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SMALL HOMES
big ideas
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BIG HOMES
charming details



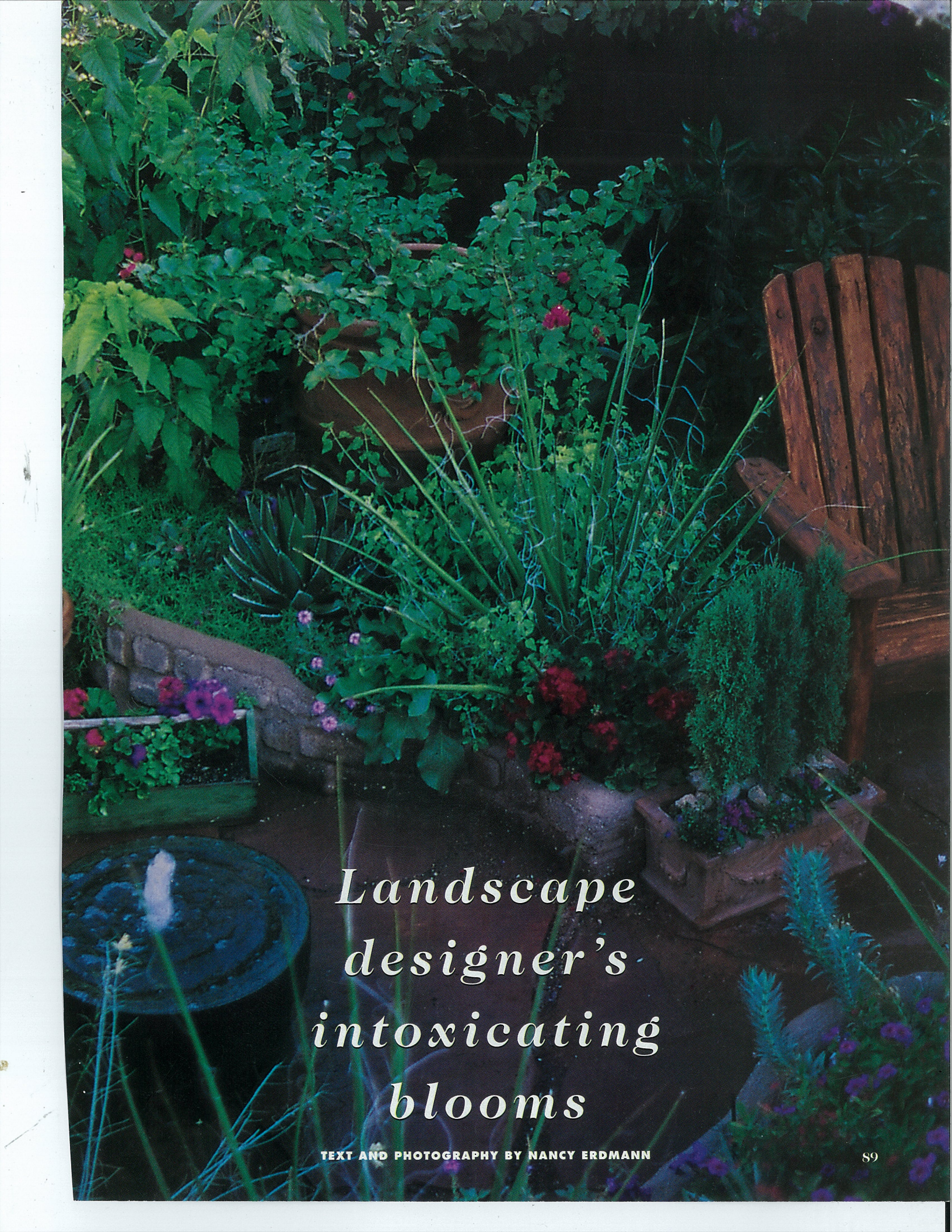


Small GARDENS

Outdoor space is a precious commodity / in a townhome, condominium, or apartment. Turning a tiny spot into an inviting outdoor room can be a challenge, especially when a hard slab covers most surface space and sun exposure may be less than ideal. The two Valley gardeners whose work is represented on the following pages rose to the occasion to prove just how lovely a small space can look.

