

# JUNE'S GARDEN

Last year a film called *Northwest Style of Gardening* was shown on PBS which included gardens from British Columbia, Washington and Oregon and my garden on the West Coast in which I identified my style as a Cannon Beach cottage garden. Since that film has been shown I have been asked what defines the term cottage garden.

When I first started a garden to surround my beach home which by the dictionary's definition is called a cottage (a small simple country home), I did not have a formal plan and thought I didn't need plans. I did know in order to grow any vegetables or flowers I would have to add fences, shrubs and trees to baffle the strong salt-laden winds and to add a drainage system to carry off the water, as there are many underground springs and runoff from the hills above me. The drainage system worked. Because I didn't want the underground pipes to clog, I covered the system that snaked through my back yard with sand, base rock and gravel, which created paths.

I then added raised beds filled with soil. Around the perimeter I mounded soil to add trees and shrubs and enclosed the back yard with a picket-like style fence. These improvements created the style of my garden.

When the people came to interview me and take pictures of my garden for the video they were making, the interviewer asked, "Did you have any formal schooling that helped you to develop this particular style called a cottage garden?"

My answer was no and I added, "If my garden has a defined style, I guess it really should be termed a Cannon Beach cottage garden." This is what came out in the film.

Quoted from *English Flower Gardens* by Clarke & Perry: "The term cottage garden originated in Great Britain, obviously the gardens made by cottagers. English cottagers influenced the history of gardening in Great Britain. They gardened in their own way for centuries, immune to the tides of fashion that had the gentry putting in formal gardens based on French or Italian models. Meanwhile the cottagers in their own small gardens generally were enclosed with a low wall or fence to keep wandering cattle away from their gardens and doorways. They planted with no eye to design and little consideration to what they were supposed to plant. Profusion was characteristic of their gardens, not lawns. Often every square inch of dirt was covered with a wide range of vegetation: medicinal and culinary herbs, vegetables, small fruits and old-fashioned perennials and biennials like hollyhocks, foxglove, dianthus, Sweet Williams, lupins, down through a long catalog of plants. These plants became established as cottage-garden flowers because they were able to fend for themselves and required little attention as the cottagers hadn't time or the facility to coddle tender varieties.

"Many of these plants would have been familiar in gardens 500 years ago and have histories as delightful as their perfumes: for scent was a quality cottagers valued in their flowers, as well as the practical uses to which the

plant could be put, since the garden had to provide for physical as well as spiritual well-being of the family. Plants were included to feed the bees who made the honey and pollinated the orchard ....

"In 1568 Thomas Hyll wrote in *The Profitable Arte of Gardening*: 'The garden is made perfect, delectable, and profitable ... and wee then receive by it two speciall commodities. The first profit, which riseth through the increase of Hearbs and flowers: the other pleasure, verie delectable, through walking in the same ...' and went on to remind us that 'the fresh air of the garden, imbued with the secret smell of flowers, bestowed health and well-being.'

"There was more written about cottage gardening in the 1700's by William Shenstone, and in 1883 William Robinson wrote in his book, *The English Flower Garden*: 'Among the things made by man, nothing is prettier than an English cottage garden, and they often teach lessons that great gardeners should learn ...'"

To read further about early English cottage gardens, this book by Clarke & Perry is an excellent source of information.

I feel quite honored people have named my garden a cottage garden. I realize after reading about this style that I have most of the plant life that grew in those early cottage gardens: the herbs and a few vegetables mixed with the same types of flowers ... malvas, dianthus, foxgloves and many more, including a row of raspberries and a Gravenstein apple and Elberta peach tree that sprouted from my compost pile. My fence, however, saves these plants from elk, not cattle. Last winter a herd of 19 elk decided to visit our area, which surprised me and my neighbors. I've seen a few here throughout the last 20 years, but not as many as this year. Fortunately, all they chewed on was my Escallonia hedge before they were scared off by my dog Barker's loud barking.

Speaking of foxglove, in June the hills on Highway 26 just past the Cannon Beach Junction were covered for miles with millions of blossoming foxglove, turning the hills pink. Mother Nature turned our man-made destruction into beauty.

Plants that have added interest to my garden this year are:

6' tall bronze fennel

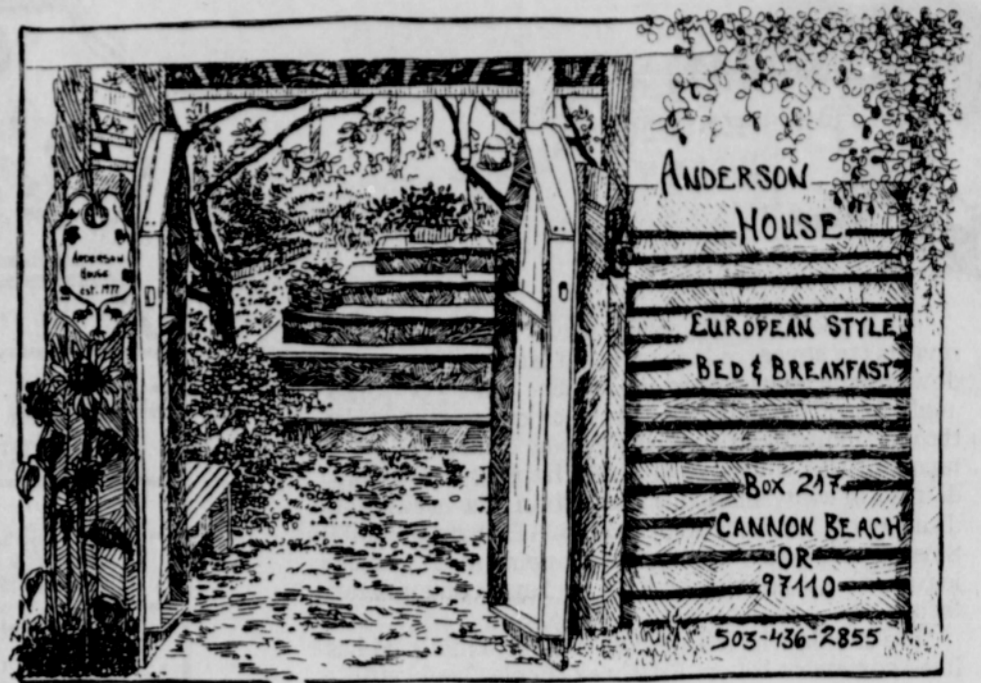
Chrysanthemum Pacificum, tiny cream-colored flowers and silver-colored edge leaves

Lavender petunias with blue veins called Blue Vein Surfinia, Jackson & Perkins (It branches and cascades from all of my window boxes.)

Seeds to save: Columbine, pansies, lychnis, godetia, feverfew, foxglove, candy tuft, parsley, chives, dill and some poppies.

Let the seeds' heads mature on the plant before collecting them.

Please send your comments, suggestions and questions to *June's Garden*, P. O. Box 74, Cannon Beach, OR 97110.





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