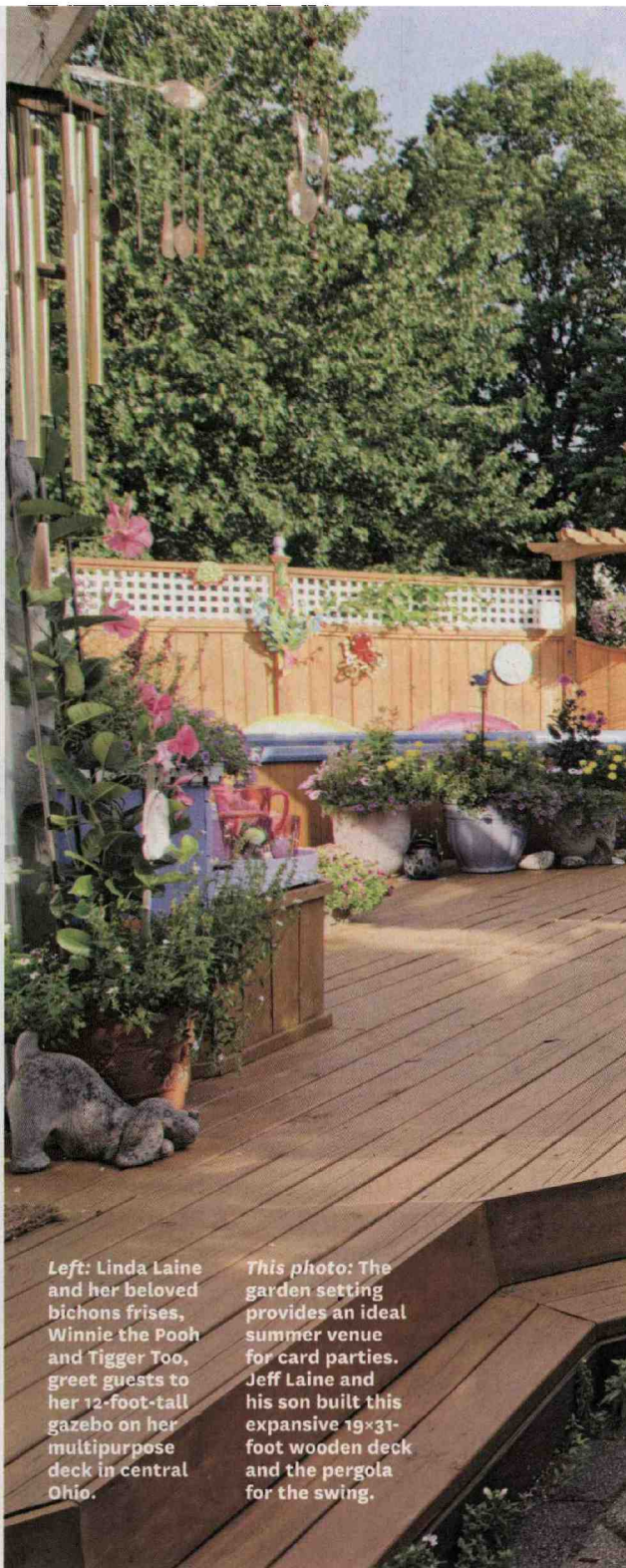


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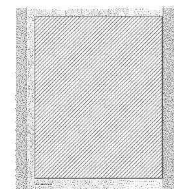
# Garden Party!

A garden setting with a deck, patio, and spa pool welcomes guests.



**Left:** Linda Laine and her beloved bichons frises, Winnie the Pooh and Tigger Too, greet guests to her 12-foot-tall gazebo on her multipurpose deck in central Ohio.

**This photo:** The garden setting provides an ideal summer venue for card parties. Jeff Laine and his son built this expansive 19x31-foot wooden deck and the pergola for the swing.





**Below:**  
Containers of red begonias and chartreuse coleus and sweet potato vine provide attractive contrast against the periwinkle blue of the siding and trim at the rear of the Laines' house.

