

# Dream Gardens

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# formal accents

A structured layout brings definition and cultivated character to overflowing beds in this country garden.

*Above:* A fenced perennial and vegetable garden features a formal layout. *Right:* The fruits of collecting can show up in surprising places. Here, a rusty 8-inch wheel adds country charm to a garden gate.









Left: Amethyst sea holly (*Eryngium amethystinum*) mixes spiny leaves and dome-shape flower heads for a charming, natural character. This photo: Four grassy paths intersect in the fenced perennial/vegetable garden. At the center of the formal design, a brick-bordered circular area offers an intriguing focal point.



Sometimes it's good to have a little structure in life. This Massachusetts garden is the perfect example. A circular herb garden and a fenced vegetable and flower garden, defined by brick-lined beds and intersecting paths, introduce a note of formality to the country setting. But the mix of perennials and edging plants that spill out of the structured beds creates an inviting, casual look. Here's how to get the best of both worlds in a garden design.

■ Aim for a relaxed formality. Here, a circular herb garden, flanked by two curved pergolas, and the 2,000-square-foot perennial and vegetable garden both feature geometric lines that create stunning views from upper-level windows. Overflowing plants decrease the formality and keep the overall look in line with the casual country setting.













**This photo:** Perennials, such as Shasta daisies, have replaced overgrown herbs in the circular herb garden. A handmade recirculating fountain offers the soothing sounds of water at the garden's center.

**Right:** *Phlox paniculata*, purple verbena, and Oriental lilies mingle in one of the overflowing beds.



■ Mix culinary crops with perennials, annuals, and bulbs. Vegetables are fine on their own, but nonedible plants bring additional color and texture to beds for an appealing look. In this garden, plants that deer don't like—such as peonies (*Paeonia* spp.) and lamb's-ears (*Stachys byzantina*)—grow along the perimeter.

■ Consider foliage as well as blooms. For long-lasting beauty, foliage and texture are as important as colorful flowers, which soon fade. Here, lamb's-ears add striking contrast with haunting notes of silvery-gray foliage that peek out from amid the greenery. Also consider *Coleus* cultivars, hostas, and *Ligularia dentata*, which features big, round leaves.

PHOTOGRAPHER: ERIC ROTH

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*Top* Over time, Hilarie replaces overgrown herbs in her circular garden with perennials, such as Shasta daisies. "I've learned never to plant mint," she says. "It takes over!"  
*Bottom* Stone steps planted with sedum, violets, Ajuga, and thyme lead from the driveway to the garden's path.

