



ONE OF CHIP'S FAVORITE
FLOWERING PLANTS,
chocolate vine (*Akebia
quinata*), cascades
over an arch between his
home and backyard.

Beginning with little more
than a rustic shed,
a few old trees, and bad soil,
Chip Callaway created a sanctuary

“my garden looks



CHIP'S AT HOME in his garden, at left, deadheading several varieties of Buck roses in front of the arbor. Buck roses are incredibly fragrant and cold hardy. **HIS YARD SPANS TWO SMALL LOTS.** Chip bought the house next door to use as an office.



THE WELL FOUNTAIN (4, SEE PAGE 106)

PICTURE CHIP CALLAWAY'S MORNING COMMUTE: He's out the back door of his slate-blue home, a vintage 1912 bungalow in Greensboro, North Carolina, and with his leaping, loving golden retriever Peggy Lee, takes a one-minute stroll through a lavender-scented path to the celery-colored Craftsman cottage next door, where his landscape design firm has offices.

Along the way, he snips a few branches from the autumn-flowering cherry tree, gathers a handful of fragrant 'Zephirine Drouhin' roses, and picks a bright white 'Mount Hood' daffodil or two for an impromptu arrangement. He passes a curvy old metal daybed, tucked into a stand of ornamental grasses, its grid of metal squares filled with potted succulents. If he's not careful and doesn't keep his eyes on his office across the gravel parking area, a wrought iron fence with a pair of walk-this-way gates invites a detour.

Inside the garden, tinkling sounds of two fountains drown out the steady humming of downtown, seen just over the hill. There are heart-stopping roses—the prairie-bred Griffith Buck shrubs; the riotously blooming climbers; and the elegant, French antique, 100-plus petal varieties. Peonies bloom, vines twine, icy-blue hydrangeas charm, and showy viburnums gleam like midwinter snow mounds across the yard. Groomed hedges, friendly old shade trees, and don't-turn-your-back-on-them-or-they'll-run-away ground covers nestle nearby. A weathered garden shed hides a secret—tucked behind is a dining terrace made for lingering over morning coffee. How Chip ever goes inside to get work done is a mystery.

great in all seasons”



VIEW TO THE WELL FOUNTAIN (4)

DROPS OF WATER FALLING into the fountain's basin sparkle like diamonds in the early dusk light. This gate, at the left side of the garden, leads to the rose arbor.



THE GARDEN SHED (3)

AN OLD SHED, original to the property and still crammed with pots and tools, hides a private dining terrace (page 108).



THE WELL FOUNTAIN (4) AND ARBOR (2)

STEPPING-STONES in the garden lead visitors from room to room and help preserve the soil.



- Office Cottage
- Key
- ① Mixed Shrub Border
 - ② Rose Arbor and Dining Garden
 - ③ Garden Shed
 - ④ Well Fountain
 - ⑤ Goldfish Pond
 - ⑥ Arbor
 - ⑦ Mixed Shrub Border
 - ⑧ Terrace Balcony
 - ⑨ Mixed Perennial Borders





VIEW TO THE GOLDFISH POND (5)

FROM THE BACK of the house, guests wander through a gate to a second fountain spilling into a lily-filled pond.

Take It From Chip Whether you're a beginner or expert, Chip has plenty of advice for designing a cottage garden that won't drive you crazy (at least not in a bad way).

See the big picture. Select plants based on their ultimate size, not how they'll look first planted. "I love an instant garden as much as the next person, but it's so important to pick plants that will be happy in the space you provide them. There's nothing more pathetic than a tree or shrub that's pruned mercilessly to fit into a too-small space," says Chip.

There are no mistakes, only opportunities. "My biggest challenge is light. Sunny borders quickly become shade gardens as plants, particularly woody ornamentals and trees, develop their canopies," he says. You might have to make hard choices. Chip moved his favorite hydrangeas, spireas, quinces, and viburnums to make way for more shade-tolerant plants. "I decided to accept the garden's change and grow astilbes, hellebores, hostas, Bleeding Hearts, columbines, and Virginia bluebells there instead." The lesson here? Things change. Seeing this as a mistake misses the point of gardening. Don't be afraid to rethink your garden.

Plan for all seasons. Winter is the best time to design a garden. If it looks good in February or March, the rest of the year will be a cinch. Even in the warmest regions, it's winter sometime and the garden won't be in bloom. Chip incorporated plants that look gorgeous in every season—shrubs and trees. Architectural elements like arches, trellises, pergolas, and garden ornaments also go a long way toward beautifying a garden in fall and winter.

Have a seat (and watch those feet). You need places where you can observe, experience, and live in your garden. Tables and seating, both modern and vintage, are found throughout Chip's yard: a romantic dining area beneath the rose arbor, a table and chair set in the shade behind the cottage. Your garden doesn't need to be laden with fabulous ancestral antiques—just things you love. Hiding beneath his hydrangeas and Buck roses, stepping-stones protect the soil Chip has improved over the years. "The last thing on earth I want to do is compact the earth while pruning, cutting flowers, and weeding," he says.

