

Ann Storey and Randall Johnson have gardened in this lovely location intensively for over ten years. In the family since 1950, at which time the now large rhododendrons were planted, the land is a beautiful legacy worth preserving. Several different scenes delight garden visitors. A woodland garden includes native plants, a small shaded pond, and a walking trail through the woods. Raised vegetable beds, fruit trees, and an ample fruit arbor thrive in the home made compost. Large, colorful flower beds frame the gorgeous view with color and variety. New shade gardens feature plants with dramatic foliage while colorful ceramics and mosaics, created by Ann, add whimsy to the garden year round. These gardeners have learned to work together, sharing compost, design ideas, and relaxing together in one of many garden rooms.

What are your watering strategies? New plantings are really the only ones that get watered regularly. The established areas, including the lawn and woodland depend on the natural water cycles to thrive. The flower gardens are watered occasionally with drip irrigation in times of drought.

How do you control pests? Slugs are trapped or picked off of plants under the cover of darkness. Aphids get a good hosing off if they start to colonize a plant but with all of the flowers in the garden, ladybugs and other beneficial insects are abundant so pests don't usually take hold. Moles get a good blast of water or castor oil in their runs. Deer-susceptible plants receive an egg spray that acts as a repellent but raccoons in the pond are a problem that don't yet have a solution!

How do you fertilize? Fertilizer is applied annually using organic fertilizers and compost made on-site. New areas get compost mixed in as they are planted while established areas receive compost as mulch. Compost provides organic matter to clay soil as well as nutrients.

What approach do you use for controlling diseases? Roses are the only real disease-susceptible plants in the garden. Watering in the morning helps prevent problems and when any sign of disease is noticed, infected leaves and stems are removed immediately. Problem roses are being replaced with hardier varieties.

How do you handle weeds? Hand weeding happens all year. Close plant spacing helps squeeze out weeds and a relaxed but constant approach to weeding means that it doesn't ever get out-of-hand.

How many hours a week do you spend in the garden? Eight to ten hours on average between the two gardeners.

Do you attract wildlife to your garden? Bird feeders and water features are scattered throughout the landscape. Native flowering and fruiting shrubs provide food and other flowering plants attract bees, hummingbirds, and butterflies. Bees are very important to gardens and these gardeners have noticed a decrease in the number of honey bees in the garden over the last several years. They are grateful to report that mason and bumble bees are abundant in the garden this year. The acre of forest provides wildlife habitat and the bat and purple martin houses are used every year.

What are your biggest gardening challenges? Moles are the peskiest pests in the garden. They have killed some trees and made the lawn uneven to walk on.

What makes gardening fun or satisfying for you? The garden is a three dimensional work of art that can be shared with others. It provides therapeutic stress relief and creates a reason and place to be outside. It is a haven for wildlife.