

THE GARDEN ISSUE

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**Spring's
Best!**

Beautiful Touches
for Every Room

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Spring Parties

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- Step-by-Step Garden Plans
- Best New Flowers and Veggies

Plus:

Helpful Tips and Tools
for Spring Cleaning

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The "princess and the pea" window seat, *this photo*, showcases the mismatched sensibility that's a signature of designer Lauren Liess' work, including this room in the 2011 DC Design House.

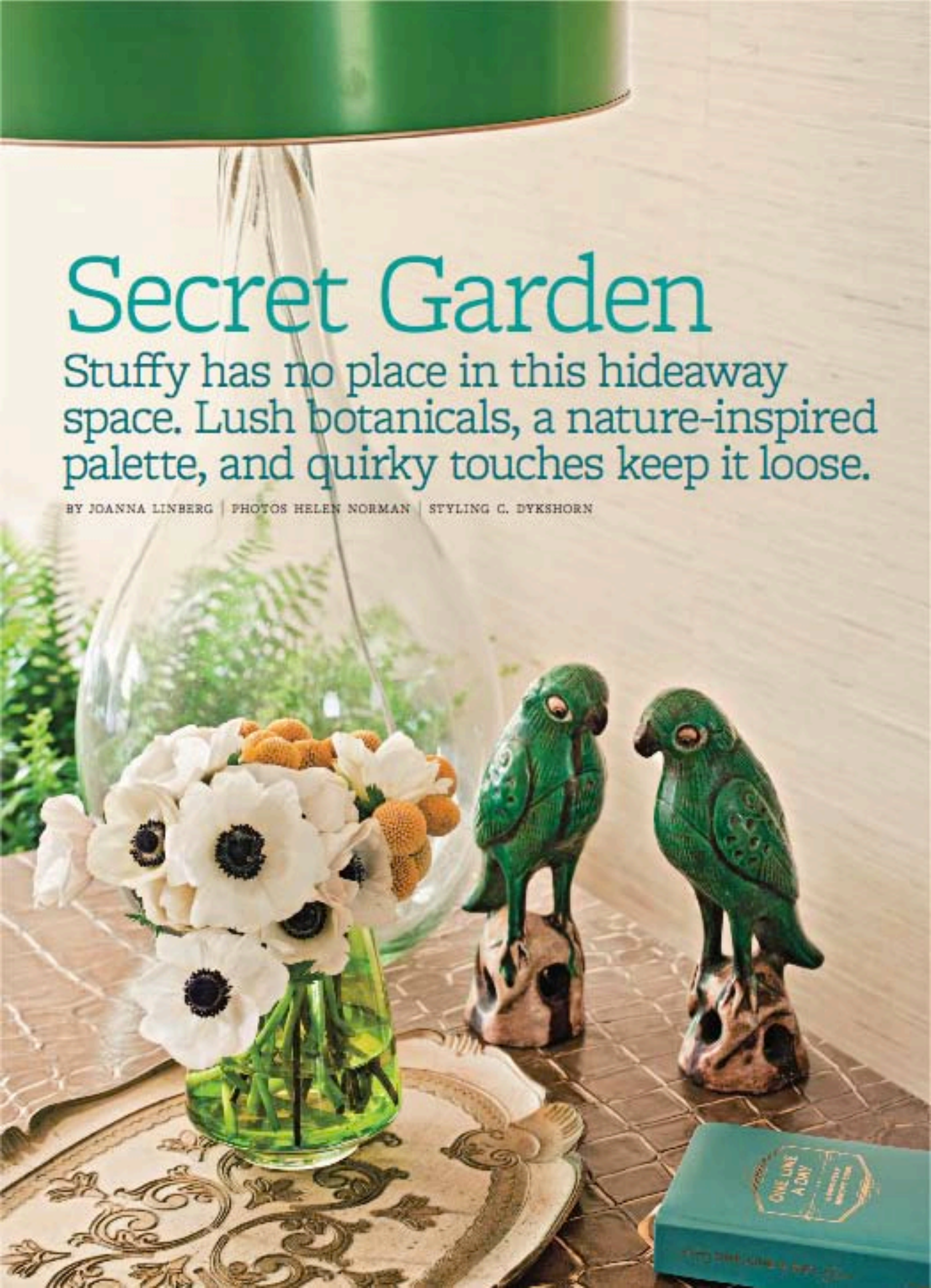
The key to a seemingly effortless style? "Mix in surprising pieces," Liess says. She found these quirky parrot figurines (actually Chinese incense holders), *opposite*, at an antiques store.