Break some rules. It's your garden. Have some fun. While annuals have been uncool in recent years, it's hard to have a midsummer garden without them. Chip favors cleomes, ageratums, zinnias, amaranths, and heliotropes. Some plants are not likely to survive a really hard winter, but plant them anyway. Replacing tender camellias or gardenias every few years is worth the pleasure they afford.

Chip has the ideal commute . . . right next door



CHIP'S OFFICE

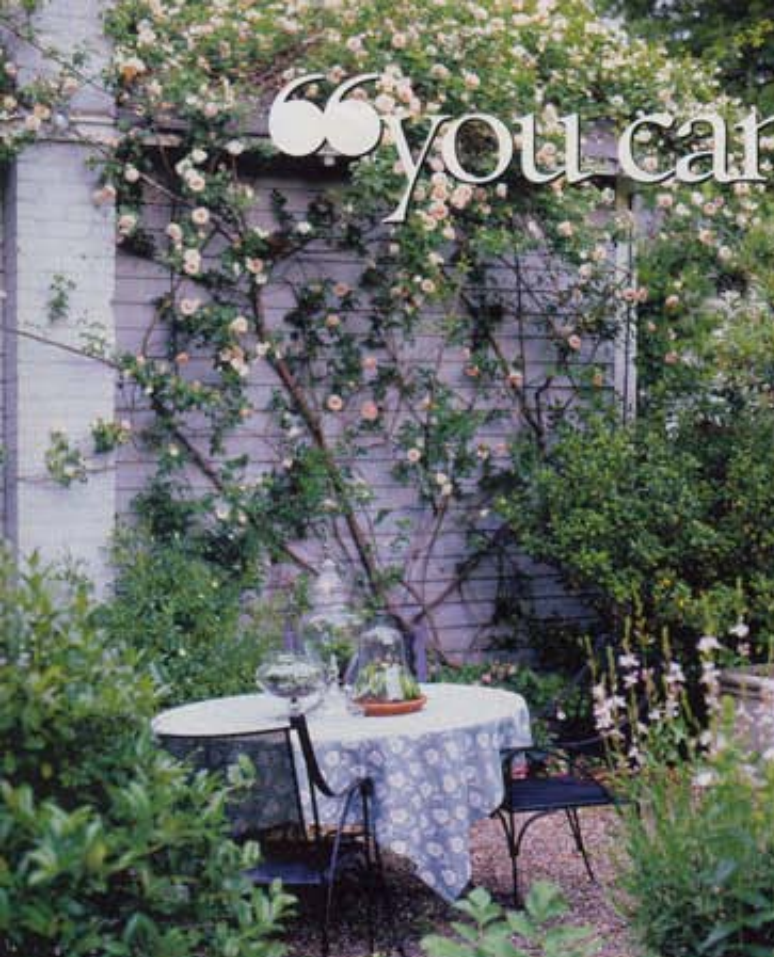


DRIVEWAY BETWEEN OFFICE AND COTTAGE



CHIP'S COTTAGE

“you can't be a perfec



DINING TERRACE BEHIND SHED (3)

But don't be fooled by Chip's exuberant garden. While it looks like something out of an English gardening coffee table book, this landscape is a work in progress. The garden, created when he purchased the building next door and combined two small lots, had humble beginnings. The back of the property sloped dramatically from an ugly parking lot above, requiring the backyard to be leveled completely. There was little here to work with when he began the landscaping process—only a few old trees and the shed at center stage. Now, it's a romantic yet functional garden.

Chip's secret is clever planning. The garden consists of a sequence of spaces that move at one far end from shade, to a sunny center, then back to shade again. Shrubs, fences, arbors, and gates bound and frame it all. The structure of hardscape and evergreen plants rather than the bling of spring flowers allows Chip's garden to flow, without a blip in beauty, through every season.

But, as Chip knows, no garden is ever really done. "You can't be a perfectionist and a gardener," he says with a smile. "I get bored when things stay the same, plus you have to respond to change. Plants decline or die. Storms hit. It rains too little one year, too much another. We had all those dry summers. And now we've had record rains. I don't mind. I like the challenge."

So, no, Chip's garden might not be perfect, but it's very, very close. ■

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ROSE ARBOR (2)

A SEQUENCE OF SPACES
FRAMED by shrubs and fences become rooms, and arbors and gates ease the transition and control the view from one room to the next. Chocolate vine covers an old wooden arbor, where birds love to nest.

FIND IT FAST
PEONIES (on table)
Container-grown peonies, \$19.99, from Springhill Nurseries; springhillnursery.com

Bonus!
For success with peonies, step-by-step tips for planting these gorgeous cottage perennials, visit

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tionist and a gardener”