

Jean's & Paul's Gardens

Our gardens were 1 of 4 gardens selected by the University of Minnesota Landscape Arboretum for their 2022 Private Garden Tour (an annual fund-raising event for the Arboretum). Over the 3-day event, 650-people toured our gardens. We hope many of you, too, will come to see them!

Jean first saw this house when she was 16-years old (1963). She became its second owner in 1982, making this the 43rd year we've lived here. The gardens were designed and planted by Jean with help from her husband, Paul. There is not one blade of grass on the 1-1/3-acre property! The bones of the gardens include mature trees, shrubs, boulders, stone and mulch paths. The gardens are designed to have color and texture all year round. When in peak bloom (July), there are over 1,000 lily blooms in the gardens - Asiatic Lilies, Oriental Lilies, a few Martagon Lilies and Daylilies. There are 22-varieties of Hostas the largest being 'Empress Wu' and the most colorful being 'St. Elmo's Fire' with emerging yellow leaves and maroon stems whose leaves morph to mint green later in the season. You'll see 500+ Hosta plants in mass planted areas of the gardens. There are 15-peony varieties, some 65-years old (planted by the first owner), others planted as late as 2021. We've planted many ornamental grasses in-order-to have summer, fall and winter interest throughout the landscape. Last, but not least, you'll see approximately 100-rose varieties. Some hardy, others not hardy to Minnesota that require burying in the fall to survive Minnesota winters.

One of the gardens you'll see started with the removal of a 25,000 gallon in-ground concrete swimming pool 8-years ago. 15-truckloads of garden mix (leaf compost, black dirt, manure and sand) were brought in to amend Golden Valley's clay soil. Additionally, Jean likes to amend her garden soils with pea gravel...an old soil amendment trick she learned from gardening friends in England. Purposely packed with mass groupings of flowering plants, there is a density in the gardens that heightens the colors and helps to keep the weeding down.

There are trees and shrubs from earlier days, but most of the gardens were planted over the past 8-years. Each year brings new additions and lots of changes to locations of bulbs, perennials, and ground covers to optimize the happiness of the plants. Annuals are planted to enhance and extend the color in the gardens. In addition to the gardens surrounding the house, there's ¾ of an acre of woodlands below the east garden with both existing and planted trees and a large section of naturalized Ostrich Ferns and Sumac. The many 40+ foot tall White Pine trees were 5-feet tall when planted by Jean 40-years ago.

As you walk "up close and personal" with our gardens, keep an eye out for some of Jean's favorites...Hellebores, Catlin's Giant Ajuga groundcover, 5'-7'h Monkshoods, Rocket Ligularias, large stands of Joe-Pye Weed, tall Limelight Hydrangeas and a 25'h French Pussy Willow that presents its gigantic silvery catkins in late February. Favorite annuals include Rudbeckia (Indian Summer), Nicotiana Alata, and Lisianthus.

Our gardens are visited by raccoons, opossums, groundhogs, many nesting birds, turtles, an occasional rabbit (bad rabbit) and foxes that like to lay around and sleep in the garden waiting for the rabbit to come by. Down the hill we are visited by many deer, coyotes, and there's often an owl's nest to watch. This all contributes to the natural setting we strive to achieve.

