

Secret Garden





Clever design transformed this suburban backyard into an intimate, family-friendly garden

When the client called in Kristopher Dabner, creative director of landscape design company The Greensman, to transform the big, blank slate that was the backyard of her south Leewood home, it was clear her needs were fairly simple: “She kind of wanted it all,” Dabner says.

Never one to disappoint, that’s exactly what Dabner’s design provides: a place for everything.

The awkward shape of the backyard might have presented a challenge but ended up providing a way to meet the homeowner’s



Above and opposite: The sound produced by the bubbling fountain enhances privacy by helping to drown out sound outside the garden.

BY LARA HALE

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Above and below: A lions' head fountain provides a focal point in the center of the courtyard. Opposite: Climbing yellow roses grace one of the garden's arbors.

request. "It's a square corner lot, but the house sits at a 45-degree angle, so it made these kind of strange spaces in the backyard," he says. Rather than fight it, he went with it, dividing them up into four outdoor "rooms" that go around the back of the yard, each serving a different purpose. A series of elegant arbors, designed to match the pergola Dabner built on the house's deck, help separate the various rooms while creating a cohesive look.

Immediately off the deck, a water feature provides not only a focal point but also an environment for relaxing, with its bubbling pot creating a gentle white noise that helps quiet noises from







Above: Espaliered apple trees create a fence on one side of the garden. Opposite: The garden's arbors were designed to match the pergola, which provides shade on the deck.



beyond the garden's borders. A row of hornbeams planted parallel to the water feature and the property line adds more privacy.

The water feature's oblong shape draws the eye toward another of the garden's rooms, a small courtyard decorated with a European-style lions' head fountain, which connects to a stone patio that serves as a space for entertaining or unwinding.

The fourth room was designed with a very specific purpose in mind according to Dabner. "She wanted to be able to grow lots of fruits and vegetables so that when her grandkids come, they could pick them," he says. To that end, he edged a lawn that's perfect for playtime with a kitchen garden planted with herbs, vegetables, berries and pear trees that can easily be harvested by little hands. ♦

