



My Landscaping Success: Henk and Vivian de Visser of Dadeville put their landscaping on the right track

Published: Sunday, November 13, 2011, 6:30 AM



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By



An 80-by-80-foot vegetable garden was transformed into two miniature villages with a river, waterfall and battery-operated train. (Special)

Reason for relandscaping

Henk and Vivian de Visser of Dadeville, which is in Tallapoosa County, had the idea to build a railroad garden about 7 years ago and started working on it 5 years ago. They wanted to add an interesting element to their eight-acre yard, and they both enjoy gardening.

Contractor or designer

The de Vissers did the work themselves.

Changes made

An 80-by-80-foot vegetable garden was transformed into two miniature villages with a river, waterfall and battery-operated train.

Railroad

Henk laid the steel track, which is mostly on a bed of gravel and stays in the garden year-round. The train is limited to up to eight cars because more would cause a derailment.

Dadeville village

Vivian thought the train needed a village. She used acrylic paint on stepping stones to make them look like buildings in Dadeville. She started with Moore's Hardware, Valentine's Grocery, then the jail and then decided to paint the



stones to look like Dadeville in the 1900s. She used old photos as her guide. She has painted about 30 stones and plans to paint more.

Vivian painted stepping stones to look like buildings. (Special)

Gottschee village

After painting her Dadeville village, she decided to pay tribute to her mother, who died a few years ago, by painting Gottschee village, which is the Austrian village where she was born. Vivian's mother lived with the couple for eight years and she enjoyed the garden. Vivian has painted three upright stepping stones to look like buildings and several birdhouses to make them look like barns and stables.

Water elements

The train travels over a stream, which the couple call Vulcan River because they have made many trips to Vulcan Quarry in Sylacauga for supplies for the railroad garden. Vulcan River comes out of an ornamental koi pond, which is adjacent to the back deck, recirculates and is pumped back into the pond by a waterfall. The pump spins 4,500 gallons of water per hour. There is also another koi pond on the side of the home. The pond in the back has 3,000 cubic feet of water and the other pond is a little smaller. The ponds are about 4 feet deep. Two fountains, one with a boy and girl holding an umbrella and the other a girl holding an umbrella, accent the landscape and are surrounded by flowers.

Landscaping

Miniature plants such as bonsai maples are found in the villages. Two acres are landscaped and include the garden. The other six acres are for 20 breeding sheep, six lambs, one ram, the great-grandmother of the flock and one donkey. The couple have had as many as 120 in their flock. Behind the villages is an orchard of peaches, pears, apples, blueberries, plums, cherries, figs and grapevines.

Village people

What's a village without people? The population in the villages is approximately 100, where store-bought miniature people made to scale reside. Four cats, two border collies and one hound mix have injured about 20 other village people, but Vivian says she has them in her "hospital" for rehab.

I am proud of this change because

"The pleasures that it brings everyone who comes here," Vivian said. "It's our little retreat." She said her children, grandchildren and everyone else who sees it just loves it.

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