

# Success Stories



CHARLTON,  
NEW YORK

## Wynne Trowbridge

SO YOU THINK YOU have it tough trying to garden in the Northeast? Upstate New York may as well be the tropics as far as Wynne Trowbridge is concerned.

"Where I come from, with a 10,000-foot elevation in Breckenridge, Colo., we had a 35-day frost-free season," she said.

Trowbridge hadn't even tried gardening a dozen years ago when she moved to Charlton, a few miles north of Albany, with her husband and preschool children. A few daylilies growing under a birdhouse, left behind by her new home's previous owner, got her curious about growing plants.

"I found that any stress I was feeling inside the house would go away when I went out to work in the yard," Trowbridge said. "I just sort of added to it bit by bit."

She is, by acclaim, exceedingly modest.

"It's absolutely incredible what Wynne has achieved in her yard in such a short period of time," said her friend and colleague, Kerry Mendez (PPP Early Spring 2004). "Every time I visit she has something new. People are stunned at what a mother of two teenagers has been able to accomplish on her own."

At the urging of her admirers, Trowbridge hung her own shingle out front and opened a home-based business, Shades of Green, that specializes in shade-tolerant plants. Located on a suburban side



P.J.T.

### WYNNE'S WISDOM

- "There's no such thing as too many plants in the garden. The more plants you have, the more it crowds out weeds. If things get crowded, move them. People should never be afraid to move plants. It's a never-ending process of trial and error until you get the garden the way you like it. Even then, you're never really done."
- A devout organic gardener, Trowbridge doesn't even consider using chemicals. "Mother Nature didn't use them, I'm not going to use them," she said. "Besides, I'm on a natural well with children, dogs and chickens. It wouldn't be responsible for me to put down chemical fertilizers."

road, the business draws 10 customers on a busy day — just about the right number with go-carts, basketballs, dogs and chickens flying around the yard.

"I have the luxury of being able to do what feels comfortable," she said, standing under a prevalent canopy of native oaks and pines. "I'm able to give customers as much attention as they need, and I'm able to concentrate on the kind of gardening I really enjoy. As much as I like the bounty of rich colors in the sun garden, I really prefer to garden in the shade. I can be out here all day long and not have to worry about the hot sun."

The greatest luxury of all, she said, is not having to worry about snow from May to September.

"Back home, no one could garden without a hoop house," she said. "Some people would occasionally move things out on the porch for a few weeks, but that was about it." — P.J.T.

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