

Garden Description to the 34th Annual Pocket Gardens of Portsmouth September 8-9, 2023



Garden #1 Loughlin Family Preserve

Learn more:

<https://www.seacoastonline.com/story/news/local/portsmouth-herald/2014/10/20/loughlin-spends-100k-to-preserve/36122041007/>

Garden #2 on Thaxter Rd.

The Norellis inherited this garden from the previous owner when they bought the property 5 years ago. Since then, they have made some changes as plants have outgrown their spots or struggled, and have lovingly tended the garden and its diverse collection of plants.

Of note in this garden are the several pieces of stained-glass art created by Allen for the spots they inhabit.

At this time of year, the garden reminds us of the value of foliage in landscape design. You will find soothing combinations of color and texture everywhere you look. The curving beds lead you through the garden, making the property feel much larger than it is. Artful planting and long-range planning, as well as attentive maintenance, have made the backyard a private oasis. The sunny grass areas contrast with the shaded patio tucked behind the garage, a cool green resting area for a cup of coffee or a glass of wine on a summer's day.

Allen has carefully created a planting plan that reflects the placement and name of almost all the plants you will see here. This is available to reference if you spot a plant you are interested in.

Garden #3 on Thaxter St.

This is a true pocket garden, complete with pockets filled with cascading annuals hanging on the garage wall!

John and Linda created this outdoor living room after seeing the patio gardens of Mexico, Italy, and Guatemala. A substantial fence encloses the garden, creating the privacy of those inspirational gardens. John and Linda have lived here 7 years and all that you see here is their vision and handiwork. A raised bed provides the opportunity to grow vegetables and herbs right outside the kitchen door. A Japanese tree lilac is starting to provide shade for the patio and will be pruned to add shade where needed as it grows. John is very handy, and the stonewall he constructed created a raised area in one corner where you will find a variety of blooming perennials. Linda is particularly fond of the wild, weedy vines that grow in profusion on the fence that separates this space from a neighbor's. In the fall Virginia creeper* and other vines provide a profusion of color.

On the side of the house, behind the barbeque, is a run for the family dog. So, everyone's needs are accommodated.

Statuary is particularly notable in this garden. Two angels watch over the garden, and an antique English fountain adds the always welcome sound of flowing water to the delightful ambience. The Lelands shipped a striking urn back from Italy, and now it handsomely holds a variety of annuals. Closer to home is the antique wood stove that the couple found nearby, in a junk pile. Now restored, it provides warmth and atmosphere to this charming seating area. This garden admirably demonstrates that you can meet many needs in a very small space with thoughtful planning and planting.

New England Native Plants

**Parthenocissus quinquefolia*, Virginia-creeper is a common vine of woodland edges and roadsides as well as floodplains and open forests. (gobotany.nativeplanttrust.org)

Garden #4 on Aldrich St.

The Higgins' garden, one of the largest of the tour, is certainly no pocket garden - you can view much of it from the sidewalk. But to genuinely appreciate the beauty of the garden, with its diversity of plants, design styles and uses, one needs to slowly walk through its many garden areas - from display gardens, spots for socializing and relaxation, a cutting garden, and a small vegetable garden.

When the Higgins purchased the garden in 2014, there were peonies, a large hickory tree, a rose of Sharon hedge, some hydrangea, jonquils and huge yews. They had to take the hickory tree down due to beetles and that afforded more sun and garden area. Their garden started to grow in 2015 and it just keeps on going. They started putting in concolor firs, arborvitae, and Japanese cypress to block the view of the laundry wall. A unique feature in the Higgins' garden is the diversity of trees they have planted. There is a Seven Sons Flower, Japanese maple, river birch, a Japanese crab apple, and two smoke bushes.

In addition to the beautiful plantings, the Higgins have incorporated interesting elements to draw the eye - there is an antique trellis with a sweet autumn clematis, and a wally pocket garden on the back deck side of the house. A lovely resting stone lies in the middle of one of their gardens with a stone pathway to it. Old granite curbs align with their deck stairs.

