



French doors and crawl up over my bed.

Each room of my house has its own distinctive garden view – from microscopic to panoramic. When I stand at the kitchen sink and watch a wild black mink loping

across the lawn into the back holly woods or a juvenile eagle eating an early breakfast on the lawn, I realize that my wild garden house is truly a sanctuary. ■

knockout roses that ran to the edge of the shed. The roses were added as gifts for the faeries that the Irish side of my family has believed in for at least four generations. My great-great-grandfather left water for them every night so they would not do mischief in the house. I hoped that these woodland spirits would inhabit the garden. To encourage their presence I named the shed “The Faery House.”

The backyard already had a lush green western wall that contained a mixture of camellias, beauty berry, various types of rhododendrons, oleander, palmetto, bamboo, ligustrum, a Rose of Sharon tree, holly trees, and another Walter’s Viburnum tree. Soon after I bought the house, my neighbor cut down most of the vegetation on his side and put up a fence, leaving gaps in the lush green wall. I filled those gaps in with a number of red presidential canna lilies, added more oleanders with beautiful deep pinkish-red flowers, and planted a large stand of fire thorn.

The garden perimeters in place, I was faced with a big space in the center of the garden that was empty save for weeds. I plowed these under, then seeded to create a “sort-of” lawn that serves as the hub for the individual gardens planted around it.

The thorniest problem was the northern edge of the yard running up against the house. It is an area that has too much shade to sustain a vegetable garden and too much moisture for shade loving plants. Now this bed serves as a rest stop for plants on the move.

A second northern bed has become a triangular-shaped “pointy” garden of agaves, bayonet plants, variegated flax and pale green low-growing sansevieria with coffee ground brown mulch surrounded by two edges of yellow-edged sansevieria, a plant heavily used in 1950s landscapes, and a border of broken terra-cotta pieces.

A “secret garden,” hidden by red tips on the western edge of the property, can only be seen from the master bedroom or the Faery House. It is full of huge African iris bushes with their tiny, almost transparent flowers, lots of macho ferns, and an aggressive ground cover that threatens to come through the

