

June 2023 Garden Tour, Kitchener's East Ward

Garden A: 134 Merner Avenue (Close to Krug Street)

Access to back: paved driveway with one step to the backyard

*Memberships available here – please bring cash and exact change.

Lynette and Lyndon have lived on Merner Avenue for 20 years. The garden is always being revised by Lynette especially with the loss of large branches on trees both in the front and back yards due to the wind storms of the last few years. The City of Kitchener removed an ailing boulevard maple tree and then planted a sunburst honey locust as a replacement in their front lawn. The mixed lighting front garden has several beds that contain a variety of trees, shrubs and perennials, Lynette has groupings of heucheras, hydrangeas, hostas, hellebores, ferns, just to name a few of her plantings. Near the front steps of the house is a collection of roses, each of which represents a family member. Bees are invited to visit the garden with a bee house built by a friend. Note the narrow strip on the boulevard that is covered by sedum as a hardy ground cover.

The removal of old shrubs and replacement with chain link fencing on two sides of the backyard really opened up the back garden and allows Lynette and Lyndon to enjoy their neighbours' yards. Most of the warm weather is spent outside by the family. The charming shed with a front porch for sitting was built by Lyndon and two other family members. By the side of the shed is a potting table that can be folded up and stored inside over the winter. A large maple in the middle of the garden provides shade. A favorite tree of Lynette's is an Eastern Redbud that was planted near the house for protection from the elements. Lynette discovered that it is not actually a dwarf variety so the tree gets a heavy pruning every year. A few stained glass pieces and a statue of St. Francis of Assisi adorn the garden. The backyard is a wonderful mix of trees, bushes and mostly perennials such as phlox, pachysandra and hostas. To take advantage of the sunniest spot on her property Lynette has two elevated beds for vegetable gardening on her driveway near the house.

Come and see the variety of plantings that Lynette has put into her gardens over the years!

Traveling between Gardens A & B:

Merner and Lydia are parallel streets off Krug. I recommend parking on either street and walking on Krug (a short block) to get from Merner garden to Lydia gardens (a 1-minute walk, but could take up to 5 or 10 minutes if one stops to admire the many front gardens along the way). The garden opposite Lynette's has 4 raised vegetable beds that the owners have planted in the square foot method. The gardens of 140, 152 and 160 Krug have been on a previous August gardenKitchener tour. Along Lydia, take time to look at some nice front gardens including 157, 159 and 163 Lydia. Kudos to Shannon from 163 Lydia, who is the main gardener for all 3 gardens.

Garden B: 171 Lydia Street

Access to back: paved pathway.

This address may be familiar to long-time KHS members. It was on a former KHS tour when the property was owned and gardened by Dorothy and Lloyd Kuntz. Current homeowner, Susan has created a front garden that includes tulips, lupines, Star of Bethlehem, sedum, irises, black mondo grass, lavender and a Japanese maple. Garden accents are rocks and a unique whimsical metal sculpture by artist Cathy Mark. Gardeners in this neighbourhood are often maximizing their garden space. In 2022 Susan planted many hostas in her boulevard space.

Her furnished flagstone patio allows for enjoyment of the backyard. A favorite of Susan's is the huge lilac on the patio. A functioning pump from the 1930s still provides water for the garden. Poppies, irises, primula, peonies and hostas are to be found in her garden. The garden's water feature includes a bridge created by Lloyd Kuntz. A large tree stump in one corner has beautiful patterned mushrooms growing on it. Susan has put in raised vegetable beds in the sunniest part of the garden and plans to grow lots of vegetables for the family. With the trees of the surrounding properties the garden is a peaceful oasis in the middle of the city. Susan's mom has a farm from which she gets most of her plants.

Garden C: 172 Lydia Street

Access: through the garage with one small step.

Since Kimberley moved to the house in 2004 she has put her personal stamp on the property. Over the years, she gradually removed the grass on the front lawn. This property now has a lush front garden that has a pathway of pine bark chips meandering through it. Plantings include a hedge of yew shrubs, perennial bachelor buttons, marsh marigold, phlox columbine, peonies, zebra grass, a rose of Sharon, a pine tree and a smoke bush. There are small logs throughout the garden which often have beautifully patterned mushrooms growing on them. One of the features that attracted the owner to the house was the Boston ivy covering its front.

