

Blooming with ideas: Tour of 7 Sylvania Township gardens offers artful inspiration



Greenery cut into the shape of a chicken rests in the garden at 2 Riverhills Lane.

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By [ANN WEBER](#)
BLADE STAFF WRITER

People who love to garden need a really good reason to abandon their yards and flower beds on a Saturday in June.

So Friends of Toledo Day Nursery has come up with seven good reasons: seven gardens from which to pluck ideas and inspiration while raising funds for the 135-year-old Toledo Day Nursery, the oldest child-care center in Ohio and fourth-oldest in the United States.

The 11th annual benefit garden tour will be held from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday at homes along Riverhills Lane off Corey Road in Sylvania Township. Tickets are \$15 in advance, \$20 if purchased the day of the event at the parking and shuttle site, Country Square at 5800 Monroe St., Sylvania.

This will be the second time that the garden tour has been held in Sylvania Township. Over the years, the tour has featured gardens in Maumee, Old Orchard in West Toledo, Ottawa Hills, Perrysburg, Eagle Point Colony in Rossford, and South Toledo.

Locations and features of the gardens on this year's tour are:

- 2 Riverhills, home of Mary Alice and Thomas Shirk: Stone steps on the southwest side of the house lead to a planting of pink roses and lamb's ears. A large perennial garden includes lilacs, iris, Russian sage, daylilies, peonies, Autumn Joy sedum, phlox, coneflowers, and Shasta daisies.
- 3 Riverhills, home of Barbara and Keith Weikel: Boulders highlight a nearby planting of burning bushes, iris, and hostas. The property includes dogwood, lilacs, and numerous perennials transplanted from the Weikels' previous gardens in Virginia, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania.
- 4 Riverhills, home of Diana and Robert Gabel: A stone walk along the northwest side of the French country home leads to an arched gate accented by a planting of Sarah Bernhardt peonies, Blaze climbing red rose, Karen azaleas, perennial geraniums, lavender, yellow magnolia, and calla lilies. Ribbons of shrubs and perennials frame a swimming pool.
- 9 Riverhills, home of Kathy and Jeffrey Bixler: A bronze statue in the backyard keeps company with perennial flowers and pines, spruce, cypress, serviceberry, viburnum, and yews. A "moon garden" features white blossoms of hostas, astilbe, nicotiana, impatiens, and lamb's ears.
- 11 Riverhills, home of Tammy and Robert Fleisher: A blend of formal and informal plantings with a tropical theme is bordered by lush woodlands. Garden highlights include perennials and annuals in jewel tones, a pool with waterfalls, and birdhouses and feeders.

- 12 Riverhills, home of Sondra and Mark Milano: Evergreens, deciduous trees, and island plantings crisscross a landscape that also features terraces framed in river rock, paths, and peripheral gardens. The plants were chosen to be especially vibrant from mid-May through late August.

- 14 Riverhills, home of Marcia and Stanley Rosol: River rock has been used to elevate, frame, and accent land surfaces. A variety of perennials and annuals provide color, texture, and fragrance. In the back of the property are woodlands and an intimate garden in a serpentine shape.

Music will be provided in some of the gardens. In addition, garden accessories, gifts, and jewelry will be for sale.

The 11th annual garden tour to benefit Toledo Day Nursery takes place from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday along Riverhills Lane off Corey Road in Sylvania Township. Free parking and shuttle service to the gardens will be available from the Country Square business complex at 5800 Monroe St. Garden tour tickets are \$20 at the shuttle site the day of the event and \$15 in advance from Barnes & Noble Booksellers, Keith Brooks Florist, Brookwood Landscape, Garden Delights, Glendale Flowers and Gifts, Ken's Flower Shops, and David Swesey Florist. Information: 419-243-2627.

Contact Ann Weber at: aweber@theblade.com
or 419-724-6126.