

## GET GROWING

# Privacy is paramount

The Carrozzas have created a secret garden that keeps the busy world outside at bay

By LEE GUGLIADA

**Y**ou can't help but notice the abundant curbside plantings as you drive by the garden on Lighthouse Hill. Variegated shrubs of euonymus, holly, lirope, and yucca, all with a decided yellow hue, brighten the attractive border that separates the curb from the sidewalk, while yews, sedum, ivy and lilacs blend with the shrubs to create a wall of foliage.

It is not until you pass through the gate and approach the welcoming brick walkway, bordered in pink begonias, that you can appreciate the contrast of the busy street outside with the quiet oasis inside.

When Maria Carrozza, second vice president of the Richmond Ever-Green Garden Club, purchased her home on a busy thoroughfare 17 years ago, the first thing she and her husband, James, did was to plant ivy. The vine was trained to camouflage an unattractive chainlink fence on the north side of the property and the back, which faces east. The mature ivy now completely covers the fence and creates one wall of Mrs. Carrozza's "Angel" garden room. The flagstone foundation of the 1920s house serves as another wall, and is the perfect spot to hang her collection of angel plaques. Variegated aucuba plants, which thrive in a shady garden, and a collection of angel statues, add to the charm of this secret garden hidden in the rear of the home.

The Carrozzas, owners of Cake Chef Bakery in Meiers Corners, share gardening duties. Over the years, James has planted and pruned the trees and shrubs while Maria plants the bulbs and annuals.



## More on the web



More photos of the Carrozzas' garden can be found at [www.silive.com/homegarden](http://www.silive.com/homegarden).

## KEEPING IT PRIVATE

As soon as you enter the couple's garden, the transition in noise level from a busy, heavily trafficked area full of street sounds to a private sanctuary surrounded by walls of evergreens is evident. This corner property is bordered with arborvitae, a pyramid-shaped tree that remains green throughout the year, creating a lush screen. By enclosing the property in this manner, privacy is created, while the greenery absorbs distracting sounds and pollution. An added advantage when planting this particular evergreen is that it is amazingly durable and can be grown in virtually any soil.

Into the hillside, the Carrozzas have added another feature that muffles traffic noises: A five-level waterfall falling approximately 20 feet and ending in a pool stocked with gold fish. The sound of water splashing down the rocky slopes drowns out the noise of passing cars.

Stretches of lawn are interspersed with several pocket gardens featuring wonderful topiary creations to keep visitors visually absorbed. A large heart-shaped topiary is sited below a patio area, a reclining deer topiary rests in the shade and a standing "Mickey Mouse" waves to visitors from the fence.

A nicely landscaped, large circular bed on the left, featuring a tall red maple tree surrounded by both white pine and black pine, ivy, yucca, heather and a variety

of evergreens, catches your eye as you approach the front door. An old wheelbarrow overflowing with petunias and surrounded by hostas beckons you to a small porch, where a large container of coleus and a variety of whimsical garden objects reside. A border of barbery and low-growing liatrus below the porch softens the scene.