Julie and David, along with two other gardeners, Ann from L' Annsapes and Alana Brown from Portsmouth, care and maintain the gardens. Ann provided the initial plan for some of the trees and Alana helps with design and maintenance. David does all the heavy lifting - enlarging garden beds and working with stone including our front entrance to the house, while Julie works on color and placement of new plants and whimsical pieces.

The Higgins have used Rolling Green with the most success over the years for perennials, shrubs and trees. Many of their roses come from Fuller Gardens in Rye. Occasionally they buy from Pawtuckaway Nursery in Lee. As for seeds, they like Botanical Interests.

Garden #5 on Aldrich Street.

The Smith's moved to this property in the spring of 2021, downsizing from their home of 41 years in Portsmouth's South End. There was no garden here, just grass, a six-foot white vinyl fence and lots of asphalt. Developing a garden was a priority for them, and they knew they did not have 40 years to do it!

They brought a few plants from the old house – including some Dahlia tubers that Katharin cares for. They removed the fence, and then decided they needed to hire someone to do the hardscape and help with design and planting. They will continue to add plants as the garden matures.

The young garden is designed to be welcoming, where they can socialize and enjoy the outdoors with friends and family.

A whimsical garden cow came with them from their old house. She enjoys her job here screening the rain barrel and compost bin. She has been with the Smith's for many years. Their daughter added some friends, with a mural on the wall of the garden shed!

Drew Lang, of Port City Hardscapes, helped with the design, did the hardscape and some of the planting. Gerry built the new fence. Alana Brown, Fine Gardening, helped with some of the planting and continues to help with maintenance.

The Smiths say they source a lot from Rolling Green Nursery (now Gardener's Supply) because of their commitment to organic materials, native plants, and their support of community charitable organizations.

Garden #6 on Middle St.

The Corlins are only the third family to own their home in the Historic District, on Middle Street. In 1915, the home was originally built by a very successful banker for his family. Current gardens were built by cultivating the plantings that were present when they purchased the property in 2015. During six years of home and yard renovations, the Corlins have continued to develop their gardens with the goal of creating a natural outdoor living space for their family. They have filled the grounds with plantings that encourage and support pollinators and wild birds. New plantings have been sourced from local greenhouses while others have been gifts shared from neighbor's, friend's, and family's gardens!

The garden style is informal, with cottage style beds highlighting spring and summer blooming perennials, circling the property lines. The design, installation and maintenance are done by Pat, apart from the contracted hardscaping in the backyard.

Their gardens include native plants, familiar flowering perennials and a few plantings that are a bit more exotic. New to the gardens this spring, the Corlins have added a young Wisteria Vine, which is paired with two new wooden trellises that they hope will provide years of support for the perennial purple blossoms.

Pat loves working with garden tools that are well used, most having wooden handles. Many of these tools have been handed down from members of her family. Some were also inherited from the former families who owned the home on Middle Street. A kneeling pad – which is always close at hand – is an essential tool as Pat is always digging somewhere on the property and she claims these pads have saved her knees more times than she can count. Her watering hose of choice is the metal wrapped 'Bionic Steel', as they are lightweight and do-not-tangle! Pairing that hose with a long handle watering nozzle makes manual watering a joy!

Garden #7 on Middle St.

Paula and Elton have lived here for over 35 years, and their garden is ever-evolving. Many of the plants you see here were gifts from friends and family, and have grown to maturity in these English-style borders. Some of what you may see blooming at this time of year include dahlias, black-eyed Susans (*Rudbeckia**), helianthus (a perennial sunflower), sedum Autumn Joy, anemone, and turtle head (*Chelone glabra*). You may also notice a curly willow (*Salix Tortuosa*) which Paula started from a little stick not that many years ago.

In one corner you will find Sweet Autumn clematis growing on the border fence. In front of this are Mayapples, (*Podophyllum peltatum*) which are almost a weed in this garden, but are now struggling because a neighbor's tree fell down last winter.

