

**Craig Garden (Joyce)**  
**1321 Griffin Lake Ave, Chesterton, &**  
**Wrzesinski Garden (Cathy & Jim)**  
**1323 Griffin Lake Ave, Chesterton**

### **Native Neighbors**

These two adjoining properties have owners of a single garden mindset. They see the value of native plant gardens to support wildlife and return the land to its prior state. These native plant gardeners admit to being delighted in having landed next door to one another.

**Starting at the Craig garden, pause to admire the front bench garden.** Rugosa roses, swamp milkweed (*Asclepias incarnata*), dogwood and serviceberry greet you. Move to the left along the pathway. **1)** A bee, wasp and hummingbird-favorite native plant, rising above others is the figwort (*Scrophularia miralandica*), recognized by its sturdy square stems and opposing leaves. See golden alexander (*Zizia aurea*) with its umbel yellow flowers. Butterflies and bees will be nearby as this plant is a hardy food source.

Continue around the house, admiring the many ferns, corkscrew willow tree, phlox and milkweed. At the rear is Griffin Lake, hidden beyond the embankment. Take the path up to the top to peek at the lake. Just beyond that is the **2)** Migratory Bird Sanctuary (1150 S 11th St.), which you might visit on your way home.

**3)** One obstacle to returning the land to natives is the ever-present oriental bittersweet (*Celastrus orbiculatus*) vine. In the woodland segment at the base of the lake is an ocean of this invasive vine. Though some see value in its appearance, it is a menace which threads its way through any woodland, choking the trees and leaving miles of lianas scattered through the moist shady soil and up the trees. (Liana is a long-stemmed, herbaceous or woody vine rooted in the soil at ground level that uses trees or other means of vertical support to climb up to the canopy in search of direct sunlight.)

In a bit of sun is Joyce's vegetable garden, near the porch, with a nearby crabapple (*Malus*) tree.

**As you move around the woodland area, you enter the space of our second native garden, the Wrzesinski Garden.** A seed mix was used to generate the many natives you see on your right. **1)** Red is the theme in this garden—all in hopes of making it irresistible to hummingbirds. Red *Monarda*, or cardinal beebalm (*Monarda didyma*), lines the base of the woodland strip where the violet flowering cousin, *Monarda fistulosa*, is seen scattered elsewhere in the garden. Little bluestem grass, *Heliopsis*, with its bright yellow sunflower-like flowers and Rudbeckia coneflowers cohabit the mixed native beds. FYI, the common name coneflower is used interchangeably when referring to plants in either genera, Rudbeckia or Echinacea. **2)** Near the house is the shade garden filled with woodland natives such as Jack-in-the-pulpit, a variety of *Trillium*, and bloodroot. The homeowner starts seeds for these plants in special mini greenhouse containers after stratifying (cold treating to stimulate a breaking of the seed coat). This allows for quicker and more reliable germination than might naturally occur in the wild. When the plants have grown a bit, they are transplanted into the native soils.

**3)** In the front is a garden of other woodland natives such as Jacob's ladder (*Polemonium reptans*) and Canadian wild ginger. One caution, the Canadian anemone (*Anemonastrum canadense*) you see has become invasive. Though a native plant, it can easily take over a shade area. Use it only if you want an aggressive groundcover. And last, don't miss the enormous *Baptisia* AKA false blue indigo and two delphinium, mounded to 2-foot heights.

**Goin Garden (Marcella & Robert)**  
**1510 Union Ave, Chesterton**

**Packed Gem**

This small, but plentiful, garden is filled with ornamental shrubs, masses of perennials, trees, veggies and a well-tended water feature. Begin at the driveway and follow the lawn path around the east side. **1)** Though you can't really see it, this garden is rich with Valparaiso compost and mulch. Truckloads amended each bed for the four years since its beginning. Perennial seeds spread gladly into new areas because the soil environment is so favorable.

Coneflowers, daylilies, lupine and yarrow catch your eye. *Knifophia*, red hot poker or torch lily (though not actually lilies), are spikes of bright summer yellow and red. Ferns, wild geranium and American cranberry viburnum, add depth to the mix. **2)** Note the location of a couple of standing hose bibs. This is necessary to protect the masses of plantings from dragging hoses when supplemental water is needed.

Stop and relax near the Koi pond with its own bog area. This spot is a welcome respite and a delight to the senses.

Along the wooden fence is the canna bed, with zinnias and elephant ears (*Colocasia*). Small fruit bearing cherry trees line the eastern edge. At the center trellis, note the slight difference in color tint from south to north side of American honeysuckle (*Lonicera canadensis*). The southern edge gets much more sunshine, making it a deep red versus the paler shade of the northern edge.