The focal point of the backyard patio is a Red Delicious apple tree. On the advice of an arborist, Kimberly had a local artist create an iron arch and pillar to support the branches of the tree.

Several wooden steps lead to the lower part of the garden that has deep flowerbeds encircling a patch of grass. Over the years Kimberly has changed the plants so she would have the cool colors of white, purple and blues rather than the original yellows and reds. In the sunnier side of the garden she has daylilies, phlox, spurge, sedum, rhubarb and vegetable plants. She has a well controlled patch of mint, creeping Charlie, and oregano for the bees to feast on. At the back of the garden there is a bamboo patch that has grown over from the neighbours' yard and wild strawberries with yellow flowers. In the shadier corner of the garden there is a smoke bush, crab apple tree, burning bushes, Solomon's seal and irises.

Traveling between Gardens C & D:

According to Google Maps, the walk between the Chapel and Lydia Gardens is about 5 minutes, and the drive about 1 minute. The Chapel gardens are located between Samuel and Simeon. If you walk over, there are some nice front yard gardens on Simeon and Lydia to view.

Garden D: 78 Chapel Street

Access: Paved driveway, back garden flagstone path.

Since Deborah moved into the home in 2016 she has removed her grass in the front lawn and planted mostly native plants. In her garden you will see Canadian wood poppy, prairie dropseed grass, wild ginger, meadow rue, wild indigo and heart leaf aster. As a mulch she gathers a few discarded Christmas trees in January and spreads their branches. The pine needles release a lovely smell on a hot day. To maximize her garden space, her latest project is to remove the grass between the 2 driveways and plant sun-loving native plants.

Deborah has completely transformed her backyard. She first had to dig through a layer of gravel and tarp to reach the soil. She then dug out 1.5-2 feet of soil so her backyard would not be at a higher level than the house. Since then she has created different elevations in the garden using large logs from a neighbour's cut-down trees as berms' foundations. She has created a circular path of flagstone and built uniquely shaped raised vegetable beds. She has designed her garden to slowly absorb the water running off the roof of her garage. Her plantings include marsh marigold, woodland strawberry, St. John's wort. Her garden is home to several types of ferns including her favourite, the Northern Lady fern. Bushes include winterberry, ninebark and New Jersey tea. Deborah gladly shares her wealth of knowledge of native plantings and how to use snow, mulch and logs to create better water retention in the garden.

Garden E: 85 Chapel Street

Access: gravel driveway and gravel backyard with a section of paved patio in the middle.

A large magnolia tree is the centerpiece for this mostly perennial front garden that Yoko has created over the last 9 years. She has been given or has traded for most of her plants. In this garden that is enclosed by a low stone wall she has plantings that include a fern leaf peony,

lupines, several types of ferns, sedums, ajuga, lunaria, Irish moss. To create a magical feel to the garden she has ornamentation of a wishing well, a bridge and small ornaments that hang from the magnolia tree. To maximize her gardening space, Yoko has put in 2 wood enclosed raised beds in her boulevard strip. One bed houses perennials and the other has herbs with a sign that invites people walking by to take some. These herbs include chives, oregano, sage and kale.

The back garden includes a charming toolshed, a pergola, flagstone patio, and a wooden playhouse that was built by her husband for their daughter. Backyard plants include wild hyacinth, ferns, bloodroot, hellebores, prairie smoke, lungwort and peonies. Touches of Yoko's artistic flair and woodworking skills are seen throughout her gardens. She has just created a charming vignette in one corner that includes plants, whiskey barrels, a lantern and a bird statue. She is planning to decorate a wooden fence with vintage gardening tools. She has also built a series of elevated vegetable beds from reclaimed wood. These beds are along the back of the house to maximize hours of sunshine.

Yoko will happily share her charming garden with gardenKitchener members.