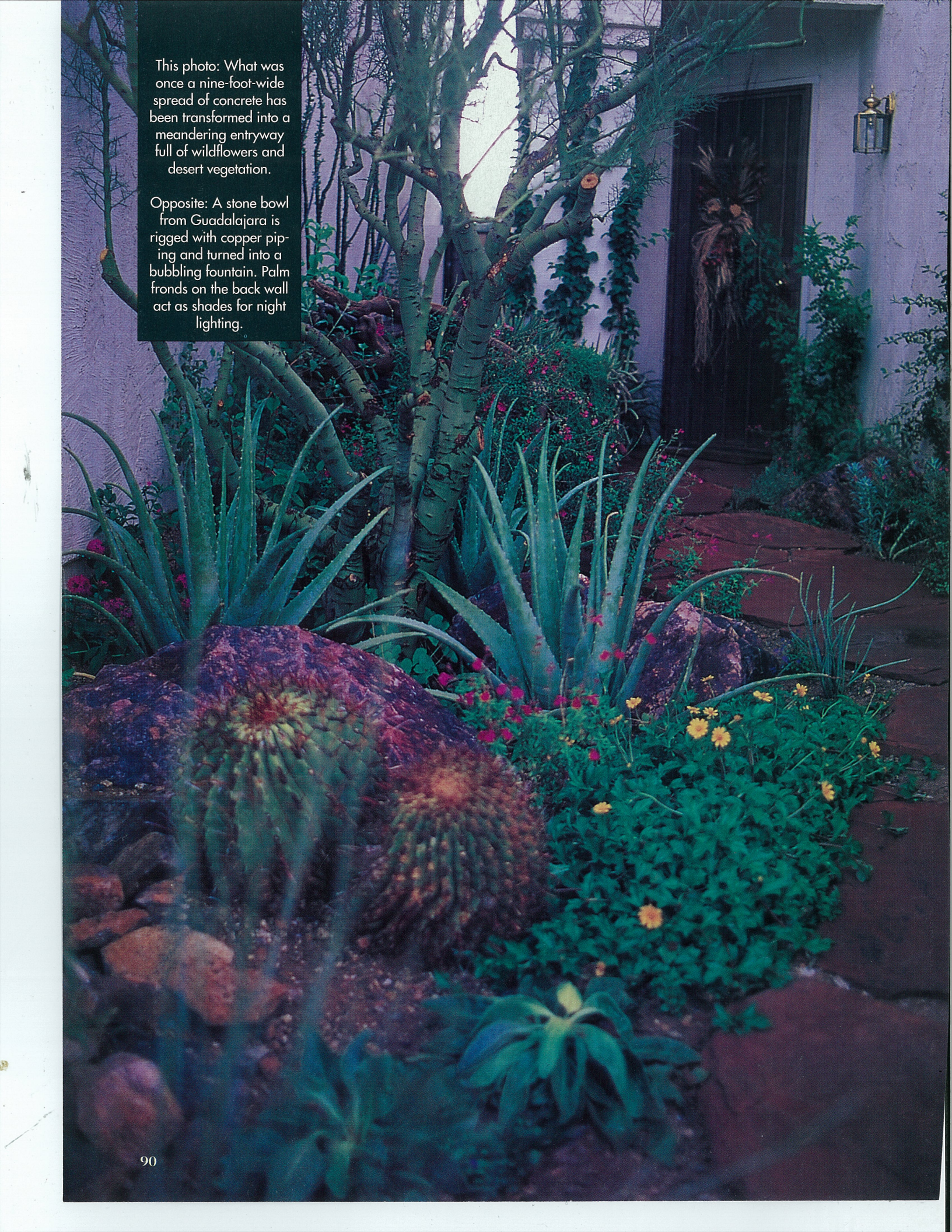
Rich hues and masses of contrasting colors and shapes take center stage in Troy Bankord's lush patio garden.



A lush garden scene featuring a variety of plants, including tall grasses, purple flowers, and a wooden chair. A stone wall is visible in the background, and a circular stone feature is in the foreground. The overall atmosphere is vibrant and detailed.

*Landscape
designer's
intoxicating
blooms*

TEXT AND PHOTOGRAPHY BY NANCY ERDMANN



This photo: What was once a nine-foot-wide spread of concrete has been transformed into a meandering entryway full of wildflowers and desert vegetation.

Opposite: A stone bowl from Guadalajara is rigged with copper piping and turned into a bubbling fountain. Palm fronds on the back wall act as shades for night lighting.

**"...with a little garden...
you have about two seconds
to make an impression."**

For Troy Bankord, acquiring odds and ends of things from his job as a landscape and interior designer is a hobby he takes to heart. Seeing the artistic potential in other people's castoffs, he is reluctant to throw away plant trimmings, botanical oddities, or flawed pottery, saving them for later use. Many, however, find their way into the lush patio garden of his 1,700-square-foot condo at the base of Shadow Mountain.

Inventive displays of aged gardening tools hang above his potting bench while dried ocotillo is wrapped around wire in order to conceal an air conditioning unit. Rounds from the trunk of a cut-down palm tree act as bases for pots full of fresh plantings. Flower stakes from a queen palm jut out of a waist-high Mexican vessel to create a dramatic focal point.

"I call this my urban recycled garden," says Bankord. "I use things that I've found in landfills, trimmings from jobs, and items clients no longer wanted. I recently found a barrel cactus that had fallen out of a landscaper's truck. It was just lying there in the middle of the road. One side was dented, and it didn't look very healthy, but I couldn't just leave it there. So I picked it up and planted it in my front entryway."

Talk about a green thumb. Everything he touches seems to thrive. From miniature cypress and pencil cactus to ice plant and crown-of-thorns, his garden brims with botanical diversity. "I wanted a funky, airy, and open mixture of plants—nothing that grows in clumps."

When Bankord first moved into the condo two years ago, he had a different plan. "Initially, I wanted an Italian-style garden with clipped hedges. After surveying the

space, I decided to go less formal."

It took about a year to get the look he wanted in the thirty-by-thirty-foot barren space. He began by bringing in more than twenty tons of composted dirt, grading the land, and planting the trees. To separate the garden areas, he built one-foot-high adobe walls. He also painted the walls that border the patio.

"I wanted to use a color that would make the plants look lush, the atmosphere cooler, and the walls seem to disappear at night," he explains. "I felt that a dark color would actually make the space seem larger." According to the designer, the plum brown surfaces absorb more summer heat than they reflect, allowing him to place plants closer than usual to the walls. Sedona-red-colored flagstone throughout the patio provides continuity.

Then the plants went in. Hundreds of them. Penstemon, Jerusalem sage, lobelia, iris, foxglove, bougainvillea, cacti, columbine, trees,

vines, and herbs of all sorts fill the continually evolving garden. Strong contrasts and beautiful pairings add dimension and texture, while a bubbling fountain attracts colorful birds to this miniature paradise. And it's not uncommon to find visiting cats rolling around in a mass of sweet cat thyme.

Encouraging that kind of familiarity was one of Bankord's goals. "A neighborhood kid came by the other day to trek through my 'Amazon jungle,'" says the homeowner.

"The biggest challenge with a little garden is that you have about two seconds to make an impression," he adds. "People either feel welcomed in a garden or they don't." ■

