



MARY'S

# Garden Grew

*Atop a hill featuring stunning 360-degree views, one Kansas City homeowner delights in her lush property landscaped to perfection.*

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*(above, left): When Mary bought a couple of pallets of antique pavers at an auction, she asked Sara to incorporate them throughout the gardens. "To add visual appeal, I used the pavers capped with limestone edges," Sara notes.*

*(above): As you turn the corner from the front, Sara created a quiet courtyard with a charming arbor entrance covered in weeping cherry, an area that was once merely rubble where Mary's dogs ran.*

*(left): Courtyards are inherently charming. Here, the wow factor is heightened by a mélange of textures including Mexican pebbles and Pennsylvania limestone. Overplanting large pots is another element that makes the courtyard so engaging.*



Story by **Gloria Gale**  
Photos by **Bill Mathews**

*M*ary White loves her house, and for good reason. The handsome story-and-a-half perched on a limestone bluff and surrounded by killer views of rolling hills and native forest is what Mary calls Nirvana.

When Mary built her house in 2005, she, along with her brood of three dogs and three cats, rejoiced in living amidst nature's gallery. Fashioning a comfortable interior was one thing, but it would take a professional's eye to design gardens with a scope she imagined. Mary found the landscaper with the skill she was looking for in Sara Antin, owner of Outside Interiors. Sara understood how to interpret Mary's ideas, suggesting they walk the property together and collaborate on a plan to enliven the grounds immediately surrounding the home.

The first order of business was to redesign the front of the house where a 150-square-foot island inside the circle drive provided a large space. "I envisioned a very organic landscape, brimming with interesting plantings and massive limestone boulders, not just an area dotted with a few bushes here and there," Sara acknowledges, which is why she designed a water feature with a waterfall spilling into an existing pool that she would eventually enlarge. Enveloped by bursts of colorful perennials and annuals that twine around paths of vintage pavers, the sound of water, along with the texture of rocks and plants, is an instant sensory experience.

"Mary found pallets of stamped pavers at an auction that she wanted to use throughout. The natural brick color would provide a nice contrast within this garden," Sara says. As a taller backdrop





for the two-legged. Mary and Sara determined a patio featuring a kitchen and fireplace would function as an outdoor room. "An ample backyard suggests an equally ample patio area," Sara says, referencing the 30-by-30-foot space. The square patio platted with a limestone floor, built-in planter and a native Missouri stone knee-wall is the perfect place for Mary to entertain her frequent guests.

"There's so much nature to absorb out here," Mary says, commenting that it's not just the view that toggles but the inrepid wildlife that fly, crouch and gingerly investigate. "Bobcat, wild turkey, a small red fox, deer and assorted other creatures are regular visitors."

One notable feature adjacent to the patio is a massive slab of limestone. "The whole area is dotted with giant stones like this one. We left it because it's so indicative of the geology of this property," Mary says, turning toward an entire



(above, left): The well-appointed grill station and gas fireplace provide everything necessary for entertaining. With a backdrop of the Missouri hillsides spilling down to ponds and horse trails 200 feet below, the essence of this backyard and vista is pure country.

(left): This giant flat of limestone becomes a garden feature adjacent to the patio. Mary chose to leave the slab instead of removing it. Not only is it a conversation point, it's yet another place to sit in the backyard.



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*Countertop Close-up: The veining in this granite top mimics the flow of river below.*

for the profusion of colorful plants. Sara utilized Serbian spruce, June magnolia and Sargentina crabapple, among others. "To highlight this garden's sculptural elements, I like to define spaces with vignettes: trees that are trunked-up to reveal their structure and hedges surrounding statuary and garden perimeters," she adds.

Anchoring one edge of the front garden, Sara installed a bold two-tiered fountain encircled by raised beds of sun impatiens and a stone wall that, she says, "is not just an attractive focal point but a place where Mary can sit." Altogether, the entire garden, enhanced with the sound of water and numerous colorful

plantings, is now a worthy introduction to the front of the house.

Turning the corner, Sara fashioned a welcoming arbor espaliered with weeping cherry as a fitting introduction at the side of the house. To create this charming courtyard, Sara brought in large flats of flagstone as a base then configured Mexican beach pebbles circling an antique iron urn as a focal point. She potted oversized planters with a profusion of foliage then added benches and garden novelty.

It's hard to imagine what comes next, but the backyard delivers. Overlooking a riverbed below, the backyard is a haven, and not just



*(above): Situated just beyond the manicured backyard, hostas and native plants mingle throughout the limestone slabs. This is often a place Mary frequents for a change of scenery.*

*(right): An antique wood/aggregate bench is the perfect hideaway to sip coffee while enjoying nature. Completing this bucolic setting is a bubbling fountain Sara made by drilling a hole in the boulder.*

flank of the limestone outcropping just beyond the backyard fence.

Because of the dense terrain of forest and boulders, Mary asked Sara to create a special sitting area hidden in the trees. "I found an antique bench, created a bubbling fountain from one of the large rocks and carved out this shady spot for contemplation," Sara says. "I'm thoroughly pleased with everything, but this area, quiet and literally surrounded by woods on all sides, is magical," Mary says. "I can't think of a better spot to appreciate nature at its best." •

