

Home & Garden

Interior Design · Landscaping

SECTION H

GARDEN TOURS 2006

Cultivated charm Time to stop and smell the flowers

by KATHRYN LOOSLI PRITCHETT
Times Correspondent

YOU CAN TELL a lot about a gardener by what he or she grows. Gardens filled with found objects or rare specimens indicate a collector's sensibility. Back yards overflowing with tomatoes, squash and artichokes identify the earth mothers (and fathers) among us. Rose gardens reveal a romantic personality; native plants a practical concern for the earth. Participates in any of the garden tours available in the Bay Area this spring and you'll meet a host of fascinating people through their plants.

Take Jennifer and Allen Lescure, for example. Their exuberant Orinda garden – featured on this year's Moraga Junior Women's Club's "Through the Garden Gate" tour, May - is filled with found objects and colorful plantings that exemplify the Lescures' high-energy approach to gardening. Both avid gardeners since childhood, the couple went looking for a garden first and a home second. When they came across the half-acre covered in overgrown juniper and oleander (freeway flowers that had to go!" says Jennifer), they knew they'd found their own personal paradise.

Six years later, the yard is completely transformed. With the help of Garden Lights Landscapes in Orinda the Lescures rerouted the entryway, installed a dry creek bed added water features, an outdoor fireplace, and canary aviaries and bunny hutches.



Found objects such as the oxygen tank "bells" that mark the entrance to the back garden, the claw foot tub water garden and the wrought-iron gate screen

from the old Pleasanton Hotel give the garden character and charm. An old mailbox was installed in the middle of the garden to keep gardening tools near where they'll be used.

Like the quirky art piece in the garden, the planting scheme features "treasures" gathered from far and wide. Potted Christmas trees commandeer one corner of the yard; leftover Easter lilies bloom near the front gate. Dozens of roses ramble over gates and alongside pathways, and espaliered fruit trees cover a garden wall. Fuchsias, hydrangeas, and rhododendrons grace the shadier eastern side. weekends we're checking our

favorite nurseries for new finds or working in the garden," says Jennifer. Gardening is really our passion."