

Turn your old junk into garden treasures

By Karen Deer

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Are you a scavenger? If you are, maybe you'll be lucky enough to find a Radio Flyer stuffed into a city trash bin, as we did. It was old, rusty and could barely move. We grabbed it.

If not, you may want to hold on to some of your junk for your garden paths, patios and porches. Classic 'junk' items include old boots, pots and pans and toys.

You can personalize your garden with old junky items scavenged from basements, garage sales and flea markets. See what a little fresh paint, new blooms and even strawberries did to these old items.

Old wooden chair

Designer/garden center Wendy Doan, garden stylist at For The Garden, St. Louis, Mo.

1. Cut center out of chair seat so pot can rest on the frame.

2. Spray paint chair and pot.

3. Plant large pot (we used a 12-inch clay pot plus smaller potted plants for the ladder part of the chair) filled with yellow

sweet potato vine, red verbena, 'Tango Neon' purple geranium, Calibrachoa 'Dreamsickle,' Supertunia 'Royal Velvet' and premium potting soil

Price: \$55 for soil, flowers and spray paint

Old metal strainers

Designer/garden center — Pam Naugle, assistant general manager at Hartke Nursery, 1030 North Warson Road

1. Line both large and small strainers with plastic grocery bags so that the soil doesn't wash out of the holes.

2. Fill both strainers with soil.

3. Place an upside-down 5-inch clay pot into the back of the large container.

Push it down until it is level with the rim of the strainer.

4. Place the small strainer on the upside-down pot and the back rim of the large strainer. (Naugle used a dragonfly pole pushed through the strainer, through the pot and into the soil below to stabilize the top strainer).

5. Plant the smaller

strainer with Dianthus 'Strawberry Parfait' and Allysum 'Snow Crystals.'

6. Plant the larger strainer with strawberry plants. (Naugle used the everbearing variety).

Price — About \$25 for flowers, strawberries, soil and dragonfly

Old metal watering can

Designer/garden center — Diane White, owner of White's Greenhouses, Godfrey, Mo.

1. Fill the bottom one-third of the can with plastic crumpled containers to improve drainage.

2. Fill the rest of the can with potting soil.

3. For height, plant a white caladium. For fullness, plant a dragon wing begonia and Torenia 'Blue Wave.'

4. To soften the look, plant asparagus fern to drape over the edge.

5. After planting, spread a slow-release fertilizer and then cover the soil with sphagnum moss for a finished look.

Price — \$25 for soil, flowers, plants and fertilizer