Stepping onto Jeff and Linda Laine's deck in Westerville, Ohio, feels like arriving at a charming bed-and-breakfast. Linda greets her first guest as she covers a patio table with a cross-stitched floral tablecloth and sets a vase of fresh-picked hydrangeas to the side. Jeff hangs a final string of white lights around the gazebo and turns on outdoor speakers as another guest enters from the backyard. It's the Laines' turn to host the monthly neighborhood card club, and these gracious hosts welcome the opportunity to entertain outdoors on their expansive deck overlooking their backyard garden in full bloom. "We wanted a bed-and-breakfast-like place at our home to enjoy and share with our friends and family," says Linda. And over the past 20 years, the Laines have transformed their empty half-acre lot into a property that overflows with the hallmark hospitality they've found traveling to bed-and-

breakfasts across the United States.

When the couple moved from Long Island, New York, to their new suburban home in 1991, their backyard was void of any landscaping and privacy. "I could see 13 other yards from the kitchen window," Linda says. Project by project, she and Jeff created inviting garden spaces, a wooden deck, a paver patio, a screened gazebo, and a spa pool.

Linda says her lively backyard design has evolved through trial and error, inspirations from garden visits in the United States and Europe, and lessons from other gardeners. "I love experimenting," she says, especially when it comes to different color combinations in the garden and on the home's exterior. For example, when Linda and Jeff repainted the home's gray front shutters in periwinkle, she liked the color so much that she repeated the hue on the entire back side of the house.

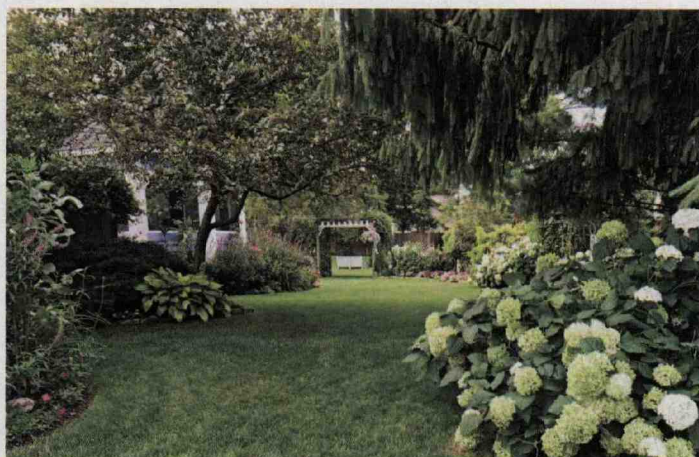




*This photo: Linda densely plants her beds to minimize weeds and achieve a cottage style. Here, she mixes red crocosmia, *Hydrangea* 'Annabelle', and purple coneflower.*



**Above:** The 8x16-foot spa pool was purposefully placed with views of the backyard's blooms. In the afternoons, Linda is known to break from gardening chores to swim in the pool. "If not, I get too grumpy," she says. **Below:** Linda has multiplied her *Hydrangea* 'Annabelle' by cutting branches, dipping them in rooting hormone, and placing them in new soil.



Jeff says Linda has a gift for designing. "She'll return home from a garden center with a trunkload of plants and plans for a new flowerbed she's envisioned while walking the aisles of plants," he says. And Linda says Jeff, who retired six years ago, "now has a life of leisure" as a hardworking gardener she recruits to help install new garden beds.

Linda offers guests at the card party a pregame tour of the gardens in peak condition for the upcoming weekend's garden tour for some 700 visitors. She points to the latest dahlia bloom, a 'Neon Splendor'. She explains that a friend's gift of 17 dahlias has grown to a collection of 120, including ones for each letter of the alphabet, from 'Aitara' to 'Zorro'. "'X' was the hardest one to find," she says. "We found 'Xenon' in Canada and had to pay hefty customs fees, but it was worth it."



**This photo:**  
Morning glory  
vines have  
returned  
for 20 years  
along the  
deck and over  
the garage  
door.

## A Dozen Deck Ideas

Whether they're hosting neighbors or songbirds, Jeff and Linda Laine deliver "bed-and-breakfast"-style hospitality in their backyard. Borrow a few of their ideas to make your own deck or patio say, "Welcome."

**Appeal to the senses.** From the Laines' deck, guests relax to the sounds of water fountains and wind chimes, scents of lilac and honeysuckle, and views of colorful gardens.

