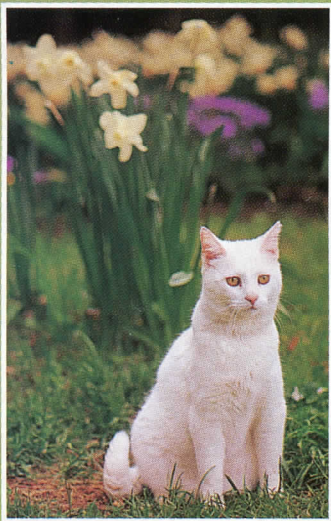


AT BROCCOLI HALL PLANTING A VISION



There wasn't a hint of a garden on Maxine Paetro's property when she first found it fifteen years ago. What's more, she wasn't much of a gardener. But that didn't stop her from shaping what she saw in her mind's eye: a whimsical landscape flowing from one distinct garden area to another. "I begged advice from everyone," she says. "I visited grand English gardens and stole ideas—and I hired a great gardener." Come welcome spring at Broccoli Hall, a personal dream that keeps coming true.



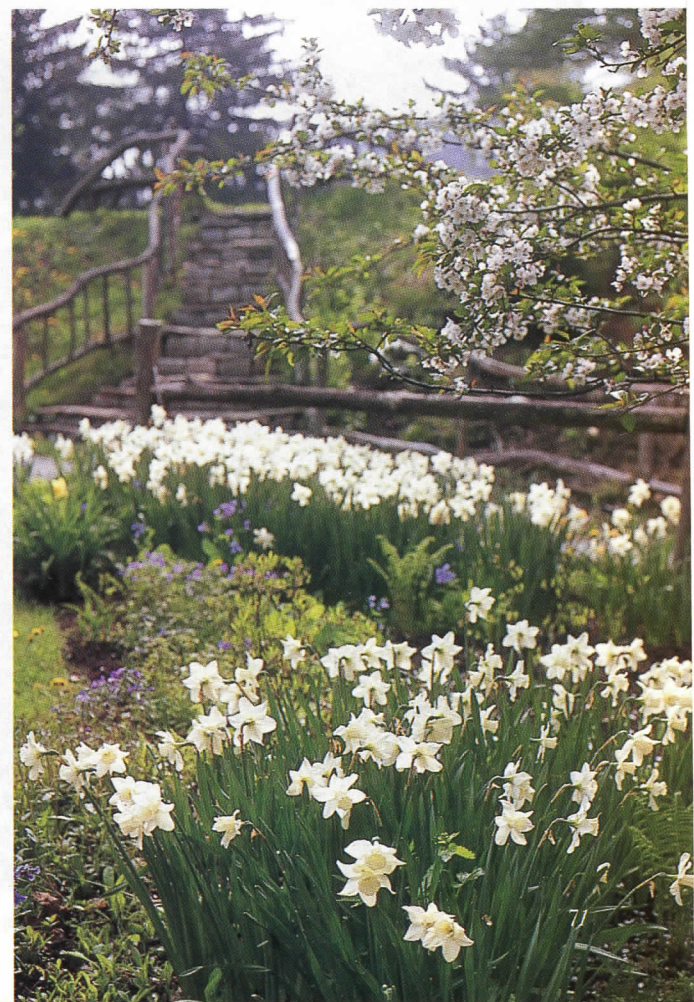
"I knew just where I wanted a pond," says Maxine—though it was not easy to install on her gently sloping land. "It had to be redug a few times," she admits.

Flanked by daffodils, this serene pool is just one of the surprises her property unfolds, along with a cottage garden, a sunken garden, an apple tunnel, and a hilltop tree house with breathtaking views. Perennials such as bleeding hearts, below, and crab apples flaring white in the woods, right, fill the garden with springtime glory.



*"The beauty of my garden," says Maxine,
"is that it's the work of an amateur. I learned as
I went along. There's nothing here that others
couldn't do as well, and people are often inspired
to adapt my ideas to their own gardens."*





Though she was an admitted “novice as a gardener,” from the first Maxine saw potential in the three-acre New York property with a ramshackle house in need of help. And what she dared to envision was not the usual beginner’s flower bed by the house but garden upon garden covering the entire area, each with its own theme and—for continuity—some flowers in common. Each would consist of pastel plantings, yet have a moment and mood all its own. That decided, Maxine read extensively, evolving her ideas.

Then a quick call to the New York Horticultural Society brought landscape designer Tim Steinhoff into her life. And Tim knew all the nuts and bolts. Not only did he map her dreams onto the hillside but he also recommended specific tulips, lilacs, and other flowers to extend the weeks of spring bloom. “We used nothing fancy,” Maxine points out, “just things you could find at any nursery—but quantities of them!”

If you don't mind a few stairs, the gardens of Broccoli Hall hold all sorts of romantic hideaways. The rustic railing and stairs, right, lead downhill to a rough-hewn picnic pavilion, opposite, one of the garden's newest whimsies.

Above the house, a driveway winds to the crest of the hill, where the tree house, above—a five-sided retreat built right around a tree trunk—commands sweeping views of the Hudson River Valley. “I call it ‘The Tree House of the August Moon,’” Maxine says, “because this is my favorite place to bring some friends and a bottle of wine to watch the sun set and the moon rise.”



Maxine, shown left with Cubbins, readily admits that many of the ideas that took root here were borrowed from grand gardens she'd admired during her travels in England. From Sissinghurst, for example, came the notion of garden rooms. And the espaliered apple-tree tunnel, top, arching beside her cottage garden, was first beheld at Heale House in Wiltshire. A humbler source—"a mail-order catalog"—gave her the idea of combining 'Greenland' and 'Spring Green' tulips, opposite top, near the garden shed. But she drew from her own heart when she combined daffodils with Virginia bluebells, opposite bottom, to cheer the early spring view from her writing desk.

Top: Having a cottage garden near the house required a genial porch to view it from, so Maxine added one when she renovated the house.

