



PERSONAL GROWTH

Nurturing a new idea? Cutting away the deadwood?

Taking stock of 12 gardens he's shot over the years, photographer **Charles Mann** philosophizes that our gardens may just be our most personal spaces.

Facing page—Artist, builder, and gardener Carol Sue Thomas has used a mélange of red chrysanthemums, silver artemisia, airy baby's breath, homey chairs, and blue pottery to dress up her eclectic West Alameda portal in Santa Fe.

Right—Santa Fe garden designers Monika Hellweg and Azul Cobb paired a Japanese fountain and spiky Parry's agave then surrounded them with yellow-flowered ice plant, creeping thyme, red pineleaf penstemon, lavender, and yarrow.

Top—Russian sage and pink garden phlox make for a great combo.



first became interested in gardens in my thirties, when I came to work for Plants of the Southwest in Santa Fe. Growing, selling, and collecting wildflowers led me to a new awareness of the natural landscape and the fantastic variety of New Mexico plants. Ten years later, my decision to pursue a career in photography signaled the beginning of a long and unexpected fascination with the garden.

People everywhere enjoy gardening, and gradually develop a relationship with the patch of earth they live on and the plants that will grow there. There's something primal about it. I've frequently remarked that even a tomato plant in a tin can has a kind of cathartic power to connect us with an ineffable mystery. Gardeners may be collectors, farmers, artists, eco-pioneers, botanists, or urban planners, but their common thread is a deep yearning to connect with beauty and life energy. Years ago I wrote: "A garden is not bought, like a new car or a hat. It grows and becomes, like a child or a personality. A garden is a patient conspiracy with nature, a place as uniquely ours as the inside of our closet or refrigerator and as un-ownable as a son or a daughter."

I have often made the case that the camera can be used as a kind of garden tool allowing us to see the aesthetically charged landscape in a new way. Picture this: I go to Mrs. Smith's garden and take photos. She has lived there for 30 years, yet she can't wait to see the pictures. Why? To paraphrase Joseph Campbell, the framed collection of objects that is a photograph becomes an object unto itself and is something unique. The pictures capture an essence Mrs. Smith herself has never experienced.

Photographs have power, and gardens have a deep relation to our human nature. The camera brings them together, and it's a good combination.—**Charles Mann**



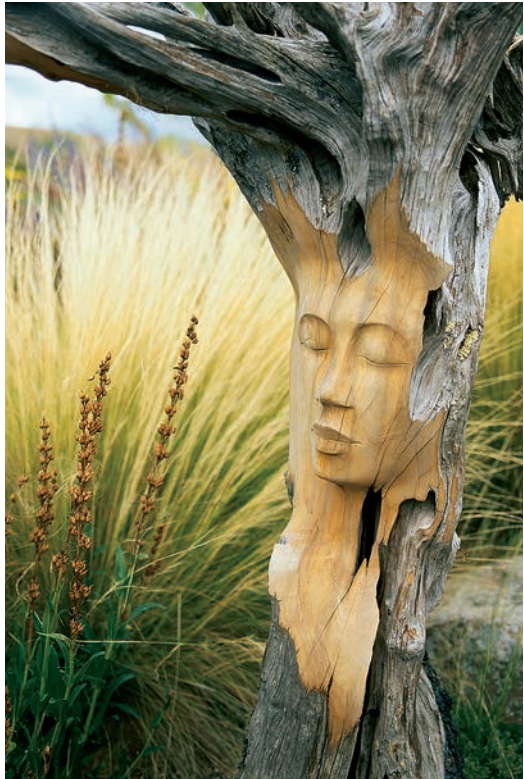
Left and below—At midsummer, Jan Barbo's La Mesilla cutting garden near Española is awash with pink garden *phlox*, yarrow, prairie coneflowers, and Russian sage, while Summer Sun *heliopsis* engulf a retired John Deere tractor, and orange trumpet vines curl around her toolshed door.

Right page—Andrew and Gay Ungerleider embellished their Santa Fe garden with artifacts from their travels.

Bottom left—In the Ungerleider garden, polished gray lingam stones from India pop from a carpet of creeping thyme, while blue oat grass is a slow-motion geyser of summer green.

Bottom right—The dreamy mood of a sculpture of Hawaiian fire goddess Pele is amplified by the wavy gauze of Mexican feather grass.

Top—Buddhist prayer flags flutter over the portal flanked by mullein, feather grass, and a lawn of drought-tolerant blue gramma grass.





Top—In Susan Blevins's Taos garden, Apache the cat surveys his kingdom of terra-cotta containers bursting with petunias. *Left*—An *horno* shares some sunshine with china-blue marguerite daisies, spiky brown rushes, delicate bacopia, and unusual pinky-purple geraniums. *Right*—A tall, yellow-blooming canna lily complements a red pelargonium geranium and a cobalt urn with white-flowering geranium and alyssum, accented by draping strands of vinca. *Below*—A hollyhock at close range.



Above, left—May is the month for wisteria in Santa Fe. *Above, right*—Towering spikes of delphiniums, limey yellow-green lady's mantle, white shasta daisies, and baby's breath create an English garden effect in the historic Canyon Road garden of El Zaguán, often attributed to the Western anthropologist Adolf Bandelier. *Left*—Luke Rader's sculpture *One Who Watches* shares the Zaplin Lampert Gallery garden with a drift of scarlet-flowered winecup. *Below*—Winecup is also known as buffalo poppy.





Left—A southside Santa Fe streetscape shows passersby how to use an adobe wall with a blue gate and a carved wooden statue to frame a splash of midsummer colors, including lavender, yarrow, zinnia, red-hot poker, and butterfly bush. *Right*—With its twigggy medieval roof, artist Carol Anthony's tiny adobe *santuario* never fails to delight visitors to her sun-drenched Santa Fe compound. *Below*—Painter Ford Ruthling put his cozy cabana amid a rowdy fluff of red-hued "floppy poppies," as he calls them. *Facing page*—Another crowd of restless bloomers—including zinnias, sunflowers, yarrow, bachelor buttons, and poppies—mix it up in a living composition created by painter James Havard.

