

## Subtitles for Gardening Amidst Shade and Wildlife Video

Hello. Today we are the Baraboo Buds visiting some beautiful gardens in our neighborhoods. Today we're at the home of Annette Halbach, and she is going to tell us a little bit about her garden. I'm Kathy Calabrese..

...and I'm Pat Taylor.

And welcome, welcome.

You do have a beautiful garden.

Thank you. It's a beautiful morning, and we lucked out this morning because I wasn't sure if the sun was going to shine. And even though we're in a shade garden, it's nice to have a little dappled light coming through to highlight some of the plants and the different variations in the foliage.

I'm sure that has influenced your plantings.

Very much so. We bought this house over 20 years ago, and this backyard area was pretty much wild. Not quite to the extent of density behind us here. But probably...well, at least a half a dozen more of these very large, very tall, pine trees, which go at least 60 foot tall. And not much but just weeds and various vegetation—undesirable vegetation—back here. And of course myself being the gardener that I am, I like to take on a challenge, and knew that someday, something would become of that space. And I have a lot of other areas within the yard too that I wanted to address. So it's been a very long, slow process, and a lot of evolution through the years, and I think we finally, I feel finally confident that I'm to the point where I like to be in the backyard here anyways.

So Annette, what were some of the challenges that you had that you didn't realize you had when you started out back here?

I think the biggest challenge was the quantity of shade. Not having really dealt with the shade like I had here. We actually took out about six trees, which helped quite a bit. But there's still pretty dense shade back in here. And just trying to figure out, okay, what can grow in shade? What really will grow? And there was a lot of trial and error with that. I mean, some of the plants that I really enjoy...I mean I love coneflowers, and sunflowers, and the bright colorful things in the summer, and that was not going to cut it back here. So, you know, kind of looking at what can I put back here that doesn't necessarily have to flower and still is going to be attractive. And to kind of take advantage of the dappled light that's back here.

Yeah, you have done a great job just with the shades of green, with the hostas and the other plants.

Yes, I love variation in greens—from the blue-greens to the bright chartreuse—which I do try to play up in certain areas where I feel the light kind of can capture that brightness of the chartreuse leaves. And then also just appreciating the really deep, dark greens, and how they can kind of help settle the mind as you're going from point to point within the garden.

Especially from your deck, you can't see all the little fine detail, but it's still very cohesive and very exciting. You want to come down and see it because of the view you get even from afar.

Thank you. The other challenge I had here, of course, is dealing with wildlife. And I enjoy it. Obviously, we've been here a long time, so you have to get to just appreciate it for what it is. The bunnies, the deer, the raccoons, woodchucks, mice, moles, voles... you name it, we have it.

And still you persist.

I persist. I persist.

The biggest thing with dealing with that is just knowing that you're not going to be able to keep every plant. Things are going to disappear, things are going to get chewed on. And you have to realize that that's okay. I mean don't get upset about it. If something's doing really well, you just use that plant in multiple places, in multiple spaces. Hostas are obviously a favorite of deer, and hostas work really well down here. So, what I have found is you just get more hostas, because you might lose three or four or five or six, but if you've got twelve or twenty, it's okay.

And you have a lot of different varieties of hostas, I see.

I do enjoy hostas. I've become more of a fan of hostas through the years, and the variations.

Is there a particular kind of hosta that you think the deer like more than others, as far as what you would avoid?

Well, I don't know about avoiding them because the deer like them, but probably using them to an extent. I have used a couple of hostas around that either the deer like and I know they're going to eat them so I have a lot of them. Or some in the very front up here, which we can look at, that are a little bit tougher. And they tend to ignore those.

Oh, well that's a good point.

So, I think if you kind of border things with those, either the tough ones that they don't like or the ones you know they're going to eat, then they're satisfied with what they get to eat, and they leave your other gardens alone.

Yeah, that's one thing, 'cause when you look online or you look in gardening books about plants that deer don't like, it doesn't really seem to hold true, in this area of the world, at least.

No, the deer will eat anything, and they especially love new growth, no matter what the plant. If it's new growth, new buds, new leaves, they're going to eat it. They're going to try it.

So what are some of the things that you do to protect the things that are coming into bloom that you really want to see the blossoms of?

I do use deer deterrent sprays, and I've tried various ones, and everyone seems to have their favorite. And no matter what you use you have to switch it up because eventually they get used to it, and they ignore, they're going to eat it anyways. The other thing I have found and someone recommended to me was the black nylon netting. It's very fine, and it comes in all different widths. And especially in the spring, I tend to fence things off, just using the garden poles and putting the fencing around with that black mesh. You don't see it from a distance, so it's not unattractive. And the deer don't see it until they're right up to it, so it kind of startles them. And they're not going to try to eat through it. So you can drape it over things, or circle around.

I was in a garden once that they'd tied line across from tree to tree and hung little bells on them, and the deer didn't like to cross the bells and the noise.

I'm sure there's many, many tricks. They say putting out soap also, but I don't know, I don't know about having bars of soap sitting all around. Have suds piles everywhere.

Well we were taken by your little adaptation here with the garden fence. It's so charming. I mean, it looks like that was the intent: to make something lovely, but actually it's to protect that little plant.

It is, and that's one that they really enjoy. I have those out in the front bed and they disappear every spring. So that's a little bergenia, and I just had the fencing and thought, "Oh, what the heck. Let's try this." So, tipped it upside down, then put the spikes into the middle, and covered it up.

