



# On the Stump

CREATE A STUNNING MINIATURE LANDSCAPE USING  
DWARF PLANTS, STONE, AND A HOLLOW TREE TRUNK.

by MARSHA JAHNS Photographs by PETE KRUMHARDT Produced by KRISTOPHER DABNER

Forced to remove a silver maple that was leaning precariously over the roof of his house, Kansas City, Missouri, garden designer Kristopher Dabner decided to recycle a large section of the tree's hollow trunk into a one-of-kind container. He sliced the 5-foot-long piece in half lengthwise, leaving two 24-inch-wide sections. He chopped up and discarded one section and retained the other for the planter. The trunk was hollow and had old knotholes, which facilitated drainage.

Kristopher's next step was to choose a location

for the miniature landscape. He decided on the middle of his formal garden, where the plantings would receive a lot of light, good morning sun, and filtered sun in the afternoon so the plants wouldn't get too dry.

For plants, the garden designer selected more than a dozen dwarf conifers, ground covers, and herbs. All of the plants are hardy and bear small leaves and flowers. They also share the same water and light requirements.

Kristopher set the section of trunk atop some

## PROJECT |

large stones (1), elevating it for easy viewing. He used small flagstone pieces to fill the open end of the trunk and as a retaining wall in back for a two-tiered effect (2). He put sphagnum moss in the bottom of the trunk, followed by potting soil (3). Next came the plants (4). Hardwood mulch was added to help retain moisture. A stone trough was placed on top in back for balance (5).

You don't need an old tree trunk to create the same effect. As alternatives, Kristopher suggests using an old dry sink on legs or an oversize galva-

nized washtub, a giant stone trough, or a large terra-cotta planter on a stand of some sort. And you need not limit your miniature landscape to plants. You could make a little dry creek bed with gravel, for example.

Maintenance is minimal. Besides watering, you'll need to fertilize a couple of times a year. And if you plan to leave the planter exposed over winter, add extra insulation around it with straw or leaves. You'll also need to water the plants whenever the temperature reaches 40° F. □



### WHAT'S PLANTED

- Basket-of-gold (*Alyssum saxatile* 'Gold Dust')
- Butterscotch euonymus (*Euonymus japonicus* 'Microphyllus Butterscotch')
- Cinquefoil (*Potentilla* × *tonguei*)
- Creeping juniper (*Juniperus horizontalis* 'Lime Glow')
- Diascia (*Diascia* × *hybrida* 'Sun Chimes Coral')
- Dwarf Alberta spruce (*Picea glauca* 'Conica')
- Dwarf iris (*Iris pumila*)
- English lavender (*Lavandula angustifolia* 'Blue Star')
- Hinoki false cypress (*Chamaecyparis obtusa* 'Fernspray Gold')
- Roman chamomile (*Chamaemelum nobile*)
- Sawara false cypress (*Chamaecyparis pisifera* 'Tsukumo')
- Singleseed juniper (*Juniperus squamata* 'Blue Star')
- Stevia (*Stevia rebaudiana*)
- Variegated lemon thyme (*Thymus* × *citriodorus* *variegata*)
- Woolly thyme (*Thymus pseudolanuginosus*)