Paul and Elton have an outdoor shower tucked under the deck. Here you can find astilbe and turtle head growing happily in the moist and shady nook.

Although you may enter this garden through the back fence, be sure to admire the front yard as you exit. Two large trees, a walnut and a quince, dominate, and Paula has removed all the grass in favor of shade loving perennials such as Japanese fountain grass (*Hakonechloa macra*), hostas, Japanese painted ferns and crane's bill geranium. This creates a more interesting and biodiverse garden, friendly to pollinators

New England Native Plants

* *Rudbeckia* occurs from Pennsylvania to Georgia and sparingly north to Maine and west to Illinois. Several species of birds will feast on the mature nutritious seeds of the flower heads if left intact at the end of the growing season. Save clean-up until spring. Cultivars are also ecologically valuable to birds and pollinators. (nativeplanttrust.org)

Garden #8 on Middle St.

The Clarizio's stately brick home was built in 1920. The current garden was established in the 1990's when the owners at the time contracted a landscape architect from Chicago to plan and build the garden. Today, Deanna and her son, who have extensive experience in agriculture, are using that skill to raise the garden to new heights.

The garden employs many non-native subspecies of plants that can be found locally. A keen observer will detect the differences and enjoy the contrast.

The informal Japanese style garden includes a seasonally changing perennial bed along the front of the property, and display beds with ornamental trees, shrubs and perennials inside the fence.

Garden #9 on Kensington Rd.

The Thoresen's garden features sculpture by noted sculptors, including local artist Jamie Calderwood and well-known Iowa sculptor Isabel Bloom; the garden hosts have a list of the titles and artists of each of the works for your information.

Entering the garden from the walkway between the garage and house, you will first encounter the conveniently placed patio. Just beyond is a marsh not part of this garden, but providing privacy and a green backdrop. Following the path, installed by Jim Piper of Green Velvet, you walk through the Hosta garden which features several varieties of this shade-lover. Highbush blueberries are the foundation planting at the back of the house, and a Japanese maple is among the shading trees. The terra cotta warrior statue was purchased by Bob and Sue in Xian, China.

Your eye will be drawn to a turquoise colored Kokopelli, playfully inviting you further into the garden. The lawn here is bordered by a variety of flowering shrubs, including Beauty Bush (*Kolkwitzia*) and Japanese tree lilac.

The four raised beds from Gardener's Supply Co are where the Thoresen's grow some vegetables. An impressive rhubarb plant that they harvest all summer is in this area as well.

The front foundation planting, with its attractive stone retaining wall, features a mix of shrubs and some perennials like bleeding heart (*Dicentra spectabilis*) peonies, hydrangea, rose of Sharon and a Japanese maple. The soapstone sculpture is by the Thoresen's daughter, Kristen Thoresen Swartzendruber. The small tree in the front of the house is an unusual variety of Kousa dogwood.

Despite construction projects on both sides of this garden, it remains a green oasis with room for art, an impressive plant collection and a lawn for games and relaxing.

Garden #10 on South St.

Peek behind Dana's home and you come into view of her elegant and welcoming pocket garden. When Dana purchased the property, about 35 years ago, there was virtually no garden, in front or back, only overgrown trees and shrubs which almost obscured the house. They removed the overgrown trees and shrubs, built retaining walls along the driveway and back property line. The backyard, which had sloped significantly, was filled in for lawn and play space. Slowly the gardens began forming, and the lawn became smaller and smaller!

Today, the beautiful garden includes an informal gravel patio for alfresco dining, colorful garden beds accessed through a circular path, and a border of trees and shrubs.

The design of the garden is informal, and the garden is dotted with interesting elements to draw the eye, including a small bench tucked within the perennial bed, a whimsical birdfeeder, and a stunning three-tiered planter.

Dana designed and maintained the garden but has had some professional help through the years installing the garden borders, pruning, mulching, and some of the "heavy work".

While many of the plants and ornaments were purchased from local nurseries, Dana's favorites are from friends and neighbors!