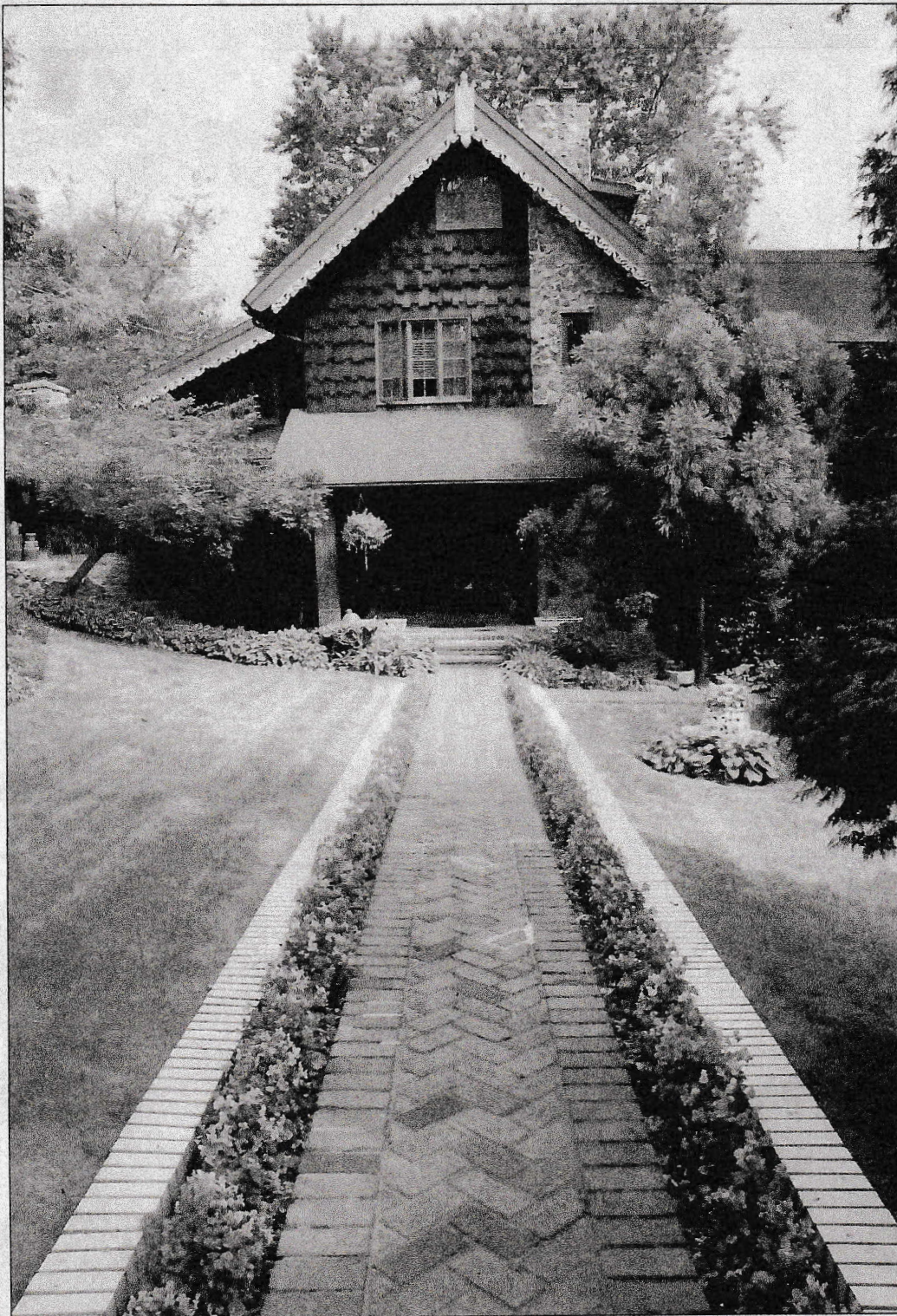
## POSITIVE CONCEPTS

This garden exemplifies many positive landscape concepts. Creative landscaping has been used as a means of making the outdoor space more livable. Here privacy is of prime importance and has been successfully accomplished: The falling water camouflages traffic noise and interest is created with the use of multiple levels and interesting garden topiaries.

Gardening on a hillside is particularly challenging, but when effectively utilized, can become an asset by adding special interest and enhancing the area.

Lee Gugliada is a member of the Great Kills Garden Club and First District Federated Garden Clubs of New York State.





STATEN ISLAND ADVANCE PHOTOS/FRANK J. JOHNS





The rustic brick walkway leading to the Carrozzas' front door is bordered in pink begonias.

One of the winged residents of Mrs. Carrozza's "Angel" garden room.

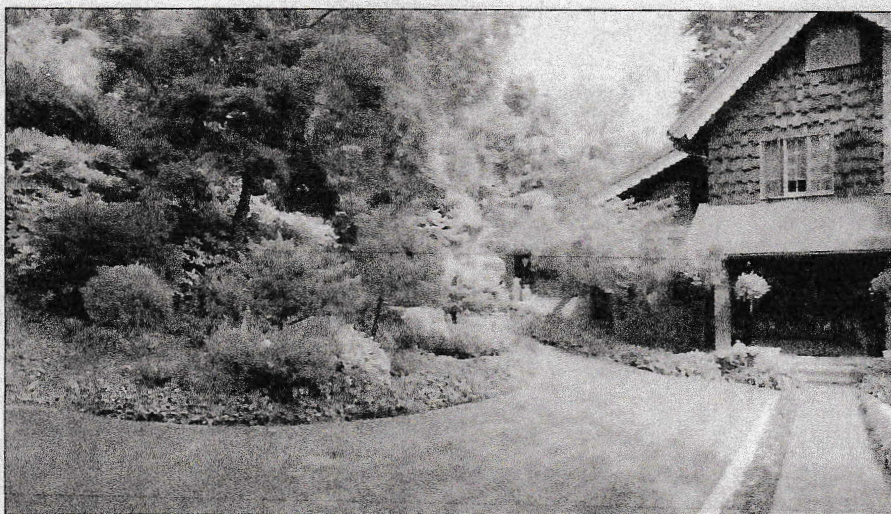


A five-level waterfall built into the hillside drowns out the noise of passing cars.



A large heart-shaped topiary is sited below a patio area.





A large circular bed features a tall red maple surrounded by white and black pine, ivy, yucca, heather and a variety of evergreens.