

HOMEGARDEN

Greenhouse Pays Off For Neb. Teen

BY LINDA WUEBBEN

RANDOLPH, Neb. — A Randolph High School senior loves his roots.

Tim Schmit has been working in his family's greenhouse ever since seventh grade. That year his older brother was taking a high school ag course where he learned how to grow plants. Schmit's parents decided to buy a small greenhouse kit which measured 12-by-16 feet and let the boys go to work.

"I just love it out here in the greenhouse," Schmit said. "It's just fascinating to me."

This is the third year he manned the greenhouse by himself on the family farm east of Randolph and used it as a money-making proposition. This is in addition to his farm-fresh egg business. The first year he sold plants to family members and friends.

The next year Schmit raised enough plants to supply the customers who shopped at the local grocery store. The business was so impressed, they decided to pass their greenhouse frame on to Schmit. They were able to buy plants locally now and encouraged him to 'grow' his nursery area.

This spring, with the additional 10-by-20-foot framework and plastic, Schmit supplied the grocery and flower shop in Randolph and also a flower shop in Osmond with gardening plants.

When he delivered his first batch of plants to Randolph, he filled a covered cart with double shelves and the back of a pickup.

In February, when the 8,000 plugs of flowers and vegetable



COURTESY PHOTO

Randolph High School senior Tim Schmit works in his family's greenhouse.

plants arrived, the whole Schmit family came to the greenhouse to transplant the minute sprigs into plastic pots. It took a total of 56 hours, but now Schmit

does most of the daily work before and after school. He spends 45 minutes every morning before school checking over the inventory and making sure

the humidity is right. A propane heater keeps the plants at a minimum of 50 degrees, which was a challenge this past spring.

The Schmit family all chips in when running the greenhouse from day to day in between the other farming chores. They all are trained to use the special computer system Schmit installed this spring with a barcode scanner. This addition makes it easier for the in-town businesses to record his sales.

Sunday is Schmit's best day and he often offers specials that day to customers who come to the farm. He estimates he has already surpassed last year's sales and is on track to at least double his profits.

Next year, he may add another greenhouse because a lot of his customers are asking for herbs. Special orders are a favorite of Schmit's. He will plant in almost anything and has done a lot of custom planters for Memorial Day weekend. His hanging planters are selling fast, with almost half them walking out of the greenhouse by the end of April.

Another customer order came from a customer who received some tree seedlings from the Arbor Day Foundation and asked him to start them in pots to be set out when the weather turns warmer.

A new planting venue this year are planting pouches, which are filled with petunias and selling well.

Schmit wants to study horticulture and UNL may be calling his name. Or he might attend Northeast Community College for two years and then just come home and work in his greenhouse.

5 Books For The Gardener In You

BY RENEE ENNA
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BUILDING BLOCKS

OK, you need to be on a familiar basis with hammers and nails for most of the ideas in "The Vegetable Gardener's Book of Building Projects" (Storey, \$18.95). This DIY compendium delivers great step-by-step instructions and graphics, from the simple (a T-Pea Tower for climbing plants) to the advanced (the lovely Welcoming Arbor). Don't let the title fool you: Projects include outdoor furniture, compost bins and birdhouses — and the pansies will look just as nice as carrots in the Square Planter.

CALLING DR. PLANT (THAT'S YOU)

"What's Wrong with My Plant? (And How Do I Fix it?)," by David Dearthoff and Kathryn Wadsworth (Timber Press, \$24.95), came out in late 2009, when the only thing wrong with many plants was that they were still burrowed underground. This book bases its tutelage on progressive drawings that will help puzzled gardeners diagnose the troubles. Another plus: Suggested remedies are organic.

GARDEN 'MAGIC'

"One Magic Square: The Easy, Organic Way to Grow Your Own Food on a 3-Foot Square," by Lolo Houbein (The

Experiment, \$18.95), enchants on many levels. Veggie gardeners (especially rookies) will benefit from Houbein's knowledge, which is informed by science and folk wisdom, as well as the breadth of its content (growing information, 30 design plots, many recipes). This single line could sustain us for life: "Never garden in a mood of wanting to control everything." The book is filled with such lines.

ELEGANCE WITHIN BOUNDS

Leafing through "Big Plans, Small Gardens," by Andy Sturgeon (Mitchell Beazley, \$24.99), our first reflex was to wonder what he charges and if we could afford him. We're confident the book is cheaper. Less about growing plants than about growing the spaces they'll (and you'll) inhabit, this nifty guide offers knockout ideas incorporating designs for any small space in a yard.

