

STYLE

Wet and wonderful | Mother Nature's gift of rain has put gardens on steroids



KATHY RENWALD

Lawns and gardens usually look as crunchy as Andy Warhol's wigs by mid-July. But, the green just keeps on going this year thanks to generous rain. Plants that haven't flowered in your garden are in bloom and things that usually flower sparsely are blooming insanely.

Everybody's roses look like they could win the Burlington Rose Award and showstoppers such as dahlias look like they are on EPO.

I took a little Giro d'North End the other day and the gardens looked scrumptious. In fact, many looked edible. Your nose immediately picks up the aroma of lavender, thyme and chamomile in front



Dinner-plate sized dahlias are showstoppers.

of the Scime-Curran residence. Their front yard is a tufted tapestry of herbs. It was planted just one year ago and already looks like a goat should be grazing nearby.

On warm summer nights you can sit on their front porch and be transported to France, Italy or Greece.

Other than some routine clip-

ping back, the garden is undemanding.

The sweet woodruff, thrift and ornamental grasses are perfectly suited to the southern exposure. In time, a beech tree will give the woodruff a bit of the shade it requires.

The softness of the herbal carpet works nicely with the fresh lines of the innovative home.

Bill Curran's an architect who saw a cottage badly in need of rescue and reworked it into a fresh take on indoor-outdoor living.

Just a few blocks away, another front garden is on its way to picture-postcard status. This one is in front of a cottage-style house that has been uplifted with a new skin of cedar shingles. It's a cool renovation of a house that is just steps away from the waterfront.

Dwarf pines, ornamental grasses, sedum and annuals are beginning to knit together in the no-grass front yard. Two urns plump with flowers frame the front door.

No Giro of the North End is complete without a stroll past Willie Molloy's garden. The herbs and vegetables are expanding this year. A thicket of tomatoes forms a gigantic raft in the centre of the garden, just a reach away from a plot of basil. Garlic, onions, lettuce and corn fill out the rest of the big yard.

Willie says he's just an apprentice to the master, neighbour Gino d'Angelo who makes the garden grow. I wouldn't be surprised to see a vineyard next. Willie is right on the 100-mile diet.

Edible or ornamental, it doesn't matter — it's all looking good during a well-hydrated summer.

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PHOTOS BY KATHY RENWALD, SPECIAL TO THE HAMILTON SPECTATOR

Herbs turn the Scime-Curran front yard into an edible, sweet-smelling meadow.



New shingles, a front door flanked by flower-filled urns and a no-grass front yard give this cottage a lift.