

## PEOPLE

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# Gardens bring joy to this Orillia area resident

One Christmas Day Glenda Bosley, who rarely sits still for any length of time, noticed that the opening in her kitchen wall would be much more useful if it was enlarged. Not one to procrastinate, Bosley got up and started to rip the wall down. Such keenness is not always appreciated at home, but Bosley's willingness to tackle big jobs is an essential ingredient in the life of a professional garden designer.

A barren yard surrounding a newly built house doesn't daunt her. Giant boulders that need rearranging, awkward slopes to be beautified, forests to be "installed," all leave Bosley unperturbed.

"Don't tell me I can't do something," she warns.

Bosley's day begins when Nika, one of three female dogs she owns (females don't lift their legs on trees and plants), wakes her between 4:30 and 5 a.m. Nika is as reliable as an alarm clock; even the time change each spring and fall doesn't throw her.

With the assistance of several cups of coffee, Bosley catches up on paperwork, designs gardens on her computer, or goes out to weed her own property where many of the plants required by her clientele are grown.

Then the day begins in earnest, with lots of digging, planting and weeding — the physical end of a multi-faceted job that requires a sound knowledge of soil and science, a sense of design, and an ability to bring to life the visions of her customers.

As far as Bosley is concerned, "anything is possible."

Bosley's preparation for the job began in childhood. A tomboy who



Kate Grigg

grew up in Vankoughnet (outside Bracebridge), Bosley liked to explore the woods and developed a strong preference for the out-of-doors.

She tried an office job after high school, but felt confined. A summer spent at a tree farm increased her devotion to things that grow, and with the encouragement of her boss, Bosley undertook a correspondence course from which she graduated as a "qualified plantsman."

Five years with the tree farm led to a position as assistant manager at a garden centre in Unionville. Bosley enjoyed the work, but intensely disliked urban living and soon returned to Orillia, taking a job with a lawn care company.

Pesticides were on the cusp of becoming controversial, but a disturbing incident compelled Bosley to take a stand on the issue. While spraying a lawn a valve let loose, forcing Bosley to shut it off by reaching her arm inside the tank of chemicals. The alert householder, a kind elderly woman, insisted

Bosley shower and launder her clothes on the premises. The quick action eased Bosley's mind, but nervous of possible health consequences, Bosley walked away from her lawn care job a devout organic gardener.

Stints with Big Cedar Estates and the Lake St. George Golf Club enlarged Bosley's experience with turf and landscape management, but often there were "too many chiefs" to please and Bosley had always been independent. Although young female garden designers were not exactly plentiful, Bosley decided to strike out alone.

She began with grass cutting, taking every job she could get, then gradually shifted her focus to her real love — gardens. It meant labouring from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. and paperwork that sometimes went on until three in the morning, but Bosley's efforts paid off and soon she was turning work down. (Like a cleaner who doesn't do windows, Bosley refuses to cut grass.)

In an uncertain, violent world, people are spending more time at home, seeking haven in their own backyards.

Gardens, whether professionally maintained or DIY, are places to relax and be at peace.

While Bosley isn't sure that gardening is a spiritual experience for everyone, she admits "You're on your knees a lot of the time."

What she is sure of is that gardening is good for you, and these days customers want all the bells and whistles.

Plant material is more varied than ever, and Bosley makes sure she keeps up with what's new and available. A Master Gardener Emeritus, Bosley delights in an-



Packet photo/Julie Langgester

Like the proverbial wise man, garden designer Glenda Bosley is early to bed and early to rise.

swering gardening questions. As a general rule she advises novice gardeners not to be afraid.

"Trial and error: If it has to be ripped out and something else planted, what's the harm?"

Although she describes herself

as "extremely happy" with her work, Bosley dreams of someday running her own garden centre.

In such a setting, not only would Bosley feel at home, she'd be able to help more people than ever to find joy in gardens of their own.