

Better Homes and Gardens® Creative Ideas

GARDEN IDEAS & OUTDOOR LIVING

Spring
1988

\$2.95

Display until April 5

TIPS FROM AROUND THE COUNTRY

Great gardeners tell you
how they do it

PLUS: Big crops from
pint-sized plots

TAKE THE PLUNGE

How to make room
for your own pool or spa

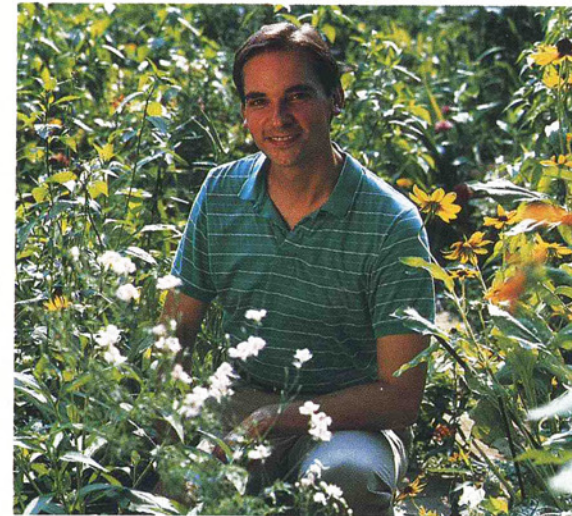
GREAT ESCAPES

Irresistible backyard getaways for
easy summertime living





A T L A N T A A Paradise for Perennials



"This started as a low-key garden. The first year, I simply removed a few pine trees to make room for some flowers. As I got into it, I kept adding more space for perennials."

—Bill Smith

Landscape architects love a good challenge. That's exactly what Atlanta designer Bill Smith, *above*, got when he moved into his house four years ago. What is now a sweeping lawn area surrounded by free-flowing perennial borders, *opposite*, was once a nearly impenetrable wooded lot with no grass or garden areas, just bare ground covered with fallen pine needles.

The backyard transformation is a giant improvement, and it would have been a formidable task for most other landscape architects. But Bill practiced some wise advice that he often preaches to his own clients. Instead of getting overwhelmed with the project ahead of him, he carefully thought out a plan of attack, then methodically followed it through, one step at a time.

Bill masterminded a landscape plan that preserved all of the "worthwhile" trees in his backyard. "My philosophy is to work with the trees, not get rid of them," he says. Most of the pines and dogwoods were saved, and only the "tall, skinny, nothing trees" were removed. The end product is a lush evergreen privacy screen at



Opposite: A brick edging adds formality to the garden. Dogwoods in back form a blizzard of white blossoms in early spring. **Right:** Relaxing is easy in a hammock floating on a sea of bloom.

Photographs: Mike Moreland Design: Bill Smith, ASLA, William T. Smith and Associates. Field editor: Ruth Reiter

A T L A N T A

A Paradise for Perennials



the back of the lot, testimony that a little judicious weeding can enhance a woodland setting.

Bill's phase-by-phase approach to landscaping his backyard has stretched out the work and the expenses over a period of four years. The first year he created a sunny clearing, *right*, by removing five large pine trees and ripping out the tangle of undergrowth. Next, he regraded the yard to make two levels for garden and lawn areas. The groundwork completed, Bill planted most of his perennial flowers that same season to get a head start on color. "I want color all season," he says, "so I mix in some annuals to keep the show going when perennials fade."

Bill saved all of the brickwork for the second year. Because he had carefully planned the edging on paper before he did any planting, delaying the construction didn't disturb the development of his year-old perennials. Having such great success with flowers the first year also convinced him to make the perennial border larger than he originally planned so he could add more plants the third and fourth years.

Bill's passion for perennials must be contagious. "My clients are wanting to grow perennials more than ever now," he says. Flowers are, without a doubt, this landscape architect's favorite solution to a good challenge.

"I saved most of the evergreens to create a natural buffer for privacy. In winter, their color and texture is especially important to me."

—Bill Smith



Left: Bill plants a variety of perennials to have flowers all season. This bed includes lily, daylily, delphinium, coreopsis, campanula, monarda, stokesia, Queen Anne's-lace, and shasta daisy.

Opposite: Pink hollyhock, orange lily, purple loosestrife, blue delphinium, and yellow heliopsis bloom in early summer to create a riot of color.

Above right: Garden color is easy to grow with perennials such as rudbeckia and daylily.

Above left: Annuals, including purple and lilac larkspur, play a big role in Bill's garden. They bloom all season, whereas perennials come in and out of bloom.

Photographs: Above right and opposite, Maris/Semel

Field editor: Bonnie Maharam

