

## the never-ending story

Charlotte Woodward is a true believer in the old adage that "nothing is permanent but change." She has nurtured her garden since she and her husband, Jack, moved to their home in 1963. It has been transformed many times to meet their changing needs and desires. "A garden is a living thing," Charlotte says, "and it's never really finished. I always keep a list of things I want to do the next time we redo the garden."

When Charlotte and Jack moved into their home in Orange, California, it was new and the yard was made up of "a lot of dirt and a few weeds." But the couple loved gardening, and it wasn't long before they had planted a wonderful collection of trees and shrubs that thrive in the Southern California climate. *Eucalyptus*, *Podocarpus*, and bottlebrush (*Callistemon* spp.) provided good structure for the new garden, and Charlotte soon added other drought-tolerant beauties in a rose

garden and a collection of succulents, which she kept in pots.

But in 1991, the Woodwards felt the need for a serious landscape revamping. Their goals were to make the garden easier to maintain and to incorporate the principles of naturalistic plantings and organic gardening, ideals that had become more important to them. They also wanted an area where they could sit and enjoy the fruits of their years of labor. They hired landscape architects Frederick Lang and Elizabeth



Leland. Together, they created a plan that added beauty, comfort, and integrity to the garden.

One important addition was an automatic irrigation system, eliminating the chore of dragging hoses across the yard. Installing brick walkways made access to the garden easier, and a brick patio gave Charlotte and Jack a new place to sit and enjoy the garden. A small slope was terraced, and retaining walls were built to create level beds. An attractive privacy fence

successfully blocked the view of the alley at the back of the property.

Even though Charlotte was thrilled with the changes, she kept making notes about how to make the garden even more enjoyable, and in 1995 she was ready to fine-tune it once again. Lang had retired, so this time she worked only with Leland, who reduced the size of the back lawn by creating a low-maintenance perennial garden. Leland eliminated the "Victory garden" vegetable patch that Jack and



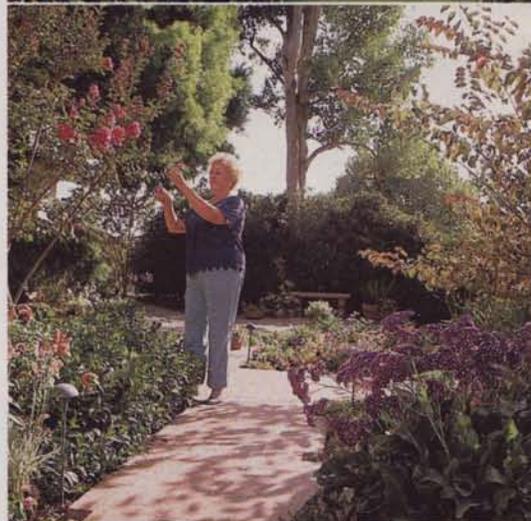
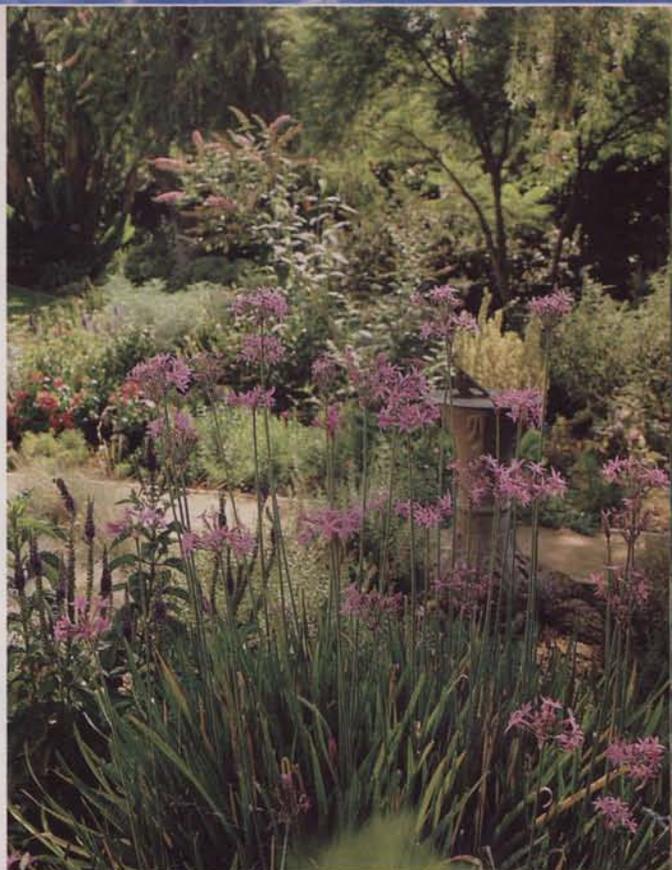
## the basics

