

Shanna Winters hasn't let allergies limit her gardening experience. Instead, she planted low-pollen producing plants. Careful attention to detail assured that only a few plants would be blooming at one time, this creates an ever-changing, beautiful, low-allergy garden. With the purchase of the house 2 ½ years ago the Winters' Asian inspired garden began.

One garden goal was to retain as much rain water on site as possible. This was accomplished by using permeable surfaces and water retention strategies throughout the yard.

In the second year the blue and white serenity garden was planted, and the patio installed. Prior to installation of the patio a 6' deep sump hole was dug in the back yard, and the house drains were led to it, enhancing the water retention of the clay soils in the yard.

This year the back yard was finished, the cold frames, raised bed vegetable garden, and moss gardens were planted in April. The potting shed/green house was created with recycled sliding glass door panels.

How many hours per week do you spend in the garden? As the garden matures I spend less time in it. Currently I am spending 10 hours or so per week on maintenance, and several others just enjoying it!

How do you control pests? My basic weed and pest control method is hands on all the way! I pick it, pull it, burn it, and throw it away. I use a recycled green cone for my undesirable yard waste, and compost the good stuff. With diseased plants, I remove them, and research the condition to determine what should be done to protect other plants. In such a new garden, I do not have many problems yet to deal with.

Please describe your watering strategies. The yard is watered by a drip line irrigation system, with the exception of the cold frames, which use a rain barrel when full, or a soaker hose as needed. The ample use of composted bark keeps weeds to a minimum, insulates the plants from temperature extremes, and aides in water retention, thereby decreasing the water needs of the garden. The parking strip uses a soaker hose when needed. When the plantings are mature they will be watered weekly if there has been no rain.

Do you use compost in the garden? Worm bin compost was used in the vegetable garden prior to planting, and included in the pots. The front lawn was removed, and the sod turned over to create the raised beds. These berms were covered with cardboard, and garden beds topped with the

recycled fill from the Chehalis Landfill and Waste Recycling Center. This nutrient rich material does not need added fertilizers.

What sorts of things do you do to attract wildlife to your garden?

Shanna hasn't done anything intentionally to attract wildlife to her garden but has attracted a loyal following of squirrels that are planting various varieties of trees throughout the garden. She also has noticed many butterflies that may be attracted to the lavenders and other blooming plants.

What is one of your biggest gardening challenges? One of the biggest challenges is controlling the bamboo that came with the house. The lovely stand of bamboo was an inspiration for the Asian themed garden. It was quickly obvious that the garden could be a monoculture of bamboo if they didn't take control measures. Two controlled bamboo growing areas were created by creating a two feet deep and four inches wide trench around the bamboo on their side of the fence. The trench was filled with concrete and the concrete topped with a layer of pavers.

The other big challenge is the morning glory that comes from a neighbor's yard. A plastic barrier was installed along the fence line but the morning glory keeps on coming. Regular pulling may one day exhaust the roots of this plant.

What do you enjoy most about gardening? To create a place of serenity, refuge and rejuvenation was my goal, and brings great pleasure to me every day. If you can dream it, you can grow it!