

Crashers: Couple convinces TV show to transform their backyard

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Jenelle Koren, a cousin of Jason's, flew in from Scottsdale with Julie Rohlfling, a good friend of Amanda's who lives in Phoenix. The two became friends after meeting at the Jakoviches' wedding.

"When they called we decided to come. We knew it would be fun. I love doing this kind of work," Koren said.

Rohlfling said volunteers removed sod, rolled it up and hauled it away.

"We got dirt in our shirts and hair," she said. "We're grunt laborers. There's not a more deserving family. It's so much fun. I like building things and seeing the outcome."

At one point Hassan gathered the troops, telling them to clean up the property and then make a human chain for passing materials.

"Contractors aren't used to working with laymen," he said. "My job is to make sure the homeowners break a nice



PHOTOS BY MARK BLACK/mblack@dailyherald.com
Designers Michael and Lori Anthony of 1 Design Group from Clarendon Hills show the plan they drew up. At right, Julie Rohlfling and Jenelle Koren flew in from Arizona to be part of the project.

sweat and have fun."

Jason Jakovich, who played football at Southern Illinois University, is regional marketing manager for the Cadillac brand. His wife works for an advertising firm.

Now a few months after the project is finished, he says it worked out great.

"Definitely the best part is the outdoor fireplace and entertainment center with

television and speakers and the pergola," he said. "It's wonderful to sit back out there and relax and eat with family and friends. The kids use it, too. 'Ratatouille' and 'Finding Nemo' are on the television as much as sports are."

Jason Jakovich recently stained the fence, a chore that reinforced for Amanda how much the crew got done in two long days.

"He thought it would take one day and it took five. And the gas grill is connected to our gas line. The first time I went to use it, I went to get a lighter. My husband said, 'Honey, what are you doing?' You just push a button and it goes on. There's also a refrigerator on the island. They paid so much attention to details with the patio furniture and the pots for plants. It's beautiful."

But there is payback, of course. "Jason will always have to come to our house when we need something," said Max Ziesmer of Joliet.

And 4-year-old Jake, the oldest of the couple's three children, thinks something is still missing.

"He asks where the swing set is," Amanda Jakovich said. "I tell him we're still working on that."

Contributors

1 Design Group, Inc., which provided the design and project management for the "Yard Crashers" project, listed these major contributors:

- **Stanulis Architects:** Construction documents and creative input
- **Greenwise:** Planting
- **Chicago Soundworks:** Outdoor entertainment system, including television and surround sound
- **Lester's Material:** Fireplace, patios, built-in grill and fridge, seat walls
- **American Finishers:** Pergola
- **Magic Irrigation:** Irrigation and lighting
- **Lurvey's:** Plant material, including trees set in with a 60-ton crane
- **Winston Furniture:** Outdoor furniture

Home and garden calendar

Seminars, workshops, events

• "Tots and Trucks," 1-4 p.m. Saturday, Aug. 6, Knupper Nursery, 1801 N. Rand Road, Palatine. Police and fire vehicles, dump trucks, forklifts, bobcats and more available to view, climb in and interact with. Free. (847) 359-1080.

• "Succulent Container Workshop," 10 a.m. Saturday, Aug. 13, Knupper Nursery, 1801 N. Rand Road, Palatine. Clay bowls will be planted with an assortment of colorful succulents, which are gaining in popularity because they are nearly indestructible. \$45. Pre-register by calling (847) 359-1080.

Tours, walks

• Explore Ball Horticultural Company, 622 Town Road, West Chicago, 10 a.m.-4 p.m., Sunday, July 31. Part of Garden Conservancy's Open Days Program. Gardens at Ball open to the public for one day only to benefit The Garden Conservancy. No reservations required, rain or shine. Usually reserved for the wholesale customers of the 106-year-old Ball Horticultural Company, get a behind-the-scenes view of 10 acres of annual, perennial, container and native plantings. Guides will be available throughout the day to give garden tours and answer questions. \$5 per person; ages 12 and under free. See opendaysprogram.org.

• Cantigny garden tour: Roses, 11 a.m. Tuesday, Aug. 2. Craig Myrwood will lead easy-paced walk focusing on the rose. Departs from Visitor

Center. Free with paid parking (\$5). Cantigny Gardens, 1S151 Winfield Road, Wheaton.

• Cantigny Tips & Tastes in Idea Garden, noon, Tuesday, Aug. 3. Liz Omura gives advice, a new recipe and plant chatter. Bring a lunch. First and third Wednesdays. Register at cantigny.org or call (630) 260-8162. Free with paid parking (\$5). Cantigny Gardens, 1S151 Winfield Road, Wheaton.

Morton Arboretum

The following events are scheduled to take place at the Morton Arboretum, on Route 53 at I-88 in Lisle. For more details including admission rates, see mortonarb.org or for classes, go to mortonarb.org/education.

• "Nature Unframed: Art at the Arboretum," Through Nov. 27. Eleven renowned artists from around the world create art to exist in and among the trees. Pieces include a dead tree completely bound in bright yellow cotton, one where branches poke through a "canvas" and a tree covered in crocheted pieces representing lichen, fungi and algae living symbiotically.