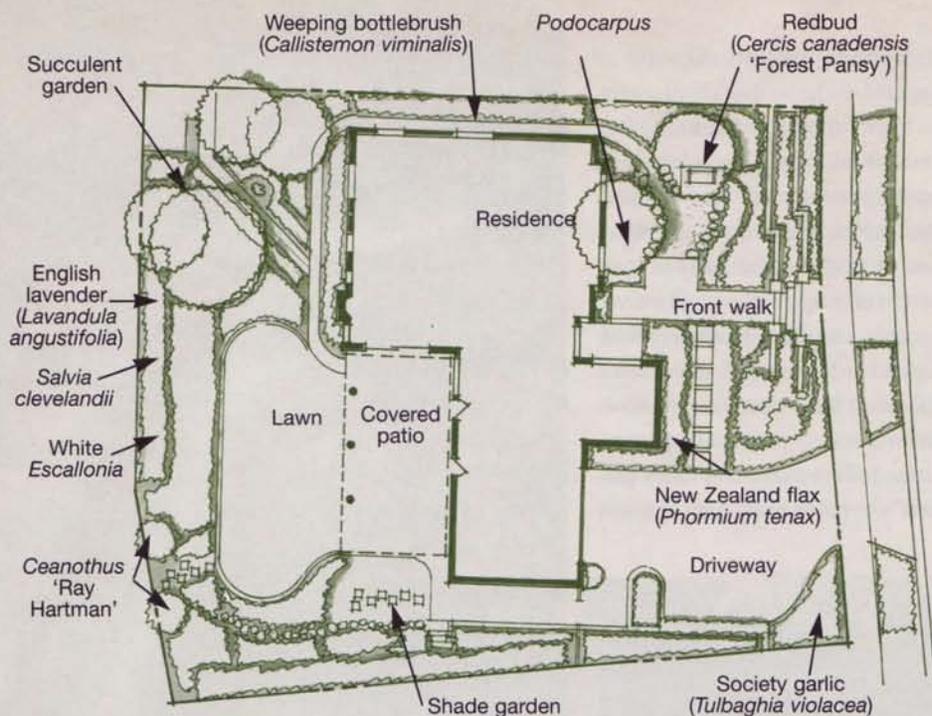
**Orange, California**  
**Zone 9**

**Problems:** House (constructed in 1963) had no landscaping; owners wanted drought-tolerant plants; garden needed fresh, updated look.

**Solutions:** First plantings were drought-tolerant trees and shrubs, followed by a series of garden revisions to match the couple's changing gardening needs.

**Left:** Extending the length of the house, this handsome pergola was once covered with a large wisteria vine, but it became a maintenance problem, so it was replaced with a light shade cloth. **Top right:** Charlotte continually works on making her garden easier to maintain and includes many plants that bloom freely but do not need much pruning. The bright purplish blossoms of society garlic and the long, cascading blooms of butterfly bush (*Buddleia davidii*) fit this description beautifully. **Above right:** Charlotte Woodward loves working in her garden, but only on her own terms. If a plant takes more than its share of time and trouble, she's not shy about replacing it. These drought-resistant crape myrtles bloom well in the Southern California heat. **Right:** Although Jack Woodward says he enjoys putting in the garden, he's quick to give Charlotte most of the credit. "She does about 95 percent of the work," he says. "I just enjoy it."





Charlotte seldom used and made easily accessible storage space. She took out the front lawn, putting a new front patio and walkway in its place. She planted large redbuds (*Cercis canadensis* 'Forest Pansy'), which have purple blossoms adorning the branches in spring and purple leaves throughout summer.

Charlotte has made the garden her life's project. When things don't

work as she envisions, she's not shy about making changes. When lilies and trailing *Gazanias* grew so fast they needed constant attention, she pulled them out and replaced them with slower-growing plants. When the flax lining the paths began to spill over and interfere with walking, she removed them, too.

The garden today is a glorious oasis of colorful blossoms. An

abundance of walkways created out of brick, concrete, aggregate, and stone make every inch of the garden easy to reach. Brick borders keep the beds looking well-defined, and a pergola provides a cool, shady area for plants and people. A stone retaining wall in the succulent garden creates a raised bed that makes it easy to reach the plants. Everywhere benches, chairs, and seats make perfect spots for resting, dreaming, or planning.