Secret Garden

Stuffy has no place in this hideaway space. Lush botanicals, a nature-inspired palette, and quirky touches keep it loose.

BY JOANNA LINBERG | PHOTOS HELEN NORMAN | STYLING C. DYKSHORN



"I knew I couldn't hide the angles in the ceiling, so I embraced them," Liess says. Grass cloth swathed over both the wall and ceiling minimizes the transition line between the two and adds textural interest to the room.



"This room is all about the windows to me, so I wanted to pull in that boxwood garden feeling. There's a hint of English style in the mix of patterns." Lauren Liess, designer

Aim for imperfection. Think you'd never hear a designer say those words? Then you haven't met Lauren Liess, a D.C.-area designer whose signature style is traditional without the starch. "I like it when rooms are imperfect and a bit 'off,'" she says.

When she set about turning this 12x16-foot room into a hideaway, Liess was inspired by the classic English boxwood garden just outside the generous bay window. She hung an oversize painting of a formal garden and filled

the room with botanical patterns using a tight color palette of greens, creamy neutrals, and black as her guide. "It can feel too stuffy if all the fabrics match perfectly," Liess says.

The furniture got the same treatment. "I consciously strive for an interesting mix," Liess says. "Traditional pieces should have more modern or sculptural pieces to play off them. Then you pay attention to both because they're so different."

Though counterintuitive, the sum of these varied parts is—dare we say it?—perfect.

Large-scale artwork functions almost like another window in the small space. Croc-embossed leather gives the familiar lines of a Parsons table new life.



See her tip in action

Do as Lauren Liess does and put a natural element in every room. Go to BHG.com/naturals for ways to use ferns, shells, and other natural finds.

Relax traditional style

A collected look could take years to pull together, or you could rely on Liess' short list of must-haves.

Multiple materials. Wooden chairs and tables, metallic lighting, glass lamp bases, leather upholstery—this mash-up of materials makes a room appear far more storied and exciting than if every finish matched.

Natural textures. "I always include these—grass cloth, sisal carpet, bamboo shades, plants—so a room doesn't feel plasticky."

Patina. Virtually every room Liess decorates includes a piece of antique furniture and an accessory loaded with character. In this room, the drop-leaf table and ceramic green parrots show their age and bring history to the room.



Best of botanicals

Floral and leaf motifs, both classic and reimagined, are back in fashion. (Did they ever really leave?) Bring a room into bloom.



Win the \$98 poster!

Enter our daily sweeps at BHG.com/winposter on April 16. See page 220 for details.



1 Black gives this print a dramatic edge. Large sunflower poster with wooden dowel, \$98; theevolutionstore.com

2 Go ahead, gild the lily (or any flower). Petal Pusher wallpaper in white/gold, \$125/roll; hyggeandwest.com

3 Painterly blossoms contain your thoughts. Botanical Journal, \$16; riflepaperco.com

4 Just as pretty on display as it is in use. L'Orangerie rectangular tray, \$44; rosannainc.com

5 A leaf for every sofa and a blossom for every chair! Southern Fragile Fern and Pink Magnolia pillows, \$100 each; oxbowdecor.com for stores

6 Tip a glass to these coffee table protectors. Botanical coasters (set of 8), \$18; riflepaperco.com

7 Page after page of gorgeous educational charts. The Art of Instruction, \$35; chroniclebooks.com

8 The garden seat that doesn't require having a garden. Lilianna Floral chair, \$380; pier1.com