**Invite birds and butterflies.** Winged garden visitors are drawn to the Laines' 11 birdbaths, two fountains, and numerous pollinator-loving plants, like such as *Salvia* 'Black and Blue' and *Verbena bonariensis*.

**Personalize your space.** On their deck and within their landscaping, the Laines add accessories from travels, local festivals, and do-it-yourself projects that reflect their personalities. Jeff's creations include hypertufa mushrooms, a wooden obelisk, and an iron butterfly.

**Create private spaces.** The Laines use landscape borders, the gazebo, and arbors as attractive privacy screens from neighbors.

**Add a window box.** For the Laines, a prolific flower box is positioned by a bay window to be enjoyed inside and out. Linda fills the box with low-maintenance, long-blooming plants such as *Nemesia*, *Calibrochoa*, *Laurentia* 'Beth's Blue', and *Euphorbia* 'Diamond Frost'.

**Have fun with color.** Linda assembles containers of purple- and pink-flowering plants to complement the home's periwinkle exterior.

**Consider a gazebo.** Rather than a traditional screen porch, the Laines' octagon-shape gazebo provides architectural interest and multiple—yes, eight—views.

**Design along a theme.** The Laines achieve a bed-and-breakfast look with cottage-style scrollwork, whimsical colors, and overflowing flowerbeds.

**Set a mood with lighting.** When entertaining, the Laines string twinkle lights, burn candles, and turn on ambient porch fixtures. They've also considered floating candles or water-safe lights in the spa pool at night.

**Offer pet-friendly spaces.** The Laines' bichons serve as cheerful greeters and respect the backyard boundaries, thanks to an invisible fence. In the backyard, these canines find several places to rest in shade or drink water.

**Provide flexible seating.** On the Laines' deck, guests have several options—a swing, patio furniture, or a built-in bench.

**Focus on garden views.** The Laines designed pockets in their deck's railing to create unobstructed views of the beautiful gardens surrounding the deck.

*“We wanted a bed-and-breakfast-like place at our home to enjoy and share with friends and family.” —Linda Laine*



**Above:** A periwinkle-painted window box filled with colorful annuals provides season-long color outside for guests on the deck as well as inside, as seen from the dining room.

Near the spa pool, Linda shows off more new blooms in the butterfly garden, where Monarchs and Ruby-Throated Hummingbirds visit in late afternoon while the couple takes swim breaks from gardening chores. “The other day, we saw a hawk moth drinking up the nectar of our butterfly bush,” Linda says. She leads her guests farther into the backyard, which is divided with a crescent-shape bed of three gardens connected by two arbors Jeff built. A swing hangs from one arbor, and a full-size

ostrich sculpture finds cover under the other. As Linda walks, she delights in sharing stories of these sculptures collected from local arts festivals and travels.

Even while the Laines and their neighbors play cards, it’s not unusual for the conversation to turn to gardening questions. Linda’s hospitality now extends to offering garden consulting services to neighbors, including one who triumphantly reported: “I got my first hummingbird.”





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Linda Laine is publicity chair for the 21st annual WesterFlora garden tour in Westerville, Ohio, open to the public and scheduled for July 2012. For more information, visit [westerflora.com](http://westerflora.com). **Deck planning and building assistance**—Jarret Laine, J.L. Carpentry, Columbus, Ohio, metro area; 740/817-4403. **Plants**—[Proven Winners](http://ProvenWinners.com); wholesale; 877/865-5818; visit

[provenwinners.com](http://provenwinners.com) for a retailer near you. **Exterior wall paint Lobelia #SW6809, trim paint Celestial Blue #SW6808**—The Sherwin-Williams Co.; 800/474-3794; [sherwin-williams.com](http://sherwin-williams.com). **Outdoor grill**—Sears Kenmore; 888/536-6673; [kenmore.com](http://kenmore.com). **Hot tub**—Royal Spa; 800/541-1248; [myroyalspa.com](http://myroyalspa.com). **Re-covering of chaise longue and chairs**—Strip-N-Strap, Columbus, Ohio; 614/863-6242; [stripnstrap.com](http://stripnstrap.com).