Charlotte, who grew up near an orange orchard, holds a special place in her garden for a Eureka lemon tree and Valencia and navel orange trees. "I wouldn't feel at home without a few citrus trees in the backyard," she says. But in this garden, one never knows. If Charlotte can find a better way to get fresh-squeezed juice, her next garden makeover might make even her precious citrus trees a little nervous. After all, gardens are complex, ever-changing labyrinths posing new questions every day, and Charlotte is always up for a good brain-teaser.

For Resources, see page 114.  
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 Landscape architects: Frederick Lang (retired) and Elizabeth Leland, Private Gardens  
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## into the future

Not many gardeners share Charlotte's ability to plan for the future of their gardens. Too many of us plant trees, shrubs, and a sprinkling of flowers and expect it to look the same year after year. But the march of time inevitably brings changes to these living plants. To make sure your garden continues to fill your needs and desires year after year, consider the following:

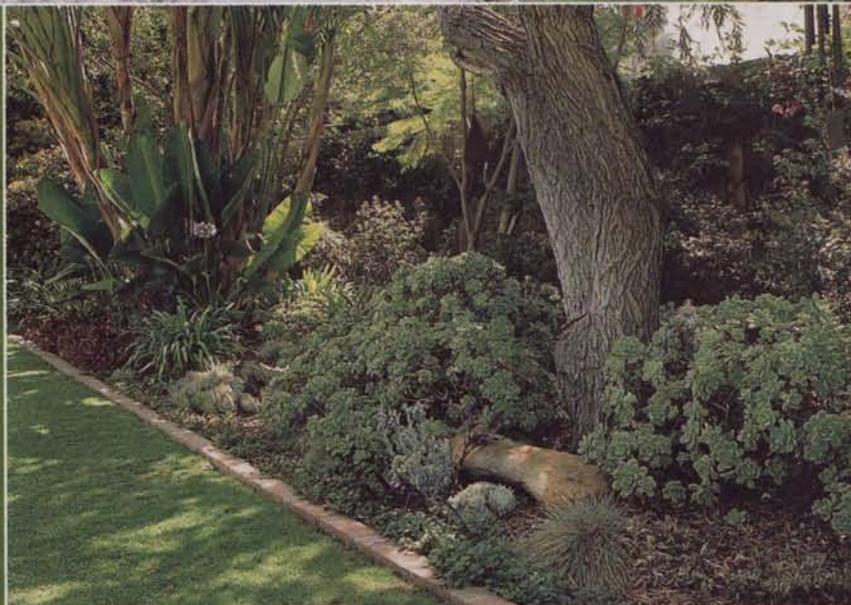
■ **Keep a notebook of ideas.** As you work or sit in your garden and thoughts come to you, jot them down for future reference.

■ **Don't be shy about making changes.** As your time and interest in the garden change, alter your landscape to keep up. If you've just retired and want to spend more time in the garden, indulge in some high-maintenance plantings. If you've just gone back to work and your free time is scarce, find low-maintenance plants to use in the landscape.

■ **Be realistic about your physical abilities,** both now and in the near future. If it's hard on your back to bend over for long periods of time, install raised beds to make it easier to weed and tend to your plants. If you can't reach quite as far as you used to, install paths and stepping-stones for easier access.

■ **Learn about plants** before you make a final decision to plant them. Consider their full mature size and their requirements for pruning, watering, fertilizing, deadheading, etc., before purchasing them.

■ **Make your garden work for you** rather than the other way around.



**Opposite left:** This Argentine trumpet vine (*Clytostoma callistegioides*) produces pairs of bell-shaped blossoms in spring, then forms fruits with prickly outer coats. **Opposite right:** Even past its prime, the kangaroo-paw plant (*Anigozanthos* spp.), an Australian native, lends rich golden tones to the garden. **Top:** A profusion of benches makes the Woodward's garden wonderful for relaxing. Although this area was at one time a grassy lawn, the couple tired of mowing, watering, and weeding, so they replaced the grass with stone and aggregate and added more planting beds. **Above:** A large bottlebrush tree (*Callistemon* spp.) on the right creates a shady haven in the garden. Brick edging keeps the Bermuda grass in its place, allowing a border of succulents to grow and bloom underneath the trees. The white bird-of-paradise to the left (*Strelitzia alba*) produces a large white flower, but the plant can grow up to 30 feet high, making the flower difficult to appreciate at that height.