The Artful Garden

I.Garden as art - Living/evolving painting
A.Mood
Serene: "Peaceable Kingdom" by Linda Mears (boy with lion and other animals)
Serene: Curving brick walk entices and leads to serene spot of pink and white
Dramatic: Frida Kahlo self-portrait – "The Frame"
Dramatic: Strong color: Planted pots on orange wall
Playful: "The Owl and the Pussycat" by Edward Lear
Playful: Small part of railroad garden
B.Style
Contemporary natural: Unusual sculpture reflects wild landscape
Contemporary: Blue metal abstract sculpture
Traditional: Early 20th century house with classical garden stone terrace and containers
Informal country: Complex, colorful landscape and welcoming stone walkway, low perennials in
   walk, color echo of perennials with yellow chairs on porch
C.Composition
1.Balance
Symmetrical balance of containers; what makes this artful is unusual choice of vegetable and color
Asymmetrical siting of benches on short boardwalk
2.Continuity (repetition)
Repetition of line, material, and gray color in wall and firepit of patio is lovely but bland
Repetition of red accents perks up bland scene
Repetition in mixed border of species and color
3.Contrast (textural)
Cimicifuga 'Chocoholic' with green background is okay but nothing special
Contrast of foliage color and texture: *Hakonechloa* 'Strike It Rich', *Cimicifuga* 'Black Negligee'
Contrast as well as subtle repetition of foliage and flower form: *Acanthus, Hydrangea, Persicaria*
4.Scale
Out of scale: Vine-covered wire arbor shades too small stone bench but is artfully framed by tall dill
Same scene with larger bench
Tall thin sculpture for scale near yellow wall
5.Focal point/accent
Bench as traditional focal point
Pot and pedestal as focal point reinforced by color echo of *Chrysanthemum* 'Sheffield Pink' and
   'Bronze Elegans'
Multiple but similar focal points: Concrete stelae that resemble petrified wood;
Too many focal points?
Verbascum bombyciferum 'Polarsommer' as focal point in perennial border

6.Color

Clashing reds have different undertones

Pastel garden: Pink/purple: *Agastache* 'Black Adder', *Aster, Dahlia, Lythrum, Veronicastrum*

Intense purple and magenta: *Geranium psilostemon, Salvia* 'Caradonna'

Use of orange: *Belamcanda* and *Echinacea* 'Merlot'

Railing color echoes grout color; riser color same as furniture legs and cushion pattern

Red gate leads into Cupid garden

Children's playhouse with seating in bright color

Painted flower house as model for playhouse

Pergola with painted support columns

Color echo of pale purple bench and *Verbena bonariensis* creates artfulness

D.Seasonality/succession

1.Bulbs

Newly pruned grasses

Narcissus and *Scilla siberica* between cut back *Pennisetum*

Early summer blooming bulbs and perennials: *Lilium* 'Dani Arafin', *Rosa* Oso Easy® 'Peachy Cream', *Allium giganteum, Lychnis chalcedonica* 'Morgenrot', *Rosa* 'Dr. Van Fleet', *Geranium psilostemon*; bulbs add extra form, color, and height

Fall blooming bulbs – element of surprise: *Colchicum autumnale* in *Oenothera berlandiera* 'Siskiyou Pink'

2.Vines

Celastrus in spring

Celastrus in fall

3.Shrubs

Acer palmatum 'Viridis in late spring, summer, and fall

II.Garden as Outdoor Room(s)

A.Ceiling

Natural, lowered ceiling provided by tree branch

Hardscape ceiling provided by Wisteria on pergola

Wisteria racemes dangling through pergola add extra artful element

B.Walls

Living wall of climbing roses on posts and wire

Conventional fence wall with some artistry; trellis panels periodically break up linearity and length

Hardscape wall: Timber posts and painted stucco-like walls with "windows" and "door"

Implied wall with steel pergola

C.Floor

"Broken glass" stone patio

Mazus reptans between stones of informal patio and blue chairs

Colorful detail in grout of irregular stone patio

Stone mosaic floor that foretells serpents in The Uncommon Garden

III.Illusion

Illusion of cabin, fence and garden to break up long fence

Tool shed with flowerboxes under mirror windows

Use of mirror in framed "doorway" to enlarge space

Illusion of water with use of mirror to create reflections

Illusion of depth with gate to borrowed landscape

IV.Imaginative use of materials

Strawberry vine to cover ugly risers

Amsonia hubrichtii along gravel path with irregular stone edge
Reuse of bowling balls as mulch
Plates on arbor at entrance to potager
Tree trunk used as table through wall
Large concrete pieces recycled as paving with sedges and ferns between
Abstract design of walls with brick, stone, and tile
Colorful painted wall between properties
Ribbon "door" to pergola
Hot tub accessible by steps from patio is curtained for privacy
Deceptively unassuming front yard hides colorful back yard
Colorful side yard with artistically painted gate
View inside artistically painted gate
Colorful back yard garden has painted fence that makes excellent background for hot colored flowers
    Rudbeckia 'Herbstsonne' and *Monarda*
Back yard gate matches painted fence

V. Inclusion of art/ornament
A. Why?
Vines trained in X pattern against fence
Addition of colored glass ornaments to bed
Dealing with an eyesore: Massed tulips as color echo with fire hydrant (unwanted "sculpture")
Ornament (English phonebooth, "aliens") for winter interest with grasses
Birdbath as memento of trip + drama of seasonal variation: *Hydrangea* 'Annabelle', *Clematis* 'Nelly
    Moser', *Clematis* 'Sundance', *Lythrum*, *Hosta*, birdbath
Same view in winter
B. Where?
Wrought iron wall art instead of tall shrubs for blank garage wall
Statue as enticement to enter stepped path
Fanciful silver ornaments lighten all-green area
Glazed blue jar almost hidden by *Polygonatum.odoratum* 'Variegatum'

VI. Wrap up
Epitome of an artful garden Taking something ordinary (rusted steel fence) and making it special
    with a colorful wire sculpture of a sun

Bobbie Schwartz, FAPLD
Bobbie's Green Thumb
18405 Van Aken Blvd.   Shaker Heights, Ohio 44122
(216)752-9449 fax (216)752-9449 e-mail:bobbie @bgthumb.com
website: www.bgthumb.com
blog: www.bgthumb.com/bobbies-world/