





© LESA KNOLLENBERG

Monona Blooms

ONE COUPLE'S PASSION FOR WATERFRONT GARDENING

BY LESA KNOLLENBERG
PHOTOGRAPHY BY CLINT FARLINGER UNLESS NOTED

Nestled in a quiet cove in Monona, Dr. Mike Beyler, D.C., and his wife Lynn live in a lakefront home that combines simple lines and familiar warmth. Outside, their gardens form paths with flowers and plants that accentuate the stunning view. Meet the local couple who use gardening as a way to relax, spend time together and create the perfect lake setting.



The Beylers use classic daisies in gardens and cut-flower arrangements. Their simplicity and symbolism for a fresh start make them a favorite in wedding bouquets.

The front path leading to Lynn and Mike Beyler's home on Lake Monona is lined with color. Attention-getting flowers hug the walkway and lead visitors to an entryway that is both welcoming and fragrant. As the garden plot widens, hydrangeas and roses provide a striking contrast to an otherwise dreary day.

Inside the Beyler home, an expanse of windows showcases Lake Monona's cozy bay. The view is highlighted by the sweeping curves of gardens in the back yard, as well. Annuals and perennials combine to create a garden that appears effortless, but is the culmination of years of trial and error.

Lynn Beyler is the first to admit that her gardens are fertile ground for horticultural creativity and investigation. "We experiment. Each Saturday I go to the Farmer's Market and bring home something new to try. We try things next to each other, see how the flowers get along. See how they like where they are. If they don't look happy, we'll try something else. Mike will be the first to admit that he's afraid when I go to the Farmer's Market."

Once home, Beyler uses her years of experience as a florist to visualize the results, and asks Mike to grab his shovel. "My husband is the gardener," she admits with a laugh, "although I'm the choreographer."

It's clear that the division of labor is working. The Beylers have created a back yard sanctuary that helps build relaxation into their routine. "The highlight of our lake living is definitely the summer," Beyler says. "At the end of the day we grab a cocktail, take a garden walk and talk to everybody." By 'talk to everybody,' Beyler means, of course, the flowers and plants. She laughs again. "They all have personalities," she explains, "and we need to check in with them, to see if they're happy."

The back yard hosts a view of the State Capitol, Monona Terrace and Lake Monona. "Some nights, as the sun is setting, the reflection of the sun off the buildings in downtown Madison makes it look like Madison is just on fire. It's amazing. It's one of my favorite things about living here."

Another advantage to lakefront gardening is the immediate access to water. Since the Beylers travel often, they needed a system to keep a consistent amount of moisture in the soil while they were gone. To avoid returning to wilted flowers, a ground system was installed, where water is pulled from the lake and pumped back into the ground with an irrigation system.

Although it takes a great deal of maintenance, Lynn Beyler knows that flowers are worth the effort, and finds ways to enjoy blooms



Zinnias, the workhorse of all flowers, are annuals that provide splash and color to any garden. They do well among perennials, require little maintenance, and their long stems make them popular in bright summer arrangements.

Double-flowered roses take the classic, venerable rose and add volume. The Beylers' walkways are sprinkled with these beautiful roses, providing a lush entrance to their lake home.





Beylers' Monona Bay view of the Madison skyline is framed with flowering hostas and arbor vitae.

outside of her garden. “My kids and grandchildren laugh because I always have to take a bouquet of fresh-cut flowers up to our cottage,” she says. She has helped numerous brides with ideas for bouquets and centerpieces, and has donated many of her cuttings to weddings, as well.

During the winter months, when the snow and ice on the lake are a stark background, Lynn Beyler coaxes a bit of color into her home. “Because I was a florist, I have a refrigerator downstairs for flowers. At the end of the spring season I buy up flowering bulbs and keep them dormant in the refrigerator. In the winter, just when I need a spot of color, I bring out the bulbs and slowly force them open. It’s nice to have blooms during the winter months.”

Once the ground has thawed, it’s back to gardening and the other items on the Beyler’s busy agenda, including time for local charities, mission trips to remote locations and a close-knit family. They have a new adventure on the horizon: retirement. After years of operating a successful chiropractic business, they have transitioned from being on the front lines to mentors, as their two sons carry on the practice. The Beylers are eager to begin their new journey, a new path that will surely be lined with colorful blooms. 🌸

