

FEATURED GARDEN

by *Cathie Lank*

Yvonne Scott is no stranger to design. As a graduate of the Ontario College of Art and a very talented visual artist working mostly with acrylics, she has an eye for combining colour, composition and layout. As a plein-air artist, Yvonne finds herself naturally attracted to gardens with their myriad colours, shapes and textures; it's like working with a live canvas.

Most summers, you can find her in her Bayview garden in southwest Calgary digging in the soil, trying new plants, extending another garden bed, painting and generally getting her fingers dirty. Both Yvonne's father and grandmother were gardeners and some of her earliest memories were associated with gardening.

"I remember picking some hyacinth bulbs with the new shoots coming out to show my mom when I was very young," she laughs. "I can't remember what her reaction was but I must have been taken at how pretty they were."

When Yvonne and her husband, Mike, bought their Bayview property six years ago Yvonne started

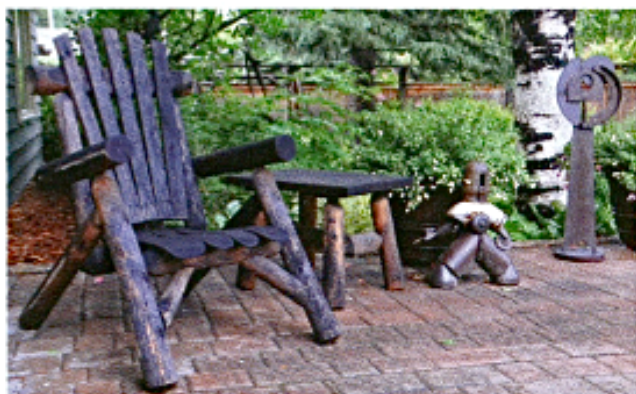


working on the garden almost immediately. Every year she adds a little bit or makes changes in some areas or experiments with different plants that she finds at various garden centres around the city. She admits that a lot of her inspiration comes from English gardens.

"I spent three years living in England and I always liked the English country gardens," she said, "I also visited a few public gardens like Savill, Wisely and Hadlow and they were very inspiring."

Yvonne had never entered her garden in a competition before and was undecided about entering in the 2009 Calgary Horticultural Garden Competition. Although she is confident in her gardening skills, she wasn't sure how her garden would do against other competitors and only decided to enter at the last minute.

Her garden won first place for Open Large Garden but then the prizes kept coming in; first place for Container Garden, first place for Curb Appeal, third place for Shade Garden and third place for Water



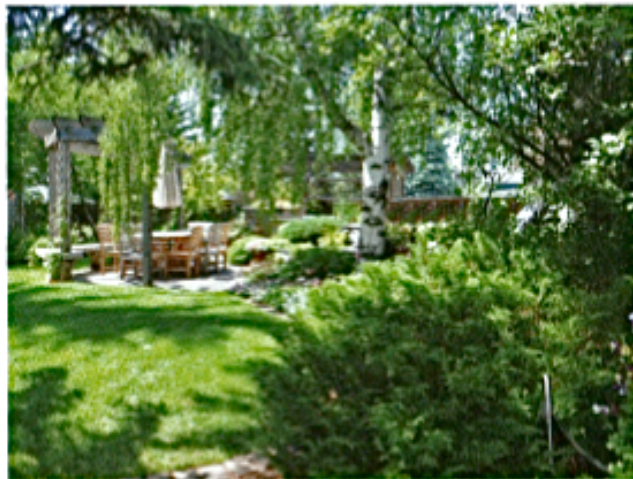
YVONNE SCOTT - A PAINTER'S GARDEN

Garden. When all was said and done, the garden had pulled in five prizes, not bad for a first-time entry!

When asked if she has any favourites she admits that she doesn't, she enjoys all plants. By taking the time to hand water to supplement her soaker hoses, she can see how the plants are doing, and finds her time in the garden relaxing and meditative.

"I enjoy my garden as a whole and love all the plants for their differences," she said. "Buying the plant and planting it is a learning experience and blooming time is my favourite time for many plants."

During the garden competition, some plants seemed to get more attention from visitors. One in particular was the variegated false sunflower (*Heliopsis helianthoides* var. *scabra* 'Lorraine sunshine'). It's lovely variegated leaves and yellow flowers brighten any corner of the garden. Another plant that received a lot of attention was the silver bush (*Calocephalus brownii*), a shrubby plant with silvery green twig-like foliage.



Other plants that drew interest were Baltic ivy (*Hedera helix* 'Baltica') similar to English ivy but much hardier for northern climates, Japanese burnet (*Sanguisorba obtuse*) with its pretty pink bottlebrush-shaped flowers and great mullein (*Verbascum thapsus*) a large, woolly, dramatic herb still used for medicinal purposes in parts of the world.

The curb garden has a series of pavement roses, a hardy compact rose that does well in tough conditions and comes in a wide colour range. This rose is an excellent choice for Calgary's climate.

For Yvonne, experimenting is big. She is always on the lookout for unique plants and methods that will work well in our climate. This year she tried some Maxikap self-watering boxes and found they worked very well and hopes to expand those to her vegetable garden next summer.

Yvonne hasn't decided whether she'll compete again next year but we can be certain that she'll be out digging in her garden and perhaps digging into her paint box to start a new canvas.