• "Jens Jensen: Landscapes for People, 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Tuesday-Friday and 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Saturday through Sept. 1. It features landscape drawings, archival photographs and modern color photographs to introduce visitors to Jensen's philosophies. The exhibit demonstrates how Jensen's naturalistic, prairie-inspired

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Tall perennials add needed structure

BY DIANA STOLL

The Planter's Palette

We've all heard about the importance of "good bones" in a garden, of using plants with lofty stature to define structure and form in a perennial border.

Large plants create a vertical profile in a landscape. They create silhouettes of leaves against sky in the landscape. Frequently, shrubs and small trees are chosen to accomplish this task, but don't forget about the structural qualities of herbaceous perennial giants.

Some gardeners shy away from tall perennials in their plans. They fear they will have to stake them to keep them from flopping about the garden. Certainly there are some high maintenance perennials in the 4-foot-and-taller category, but there are also plenty of beautiful tall plants built to withstand our tough northern Illinois storms. They remain defiantly upright with little intervention.

Another advantage to tall perennials is they generally bloom later in the mixed border because of their extra growth. They burst into bloom once their full height has been achieved and add color to the garden when it's needed most. And choices exist for both sunny and shady gardens.

Some of these structural perennials are most attractive when massed, while others can stand alone as specimens. In general, the more substantial

Art in the garden

and dense a large plant's form, the more likely it can succeed solo. Large perennials with open structures or lacy foliage usually look better as part of a grouping of several plants.

Some of the best structural perennials for full sun can be found in the ornamental grass group. Ranging in height from 4 to 7 feet, grasses add height without bulk, swaying in the slightest breeze. Grasses in the Miscanthus family display attractive seed heads as the summer color palette fades for most perennials.

Like grasses in the Miscanthus family, those in the Panicum family reach impressive heights, but if you want a grass that towers above the rest, choose either Miscanthus floridulus (Giant Chinese Silver Grass) or Erianthus ravenne (Plume Grass).

If you want to achieve an old-fashioned look, hollyhock varieties are a natural choice. Often exhibiting biennial tendencies, hollyhocks reliably reseed. The thick, almost woody stems of hollyhocks are strong enough to support their glorious flower display, rarely

requiring staking.

The shrublike form of Boltonia is composed of fine-textured, blue-green foliage covered with an abundance of tiny, white daisylike flowers in late August. Another late bloomer is Eupatorium maculatum, or Joe Pye weed. Many cultivars are available, all with thick stems that stand straight without staking.

Heliopsis and Helianthus varieties are not only tall; they bloom a long time, too. They brighten the mid to late summer landscape with brilliant gold daisies. Rudbeckia "Herbstsonne" is another sunny garden presence, soaring to nearly 7 feet and covered with blossoms from mid summer to fall.

The bold blossoms of herbaceous hibiscus add a tropical flair to the garden. These shrubby plants are late to appear in the spring but quickly grow 4 to 6 feet tall. There are varieties available blooming with white, pink, red and lavender flowers.

Persicaria polymorpha, commonly called fleece flower, boasts plume-like flowers July through September. A single specimen of this perennial is a fine garden accent.

If you need tall perennials for a shady situation, check

out Aruncus dioicus, or goats-beard. It resembles an astilbe on steroids — the same lacy foliage and fluffy flower spikes in exaggerated size.

If your shade garden has consistently moist soil, plant one of the beautiful varieties of Ligularia. The showy golden spires of The Rocket can reach as high as 4 feet. Or choose Filipendula "Venusta Magnifica." It has coarse leaves on robust stems that are topped with soft pink flower plumes.

I love Thalictrum rochebrunianum. Its foliage looks like an oversized columbine, and their flowers are small, sweet and lavender. Another meadow rue, Thalictrum flavum glaucum, has cool yellow-fringed flowers. These fine-textured plants look their best when they are planted in mass.

Consider using some of these big beauties in your perennial borders. The only thing larger than their stature is the burst of color they provide in your landscape.

• *Diana Stoll is a horticulturist and the retail manager at The Planter's Palette, 28W571 Roosevelt Road, Winfield. Call (630) 293-1040 or visit planterspalette.com.*

Riggenbach: Coneflowers colors vary

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I appreciate, with drooping, pale-purple petals and narrow leaves.

Another one of my favorite species (*E. paradoxa*) is called Ozark coneflower, Bush's coneflower or sometimes just yellow coneflower. It looks like a typical purple coneflower except for its yellow blossoms. Despite being native to central Missouri, Ozark coneflower has proved to be just as cold-hardy as the more common purple species.

Coneflowers grow well in full sun or partial shade and in any well-drained soil, from clay to sand. While the plants stage their best performance with adequate moisture, they can sail through a drought unscathed like many of our prairie natives.

Pests and diseases are seldom a problem but if you see a distorted plant with light-green leaves, a branching top, and few flowers, discard it before insects spread this virus-like disease to your healthy coneflowers.

• Write to Jan Riggenbach in care of the Daily Herald, P.O. Box 280, Arlington Heights, IL 60006. Please enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

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