

Garden turned from drab to DAZZLING

Clive garden 20 years in the making ready to dazzle in annual garden tour

By **TOM PERRY**
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Bob Shaw looks out at his backyard and remembers when it was “one big, flat piece of clay.”

Today, less than 20 years after he and his wife Becky began installing their garden, there is nothing flat or drab about the half acre behind their home.

Indeed their Clive yard is a showplace that is likely to dazzle

participants this Saturday during the annual Polk County Master Gardeners’ garden tour.

“This is a garden with all the ‘wow’ factors,” said Carol Nading, a member of the gardeners’ group. “It could easily be featured in a Better Homes and Gardens magazine.”

One of six gardens on this year’s tour, the Shaws’ secluded parklike setting was a popular stop on the 2005 garden tour.

Organizers said they decided to add the garden again for this year’s event — the 10th annual “Extraordinary Gardens by Ordinary People” tour — because of its location near other show gardens in the western suburbs of Des Moines.

As has been part of tradition for

the Polk County Master Gardeners, the tour celebrates different approaches to horticulture. This year’s gardens range in size from a small cottage-style garden to a half acre of woodland outdoor living space.

Tour participants will be encouraged to take away ideas for their own gardens. “This is a place that we’re very happy to share with visitors,” Shaw said.

Carefully placed trees, a summer house, cascading waterfalls, flower berms, limestone pathways and more than 50

varieties of perennials and annuals have been stitched together to create a masterpiece.

Much of the credit goes to Ted Lare, owner of Ted Lare Design Build of Cumming, Shaw said. Lare looked at the piece of clay and saw it as a blank canvas, designing a garden that was enhanced by water features in 1993.

“They have really added to the joy here,” Shaw said of the water features, which add a dimension of soothing sound to the explosion of colors.



■ About the Master Gardeners tour

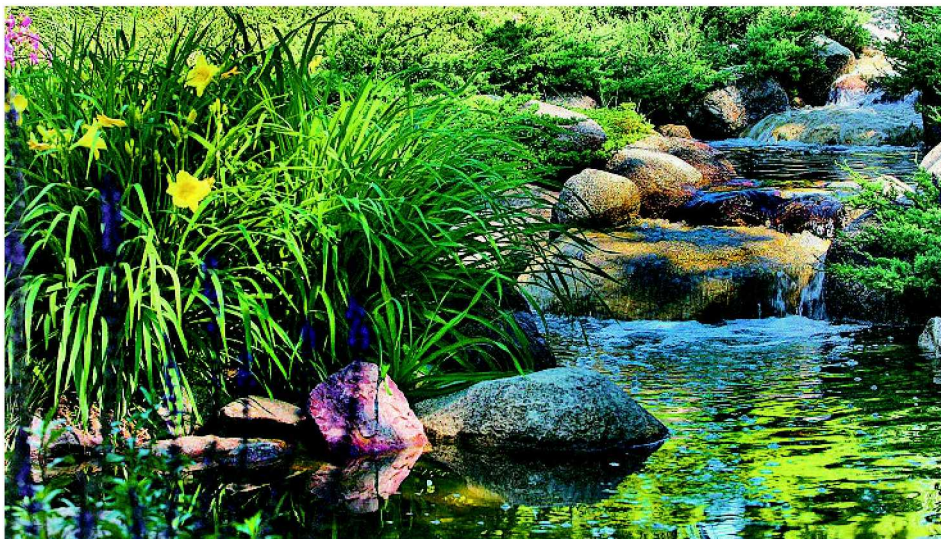
WHEN: The Polk County Master Gardeners will host the 10th annual “Extraordinary Gardens by Ordinary People” tour from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturday, rain or shine.

WHAT: This year’s tour will feature at least six home gardens. Locations will be in the western suburbs of Des Moines. Three of the gardens will host demonstrations, including Adding Koi to Your Water Feature, Family Fun in the Garden and Planting in Your Hypertufa, which is an artificial stone material.

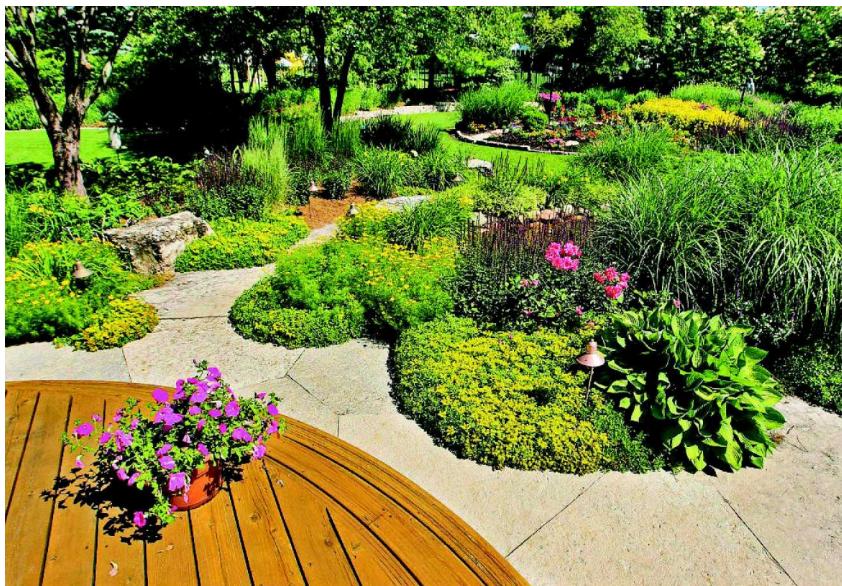
NEW: New this year is a raffle featuring two floral design quilts. The quilts will be on display at the Iowa State Extension Office, 1625 Adventureland Drive in Altoona through Friday, and at one of the stops on tour day. Raffle tickets are \$1 each or six for \$5 at the Extension office or the day of the tour.