I see a lot of your hostas have blooms too. I don't think everybody realizes that you can get flowers on the hostas.

Oh, and they're so wonderful. I think a lot of people just snip the flowers off thinking they're nothing but really, some hostas have beautiful blooms. I mean just this little one down in the front here. The bees love it, and it's very floriferous. I mean it's...you get a lot of flower out of that little tiny plant, and they stay for a long time. It's one of my favorites, and I use that little hosta quite a bit throughout the garden.

And the hummingbirds like those too, don't they?

They do, especially the larger ones. They enjoy the flowers of them.

Now this plant here isn't a hosta, but it has some beautiful blooms today.

It is blooming pretty well this year. Help me out here, Pat—

Bug bane...snake root...that's a native plant.

We did take out a few overhanging branches, so we got a little more light in this area, which helped with the blooms of that plant. And that one is kind of taking over that area, so I stole a little bit and I'm starting some over here.

Are there other native plants that you have in here?

I'm sure I have quite a few natives. Things that work well tend to be things that I have received from other people that work well in their gardens and most likely are natives. I have ginger root over here.

I see a jack-in-the-pulpit over here.

Oh, I have a lot of jack-in-the-pulpit. Jack-in-the-pulpit will help itself to the garden. And ferns, I've got some native ferns. Yes, there's quite a few things that are more of the native plant. The other thing, too, with plants, no matter what it is, if it isn't going well in one area, you've got to move it, try it in another area before you give up. They always say, "Three times before it's out the door". My husband always says, "Plants on wheels, plants on wheels" 'cause I'm always moving my plants around.

Very true.

Now what do you have across the back there?

That's called a porcelain vine, and that is one that your favorite, the Japanese Beetles, do like because it's a variegated leaf. But so far they haven't found it this year down here, or at least I haven't found a lot of them. I had that in another location, property that I owned in town and they totally destroyed it the one year because they do like a variegated leaf. But it's been...and I like it back here 'cause it does have that dappled look to it, and it tends to just do its own thing along the fence. Gives it a nice soft background.

Very nice.

So Annette, we talked about some of the challenges of living so close to nature. What are some of the pluses. I mean I know you have bird feeders and all kinds of stories about different wildlife that are a positive experience. Can you share some of those?

I do really enjoy our birds. We try to enhance things as best we can. I keep birds and bees and that in mind when I do my plantings. Especially the hummingbirds. And then just having a variation when I put in shrubs or trees around the yard, we try to do a nice variation. Things that are "berried": I've got a Serviceberry here. I've got a Chokeberry here and in the front. Things that are more dense, like a forsythia, and I've got a couple of willows that have just really interesting growth and a lot of density to their branching so, great for nesting for the birds. I put out feeders everywhere. My birds wait for me in the morning for my feeders. I pull them all in at night because the raccoons or the skunks will totally destroy my feeders. They topple the hooks over and take out all the bird feed or drink all the nectar or whatever. So I have to pull in all my feeders at night. So early in the morning my birds are all sitting out on my bird hooks, waiting for the feeders to come out.

Luckily you get up with the birds already.

I do get up with the birds, yeah. I'm the bird woman. As far as the deer, I think that the deer are beautiful. As destructive as they can be, we just really enjoy when they come into the yard. Especially early evening or first thing in the morning you might look out and there'll be a doe with her pair of twins. And that's great. We had one actually have her twins right out here beyond the fence one year, and that was really fun to see that. So a lot of neat things. Raccoons I'm not so fond of, but we have them. And we get an occasional skunk. We do get an occasional fox too, which is really fun.

I know you told me one year that water is one of the big ways you can draw birds into your yard without a major expense. What are some things you can share with our friends?

Oh, simply throwing a saucer out, and if you don't want to fill it all the time, that's fine. You catch the rainwater. But I try to have any little area around that'll have water. I like having multiple places with water. I usually try to keep the bird baths fairly clean, and replace that water, keep that fresh. But the birds love it and they will sit in there and bathe for, you know, 10, 15 minutes at a time. And some of them will even line up waiting their turn to get into the water. So water is a big attractant for birds and other wildlife. I will put saucers on the ground too, I don't know if you'll see them, but around in the garden I'll sometimes have a saucer here and there for water for my toads.

What about water in the winter? What do you do with that?

I do have bird heaters...bird bath heaters that I use in the wintertime. And I have one in particular that I keep right up by the back door so it's easy for me to keep it filled, and we draw birds all year with that. And the deer come in and drink from it too.

Is that electric?

It is.

I noticed on one of the bird feeding posts—the metal shepherd hooks—that you had a Slinky on it.

I did. I put a Slinky on. In fact, we've had a number of Slinkys out. We tried the plastic ones but they broke, but the Slinkys deter the squirrels from jumping up and climbing up the poles. So I don't remember where I saw that idea but—

Probably Kathy's garden.

We've shared that idea with a number of people, and it does work.

It's the only thing that I have had work. The baffles didn't work. The only problem I have, and I bet you do sometimes here, they jump from the trees.

Sure.

Well Annette, we really appreciate your sharing the garden with us today. It was so much fun.

Thank you. Well I'm glad the weather held out for us. It's been fun. It's been fun. It's a lot of years of love and labor, but you know, it's just one step at a time, and really no goal other than to eventually feel like you're there. You know, you're comfortable with what you have.

You've accomplished it, huh?

That's right. That's right.

Well thank you very much.