SKY SCRAPPERS

Vertical gardening is all the rage, but hardly a new development, plantwise — enter "Armitage's Vines and Climbers," by veteran writer Allan M. Armitage (Timber Press, \$29.95). That said, there are choices beyond clematis and pole beans, and this photo-packed primer delivers the pros and cons for 100-plus plants to help gardeners and gardens reach new heights.

Garden Of Blooms Cited By Shakespeare Can Transend Time

BY PAT PAPE

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FORT WORTH, Texas — When he was putting pen to paper in 17th-century London, it seems unlikely that William Shakespeare would suspect that four centuries later gardeners would be reading his works and planning their plants based on his references.

And yet, Shakespearean gardens remain popular today. And what, these might well inquire, is a Shakespearean garden?

"A Shakespearean garden is nothing but a garden that contains the plants mentioned in his plays," says Charlie Waldrop, a volunteer for Texas Discovery Gardens in Dallas. Waldrop recently helped the Fair Park attraction revitalize a Shakespearean garden that had been created in the early '60s but had lost much of its bard-celebrated-flora over the years.

Was Shakespeare himself a gardener? Shakespeare's body of work indicates that he loved nature, but historians can only speculate whether the bard planted the pansies and poppies in his off-hours.

"Shakespeare displays a great deal of knowledge about plants in his plays and poems," says Stanley Wells, chairman of the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust in Stratford-upon-Avon. "From this, we assume that he tended gardens in his spare time."

With career success and the accompanying financial reward, Shakespeare purchased New Place, a Stratford house with an extensive garden.

"There is no definitive proof to say that Shakespeare was an avid gardener; however, he certainly had a good knowledge of plants," says Tom Moores, research intern at Shakespeare's Globe Theatre in London. "His work is littered with references to flowers and herbs, often employing flowers in his metaphors and similes used to illustrate people's personalities. Twenty-nine different scenes in the Shakespeare canon take place in a garden or orchard."

"He knew plants and plant lore intimately," says Stephen Greenblatt, Harvard professor and author of Will in the World, a best-selling Shakespeare biography. "It seems clear that this knowledge was not only from books but more from direct experience."

Public gardens throughout the world often have a designated area devoted to Shakespeare, and you, too, can create a Shakespearean garden in your back yard. Here are five steps to get you started:

1. Plan your garden's basic design

You'll need a roomy garden bed that gets at least four hours of sun each day. Prepare the soil as you would for any other garden. Determine the space that you will allocate to plants and any permanent fixtures, such as a brick or gravel pathway. A bench will provide you and your guests a place to sit and reflect on nature.

Some Shakespearean gardens feature a bust or image of the writer as a focal point. A selection of busts of the bard is available at www.statue.com, with prices starting at \$84. Additional elements



RON T. ENNIS/FORT WORTH STAR-TELEGRAMMCT
Holly hocks grow tall in the Shakespeare inspired section of the Texas Discovery Garden in Fair Park, Texas, Monday, May 3, 2010.

might include a traditional sundial or antique-looking flower pot. Check out the sundial assortment at www.outdoorfurniture.net. Prices start at about \$40.

Texas Discovery Gardens employs these traditional elements in its Shakespeare garden. Waldrop created a fresh design incorporating the old structure, which was installed in the original garden around 1960. The project included a brick wall that runs 30 feet along the edge of the garden. Built into the wall is a bas relief of Shakespeare carved in Italy by skilled craftsmen and featuring the quote "Of all flowers, methinks a rose is best" from The Two Noble Kinsmen. The original pavestone path circles around a pedestal with a sundial (circa 1962). The sundial sits inside a center circle that is surrounded by garden quadrants.

To enhance the existing structures, a bushy Red Cascade rose spilling from a large antique urn was placed across from the Shakespeare relief. "It's perfect for this spot," says Randy Johnson, horticultural director for Texas Discovery Garden. "It fits nicely."

Combined, the various shapes and elements give the impression of a traditional English country garden. Waldrop advises home gardeners to be creative in craft-

ing their own Shakespearean haven, however. "Shakespeare gardens come in all different designs," he said. "Some are formal. Some are wild."

