

# At HOME

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with Newsday

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# Beyond the flower pot

BY AIMEE FITZPATRICK MARTIN

Whether your taste leans toward colorful gnomes and plastic pink flamingos or stone statuary and fountains or even rustic wood bird houses and arbors — decorating your garden is a way to let your personality bloom.

For inspiration, stroll through the Idea Garden at Trimble's of Corchaug, where the motto is "funky, funky and chic," says Anne Trimble, who along with Nancy Leskody owns the four-acre nursery in Cutchogue.

The meandering path leads through a display of offbeat decorative artifacts that the women picked up at the Southold Town Landfill and other unlikely places. Now these one-of-a-kind finds nestle among the verdant plantings. They're not for sale, they're strictly for fun and, well, ideas.

"Our goal is to have peo-

ple take a look around and get inspired to have fun in their own garden," says Trimble. So bowling balls and pins are placed like statues in the garden and a wooden baby swing adorned with impatiens hangs from a maple tree. A bench crafted from wooden plant pallets and tractor tires is a new addition.



**HOW DOES YOUR GARDEN GROW?** Anne Trimble, above left, and Nancy Leskody offer funky answers at their Cutchogue nursery. Below, a moss-dotted outhouse finds a new function as a vignette in the Idea Garden.

Leskody, a former New York City parks inspector, shows off one of her favorite finds — "this rusty hood from an old Reo E20 truck that we found at a local metal salvage yard." Now, it has a new parking spot among the *Rudbeckia*.

Throughout the garden, the women's salvaged finds add whimsy and humor — while a stereo system pipes in soothing jazz, cool samba and mellow New Age music.

License plates from states near and far are nailed to posts and shed walls. Broken urns and shovels — some spade up, others handle up — decorate flower-filled beds. A wood door with a diamond-shaped window stands like a sculpture among the blooms.

Empty bottles from North Fork wineries are buried bottoms-up as decorative edging along the borders. Other bottles hang like ornaments on the bare twigs of a dead cedar tree to create an African-inspired "bottle tree," believed in folk traditions to ward off evil.

Customers offer their throwaways, too. Trimble points to a marble pedestal sink and a claw-foot tub from Broadway casting director Bernie Telsey. The women plugged up the porcelain tub, filled it with water and added tropical water lilies.

In another area, an old three-seater outhouse — also a customer cast-off — creates a rustic vignette with its moss-dotted roof and wood door propped open with a flower pot. Nearby, a planter overflowing with mandevilla and coleus provides a splash of color.

All in all, the Idea Garden is blooming with ideas. Which is just what its creators intended.

*Aimee Fitzpatrick Martin is a freelance writer.*





NEWSDAY PHOTOS / TONY JEROME



**BEYOND GARDEN GNOMES.** Clockwise from top: A claw-foot tub finds new life as a water garden. The remnants of a rusted truck nestle among the *Rudbeckia*. A pedestal sink seems at home amid the greenery. A street sign and an old wood door mark a path.