Return to the driveway to head west around the house. **3)** Here you will see the raised vegetable beds. Potatoes, squashes and other vining plants thrive here in the summer months. Compost enriches the soil and mulch cools the ground while retaining moisture.

**Habela-Olson/Habela Garden**  
**(Linda & John)**  
**1127 N 400 E, Chesterton**

**Islands of Beauty**

Islands of native flowers, a variety of shrubs, trees and evergreens of unusual shape and color, plus focal points of sculpture, invite you into this mecca of stately trees. Over 4 acres of delight await you. See the millstones, set on strong concrete foundations, and metal art done by the homeowner. Lots of open lawn frames the bits of color and moves you through the property. Start on the lawn parking area, visit the front island beds, travel toward the house and continue your journey from one fascinating garden bed to the next. **1)** Along the front drive are border gardens of native perennials; *Monarda*, sometimes known as wild bergamot (*Monarda fistulosa*), and *Liatris* are all edged by larch trees (*Larix laricina*).

Visit the back and be delighted by two private patios surrounded by boxwood on the north and sitting adjacent to tricolor beech (*Fagus sylvatica* 'Tricolor') on the east. **2)** Sadly the beech was recently diagnosed with woolly aphids infestation. This disorder is on assault in our area. Be on the watch for it. **3)** Along the eastern back border sits an unusual seven son tree (*Heptacodium miconiodes*). Its beauty comes from a late-summer white bloom, made of seven clusters, and oddly shaped stems and branches. The flowers fade and a pink sepal remains, making the plant appear to bloom again. Lastly, don't fail to appreciate the studio where our homeowner creates the sculptures you see scattered about the property.

**Recktenwall Garden (Joyce & Dean)**  
**332 E 1050 N, Chesterton**

**Hosta Haven**

This amazing collection of hosta will WOW! you. Begin your journey at the driveway, following pathways around the property to the left. 'Empress Wu,' known for her record size, greets you along with 500 other hosta, 350 of those recognized in the industry. Others you see may be Olga Unregistered Hosta (OUH) or sports from known varieties. **1)** Note how these gardeners save every plant by overwintering favorites such as ferns and spike plants from years-gone-by-container arrangements, while also replanting each hosta seedling which finds its way into a crevice or path. Waste not, want not.

**2)** As you journey along the woodland path, enjoy shade natives such as Jack-in-the-pulpit, (*Arisaema triphyllum*) and bloodroot (*Sanguinaria canadensis*), while hellebores, *Brunnera*, pulmonaria, celandine poppies and many other cultivated woodland plants inhabit spaces among the hostas. **3)** Observe the many repurposed historic artifacts sprinkled about the property, adorning spots here and there, giving a bit of nostalgia to the serene setting. From a red plow to the stainless milk can near the front door to reclaimed chairs and horse hitch concrete blocks, there is a story everywhere you look. Circling the perimeter of this 2.5-acre lot, note the large vegetable area near the shed. There's room for every gardening endeavor here. Continue back through another hosta haven in the side yard, filled with...? You got it, more hosta. 'Becky' shasta daisies (*Leucanthemum x superbum* 'Becky') add a bright floral spot among the many shades of green, variegation, bright chartreuse and blues of hosta.

**Ricks-Miller/Miller Garden**  
**(Renaë & Patrick)**  
**338 E 1200 N, Chesterton**

**Live and Let live**

This is the garden of humor and delight. Making the most of gifted plants and the happenstance of nature's whims, this garden has several unique features. **1)** The homeowner shares hosta with the deer, bordering the beds with plants for deer feasting with the notion that more desired inner plants will be spared. Notice how that has worked. Begin your walk taking the pathway on the right. Viburnum first then false Solomon's seal (*Maianthemum racemosum*), native to our area, fill the woodland to your right. Continue on to see **2)** the large fallen maple which now graces a cemetery for lost pets and a place of artful solace. As a token to the importance of trees, scattered about the property are many Arbor Day tributes, native and thriving.

In the center rear, vegetable plants find a home where a trellis made of fallen Virginia creeper branches (*Parthenocissus quinquefolia*) arc. This provides stability for vining veggies. Good soil and a load of manure ensure excellent produce. Raspberry beds are nearby.

**3)** Near the barn is a field of *Liriope spicata* which makes an excellent shade ground cover. This plant spreads evenly where its counterpart *Liriope muscari* is clump forming, adding to its use as an edging plant.

Called "The Judgment-free Garden of Non-blooming Hydrangeas" by the homeowner, appreciate the making of lemons into lemonade.