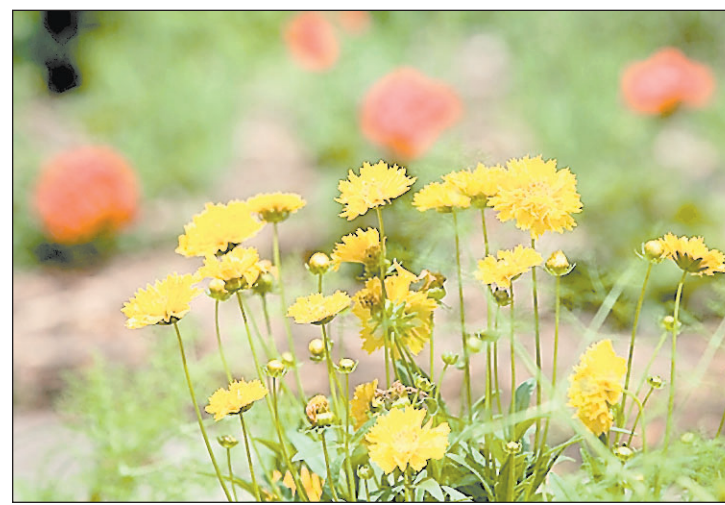
2. Research plants mentioned in Shakespeare's writing

In working on the Shakespearean garden, Waldrop researched the various plants mentioned in Shakespeare's work. A complete list of those plants is at www.lomonic.com/supplementallist2.html. It comes from "The Plant-Lore and Garden-Craft of Shakespeare," written by Henry N. Ellacombe in 1884.

Reference guides to Shakespeare's plants are found on Amazon. These include "Shakespeare's Flowers," written by Jessica Kerr and illustrated by Anne Ophelia Dowden, and "Shakespeare's Garden: Or the Plants and Flowers Named in His Works Described and Defined," a reprint of Sidney Beisly's 1864 book.

An inspirational tome is "Shakespeare in the Garden" by Mick Hales, a prominent landscape photographer, featuring shots of Shakespearean gardens and an illustrated compendium of plants. Used copies of the \$35 coffee-table book were recently on Amazon.com for \$5.

Plants had symbolic signifi-



RON T. ENNIS/FORT WORTH STAR-TELEGRAMMCT
Marigolds surround a sundial at the center of the Shakespeare inspired area of the Texas Discovery Garden in Fair Park, Texas, Monday, May 3, 2010.

cance in the 1600s, and Shakespeare's every mention of a flower, tree or herb is considered important to the text. One familiar example is the rose, which has long been emblematic of romantic love. It is cited more than 50 times in Shakespeare's work, including, of course, Juliet's famous words from Romeo and Juliet:

What's in a name?
That which we call a rose
By any other name
Would smell as sweet.
Other references include:

Like the lily,
That once was mistress of the field and flourish'd,
I'll hang my head and perish.
— "Henry VIII"

I know a bank where the wild thyme blows,
Where oxlips and the nodding violet grows,
Quite over-canopied with luscious woodbine,
With sweet musk-roses and with eglantine:

There sleeps Titania sometime of the night,
Lull'd in these flowers with dances and delight.
— "A Midsummer Night's Dream"

When daffodils begin to peer,
With height! the doxy over the dale,
Why, then comes in the sweet o' the year;
For the red blood reigns in the winter's pale.
— "The Winter's Tale"

There's rosemary, that's for remembrance; pray,
love, remember: and there is pansies, that's for thoughts.
— "Hamlet"

When daisies pied and violets blue
And lady-smocks all silver-white
And cuckoo-buds of yellow hue
Do paint the meadows with delight,
— "Love's Labours Lost"

3. Select plants that thrive best in your climate.

Waldrop made a list of Shakespearean plants appropriate for North Texas. From that list, the garden received an infusion of flowering plants, including lilies, lily of the valley, roses, columbine, salvia, chrysanthemum, delphinium, marigold, yarrow, larkspur and echinacea, or cone flower. Pretty non-flowering specimens, such as lamb's ear and ferns, were added, along

with various herbs, including chives, lavender, dill, parsley, fennel, rue, basil, mint, chamomile and creeping thyme. An established pomegranate and a fig bush, both mentioned by Shakespeare, were already in place.

You may want to search for the William Shakespeare rose created by English rose breeder David Austin. The plant produces velvety burgundy flowers.

It took Waldrop several visits to regional nurseries to find the

plants for the refurbished garden, and some were harder to find than others. Broom plants aren't common, but "he found some at Home Depot," Johnson says.

A few desirable mentions, such as mustard, were left out because they must be started from seed. Home gardeners can sow mustard seeds directly in the ground in the spring.

4. Select plants and their placement based on their individual characteristics.

"Know what season they bloom and consider the different heights and colors," Waldrop says. "It's like planning any other garden. Anyone can do it."

You might start with a visit to a local public garden; take along a notebook and jot down how the plants are arranged in the garden.

Valuable for determining the mature height of plants and their colors is Easy Gardens for North Central Texas, by Steve Huddleston, senior horticulturist at Fort Worth Botanic Garden, and Pamela Crawford, veteran gardening writer.

5. Consider using only natural products in the garden

Waldrop thinks an organic garden is historically appropriate since any garden in Shakespeare's time would have been maintained using natural methods. "They didn't have all those packaged things," he says.

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