, perennial borders, and a water garden.

In keeping with the low-maintenance theme plantings were chosen for their resilience including peonies, daffodils, daylilies, poppies, and sedums, which are set amongst an evergreen backbone of juniper, false cypress, holly, mugo pine, bog rosemary, periwinkle, and yucca. The only staking occurs when the six peony plants are in bloom, and annuals are limited to a flat of petunias added in the spring. Described as the garden's main attraction is a 35 foot long water lily pool, the side of the pool also provides garden seating in the form of a stone sitting wall. The pool is a naturally balanced system featuring a koi, snails, frogs, a school of goldfish whose population is kept in check by a resident great blue heron, and an assortment of aquatic plants such as water lilies, hornwort, and water violet.

Bordered by kale and marigolds the herb garden, which provides herbs and greens for salads, is conveniently located just off the kitchen. A shade garden is located in view of the master bath which sits in an oversized glassed window box, providing a verdant greenhouse-like view for bathers. Flanking each end of the lily pool two identical perennial borders provide continuous bursts of color in four waves of blooms: the first wave features daffodils and forsythia, the second wave arrives with the blooming of peonies, poppies, and assorted allium, the third wave occurs at the height of the summer when the water lilies, irises and daylilies bloom, and the color season closes with the fourth wave consisting of a massive overplanting of white 'Casa Blanca' lilies.