



## ***"POLLINATOR CAFE" -- SUN & SHADE PLANT SOLUTIONS IN A HEIGHTS GARDEN***

**By Laurin Lindsey**

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Heavy shade had nixed a lush lawn in Sarah and Richard Doty's north-facing front garden. While grass easily took to the sunny strip that runs between the side of their home and an alley, the all-turf look was boring. When the longtime Heights residents decided it was time for a garden redo, they met in the fall of 2016 with our garden design company, their individual wish lists in hand.

Sarah wanted plants that attract birds and butterflies. She didn't spend much time in the garden, but I sensed that the right plants that thrive with minimal input would help engage her in a new landscape.

The sunny solution? A Pollinator Cafe of long-flowering nectar plants in the side garden. We removed the grass and put in an easy-to-maintain decomposed path that winds through the narrow space. The winding walk slows a visitor so nature can be observed.

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A variety of ornamental grasses, lovely in autumn with their feathery plumes, sway along the welded fence. Native plants that offer months of blooms invite wildlife; a 'Peggy Martin' rose provides a lovely pink show. Bird, bees and butterflies find a long list of friendly nectar-bearing plants in the "cafe:" possumhaw holly, 'Luzon' viburnum, buddleia, dwarf Barbados cherry, pink Turks cap, Salvia Leucanthus, coral honeysuckle, 'Copper Canyon' daisy, 'Walkers Low' catmint, pavonia (rock rose), golden thryallis and Salvia greggii. Richard wanted low-maintenance and heat- and frost-tolerant plants. He also wanted a place to display a miniature version of a Tylon and Perisphere sculpture. Indeed, a juniper and a boxwood have granted his wish.

I felt Richard's request gave me the go-ahead to be adventurous in my design. Rather than continue the struggle with a lawn, we planted waves of shade-tolerant ground covers and other shade plants in the front garden.

The shade plant standouts include an ajuga mix, sandi leaf fig ivy, 'Blue Shade' ruellia, 'Satin Check' peacock ginger, wedelia, 'Flirt' nandina, liriopse and 'Danny Dwarf' butterfly iris.



*'Blue Shade' ruellia, 'Satin Check' peacock ginger, 'Flirt' nandina, 'Danny Dwarf' butterfly iris*

Richard added a novel touch out back by painting the deck like an airplane runway.

The Dotys' new garden has faced two winters with hard freezes and the Hurricane Harvey flood, but little was lost. I'm continually amazed at the resilience of plants.

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