

Belfast Garden Club

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Two gardens open to visitors Aug. 6

BELFAST -- Two Court Street gardens are on display Aug. 6, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., as part of Belfast Garden Club's Open Garden Day. The gardens are within a 5-minute walk of each other, at 35 Court St. and 64 Court St., and a \$5 donation admits visitors to both. Additional donations to support the Garden Club are welcome.

Gianne Conard's garden at 35 Court St. is a never-ending work-in-progress comprising apple trees, raised vegetable beds, flowers, as well as many unwanted weeds. "Weeds don't respect me," Conard said, adding she weeds a little every day. Conard and her husband bought the 1856 property in 2004, and reorientated the house, creating a more defined backyard. They regraded the yard and created an upper and lower level. The main focal point is a stone terrace surrounded by perennials, along with a large granite block anchoring one side of the sitting area. A stone walkway leads visitors through daylilies and sunflowers.

Large ferns line the side of a guest cabin in the back with its own small garden area, which Conard figures has been there since the '50s. There are also several other garden areas to explore on the property, including an area along the barn, a corner vegetable garden, a hosta garden in the front, and a row of lilies that lines the street. According to Conard, visitors may also expect to see asters, zinnias, Marguerite daisies, marigolds, dahlias, and perhaps a delphinium or two, along with cantaloupe vines and blueberries.

Richard Pickering's classic English cottage garden in front of his 64 Court St. home is a combination of perennials, annuals, shrubs, vegetables and herbs. In spring, Pickering said he had over 400 bulbs showering color on the neighborhood with a selection of tulips, crocuses and daffodils.

With English cottage gardens, he explained, there are always a few exclamation marks in terms of permanent structures. In this case, there is a wrought iron gate and several obelisks for climbers, as well as pots and other containers for annuals. Sage, parsley, chives and valerian, a plant used to promote relaxation and sleep, make up Pickering's herb garden. An old metal cultivator serves as a trellis for cucumbers and string beans grow on a twig teepee in the vegetable patch.

The garden is structured around a series of circles of various sizes, "which our loam delivery guy described as Yin and Yang," Pickering said. There are a lot of bee and butterfly-friendly plants to bring in beneficial insects to pollinate the vegetables and increase production. The garden is new as of last year and, according to Pickering, still has maturing to do. "It will get better with each coming year," he said.

The Belfast Garden Club has promoted public gardens and stimulated the knowledge and love of gardening for more than 90 years. Proceeds from the club's fundraising support local public gardens and several scholarship funds. FMI, visit BelfastGardenClub.org.



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Conard 4 - A large block of granite anchors the sitting area at Gianne Conard's garden at 35 Court St. in Belfast.