TICKETS: Garden tour tickets are \$10 each and can be purchased at: Goode Greenhouses, 1050 N.E. 50th Ave.; Herndon’s Des Moines Seed and Nursery, 6015 Grand Ave.; Woodsmith Store, 10320 Hickman Road, Clive; Earl May Nursery and Garden Centers in Des Moines at 5910 Douglas Ave. and 7701 S.E. Bloomfield Road, 1845 22nd St. in West Des Moines, 1530 S.E. Blackthorne Drive in Waukee, and 1509 N. Ankeny Blvd. in Ankeny; and the ISU Extension office in Altoona. Proceeds support several Polk County Master Gardeners projects.

INFORMATION: For more information, call the ISU Extension office at (515) 957-5760 or check the PCMG Garden Tour Facebook page.



Water features in the Shaws’ garden add a dimension of sound to the colorful landscape.



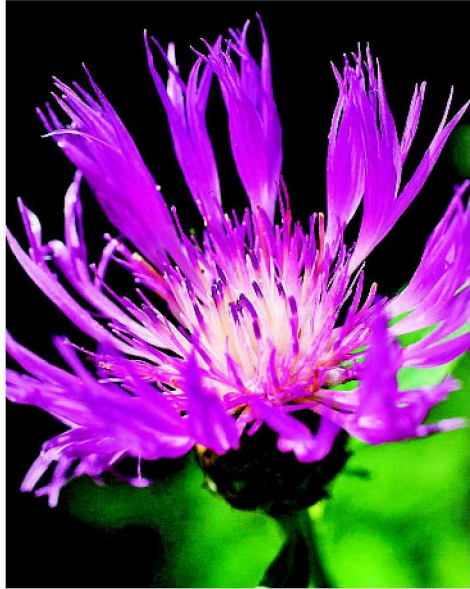
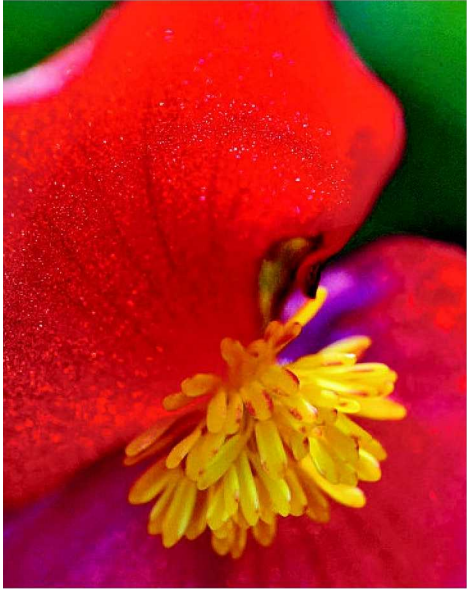
MARY CHIND/THE REGISTER

The Shaws’ backyard garden combines trees, waterfalls, flower berms, limestone pathways and more than 50 perennials and annuals into a colorful natural oasis just outside their back door. Much of the design was done by Ted Lare.

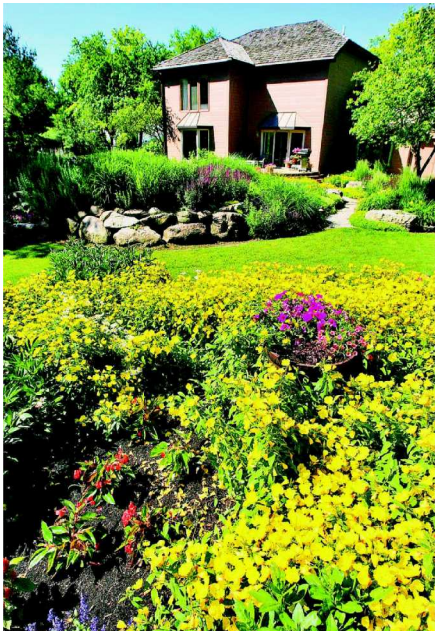


Bob Shaw's garden will be on the Polk County Master Gardeners tour.

Polk County Master Gardeners Tour



Bob and Beck Shaw's garden features, from left, a dragon wing begonia, a shasta daisy in a field of sundrops and centauria blossom.



Garden blog

Read Michelle Walke's take on gardens and the Polk County Garden Tour at desmoinesregister.com/gardenblog

MARK CHONDREGISTER PHOTOS
When Bob and Becky Shaw purchased their Clive home in 1991 the half acre backyard was an empty piece of clay. Over the last 20 years the Shaws have transformed it into a thriving, beautiful garden, where a field of sundrops are currently stealing the show in the sunny section of the yard.