

Out in the Garden

Rockport Garden Club, May 2020



Garden Diary: Creating Privacy in the Garden

I have always enjoyed visiting with neighbors and passersby at my front garden gate, but my back yard is another story — there, I like a bit more privacy where I can relax with family and close friends. This secret garden preference became a bit of a challenge when I moved here and found New England’s “thickly settled” neighborhoods often featured garden areas that were fish bowlesque — in full view of sidewalks, alleys, and the windows of multi-storied neighbors. While this situation can present some challenges to creating a private outdoor space, it’s nothing that can’t be overcome.

My first home here was no exception. Its large deck off the dining room provided much needed spill-over living space but sadly it looked directly into the neighbor’s house on one side, and fronted a side street with lots of traffic on the other side. Happily, there are several options available to build privacy on a deck or patio. Think tiers. Starting at the back of a deck at the railing, bring on the screens. These can either be folding, weatherproof outdoor screens (attached to railings with foam-coated tomato ties), lattice screens (available in metal, wood or plastic), or planter boxes with attached lattice. Adding potted conifers (e.g., arborvitae, dwarf Alberta spruce, etc.) creates a living screen that provides height and can be interspersed with hardscape screening to soften the look. With the back tier defined, bring in pots of smaller conifers as well as blooming shrubs and colorful annuals, and stagger the height of these. By setting them on short pedestals or overturned pots the varying heights add interest. At the lowest level (the first tier), scatter smaller pots of foliage or flowers,

and garden art among the larger pots.

This same approach can be used to create privacy in a bigger yard. In an effort to avoid a fortress look, first decide where you want your private relaxation area to be and focus on screening that area. You can begin with structural screening by installing fencing (wood, lattice, lattice-topped wood), or the installation of freestanding lattice screen panels (available at big box stores). Or, you can make your own screen panels by installing two fence posts and attaching lattice panels. Next, strategically plant conifers (e.g., junipers, arborvitae, etc.) or broadleaf evergreens (rhododendrons, holly, etc.) as living screens — bearing in mind their mature height and width, of course! Blooming deciduous shrubs and perennials can be added for additional seasonal screening and pops of color. To avoid having to mow lawn in your seating area, finish it off with a “floor” of flagstone, gravel, mulch, or an outdoor rug.

In your patio area, don’t forget the option of a movable screen — densely planted wheelbarrows and wheeled planters can be moved around as needed, and their plant displays can be changed with the seasons.

The final step in creating a cozy private retreat, be it a deck, patio, or area in the garden, is adding the zest. Put out the outdoor rug, comfy chairs, tables, umbrellas, fairy lights and voilà ... it’s time to bring over your friends and bring out the mojitos!



Outdoor screens interspersed with potted evergreens and flowers screen out the neighbors.

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Creating Privacy in the Garden, cont'd



Roll-out bamboo fencing can be cut and attached to a railing to increase privacy.



Freestanding lattice panels can be installed anywhere to screen out an unwanted view.



Lattice screens and strategically placed pots of evergreens lend privacy to this charming rooftop deck.



A tall deciduous shrub, like this butterfly bush, completely screens a fishbowl view.



Added zest is provided by an arbor sporting colorful vines that also screen.



A wheelbarrow garden provides movable privacy.



Privacy fencing combined with evergreens and shrubs creates a private sitting area.

—Submitted by Nanette Edwards

“The Garden shelters day-dreaming, the Garden protects the dreamer, the Garden allows one to dream in peace.”

— *in modus* Gaston Bachelard , *The Poetics of Space*



The Garden Cart: African Blue Basil

We try to discourage most basil plants from blooming because we grow them for the leaves (pesto!) not the flowers, but the African Blue Basil is different. It is an edible plant grown mostly for its pink with dark purple calyx flowers which attract swarms of pollinators.

African Blue Basil is an accidental hybrid between a perennial shrub from the forests of East Africa valued for its camphor scent and the common basil 'Dark Opal'. It will grow as large as a small shrub with full sun. The attractive purple veins on the leaves make it a great addition to summer bouquets. It is edible but it is an acquired taste.



African Blue Basil is a sterile plant that can only be grown from cuttings. It is more adaptable to indoor growing than most basil. To overwinter, either grow it in a pot and move it in before the first frost or take tip cuttings in early fall and root in a glass of water (change water daily) and then transfer to a pot for the winter.

Attributes:

Height: 2 feet but in its native habitat 10 feet

Spread: 2 Feet

Hardiness Zone: 10

Bloom: pink and purple

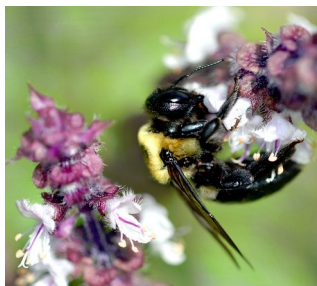
Exposure: Full Sun

Soil Moisture: Average

Maintenance: Low

Soil: Garden soil amended with compost

Winter Interest: Easy to winter over indoors



—Patty Hock

Photos: [Eyes on Hives](#)

May Garden Reminders:

• Maintenance:

Complete pruning of spring-flowering trees, shrubs (after flowering).

Deadhead bulbs, leave foliage until yellowed.

Begin rose care: deadheading, spraying, and watering.

Complete major lawn care; feed with compost or organic lawn fertilizer.

Set mower at 2-1/2 - 3"; leave clippings.

Pinch back chrysanthemum and asters.

• Plant and/or Transplant:

Bare root plants and evergreens.

Summer bulbs, ground covers, perennials; get annuals.

Sow cold and warm - season vegetables and herbs (after temperature reaches 60° F).

• Fertilize:

Needle evergreens - after pruning (5-10 -5).

Roses (organic rose fertilizer or 5-10-5).

Annuals and container plants (fish emulsion, water soluble, organic fertilizer or 5-10-5).

Perennials and spring bulbs (5-10-5).

Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr
May	Jun	Jul	Aug
Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec

What's Happening

Virtual Member Meeting

Monday, May 4th

1 PM

Speaker: Betsy Szymczak:

"Gardening with Dahlias"

Check your email inbox!

Plant Sale

Sorry, Cancelled.

See ya Next Year!