

Bucky's Run

Asheville, NC

Bucky's Run is the transformation of an overgrown and unruly landscape into a calm and tranquil garden space. It's also the result of a personal journey to create a garden reflecting both the gardener and the landscape. It is the culmination of seasons of trial and error; miles driven to source and haul home plant materials; years spent clearing, designing, planting, and transplanting.

Over the course of 12 years, with basic tools and without a crew, this garden owner installed 100+ tons of stone, 150+ cubic yards of garden soil, over 400 trees, shrubs and perennials. His companions were his 2001 Dodge 2500 pickup, his 23hp Bobcat and his best friend, Bucky, the family's English Labrador. Occasional consultation and installation services provided by local designers, growers, contractors and artisans.

The gardens include over two dozen Japanese Maples, three Hornbeam hedges, many specimen conifers, dozens of hydrangeas, azaleas, additional flowering shrubs, understory trees and hundreds of perennials. A layered shade garden in the front of the property provides year round interest with natives, pollinators and unique ornamentals. Cutting beds of Echinacea, Agastache, Leucanthemum, Gaura, Lavender and more flowering perennials are located on the sides and rear areas of the property.

The driveway into the gently sloping 1.66 acre property, begins with a bluestone threshold and transitions to brown decorative pea gravel. A cattle grate installed in the driveway, keeps deer out and marks the beginning of the deer fencing that surrounds the property. The driveway surface is made of pea gravel bonded with a permeable epoxy material, allowing for absorption of rainwater rather than run-off. It is surrounded by well attended beds that offer immediate engagement. The bluestone walkway to the front of the house has a custom iron arch and lantern to welcome visitors. Along this path is a sculpture by Berry Bate of Asheville, NC. This unique sculpture is 7ft tall and was made from a single sheet of iron; it is aptly named "A Prayer to the Universe".

A narrow gravel path leads from the front walk to the solarium. This path is bordered with perennials and flowering shrubs, planted containers, a fountain and a birdhouse are tucked in along the way. It is hidden from the driveway by a Hornbeam hedge and makes a colorful vista from the kitchen and breakfast nook windows.

The front section of the property is a woodland and shade garden with several gravel paths winding under the canopy of older trees. There is a dry stream bed, designed to channel rainwater from the driveway and the above roadway, that leads to the rain garden. There are sitting areas, including an 8 foot stone slab bench. The garden beds along the paths are dotted with layers of thriving ferns, perennials, shrubs, unusual conifers and understory trees for multi-season interest. The beds are bordered in stone. The layout is casual in feel, and intentional with detail.

The lower side of the property has full sun exposure permitting a lap pool, a stone patio, a bubbler water feature and cutting gardens. The house borders this area on two sides and overlooks it with covered decks. The Echinacea cutting bed is located here along with companion plantings of perennials and seasonal plants. An abstract concrete statue of a dove from Louisville, KY, is located in this area.

The back of the property is a wide expanse of lawn and shaped beds. The deer fencing runs around the rear property and access to the gardens and lawn areas are through various gates. Four of the gates, each

a different design, are from a horse stable in Lexington, KY. Two of the gates are from Charleston, SC and date back to the early to mid 1800's; they have no welds and their finials and bars were forged and pounded out by hand. All of the gates were restored by a local sculptor, Berry Bate of Asheville.

Many of the Japanese Maples and specimen conifers are located in these rear beds. There is a cascading water feature with two waterfall drops and small basin at its base. A mini Birch Grove surrounds the second rain garden on the property and screens a casual seating area. Two separate garden beds bordered in stacked stone have a variety of evergreens, shrubs and perennials. In the foundation beds along the rear of the house there are hydrangeas, camellias, herbs and perennials.

The lower garden located along the back of the property has the largest of the Japanese Maples along with numerous perennials, evergreens and flowering shrubs. Also located there is a sculpture by David Caudill of Louisville, KY; its unique tubular form allows it to be repositioned to compliment the garden space. Behind this bed is the rear section of the tractor path which runs from the driveway, through the woodland area, along the lower side of the property next to the deer fencing and returns to the storage and garage area on the upper (north side) of the property. The tractor path provide access to all areas of Bucky's Run for delivery of plants, materials and maintenance.

The owner designed and created this garden to express his love of nature, and to create a space of calm and tranquility. A favorite motto is "I am into instant gratification – there is more to appreciate over a longer period of time." This garden continues to be a work in progress and a means to improve emotional and mental health. Bucky's legacy has been passed on to Baron, another English Labrador, who carries on the joy of the garden.

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Garden History & Design Committee
The French Broad River Garden Club Foundation, Inc.
December, 2022