



INSIDE Riana's World

Tour a fanciful garden filled with mosaic art. Live up your yard, too...this reader shows you how on p. 56.

In a rolling stretch of rural Wisconsin is an unexpected garden. Once you've stepped inside, it feels 10 degrees cooler than the real world. The tranquility is so free-flowing that even the dogs don't bark.

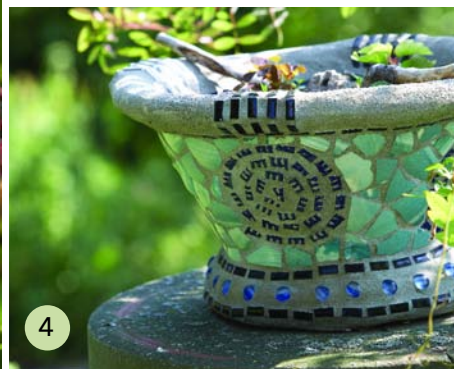
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Instead, their wagging tails lead you down pathways formed with found-object art, through off-kilter archways bent over with flowers, past bright mosaic sculptures and fountains to finally...the rustic workshop of Riana DeRaad (pictured above).

By the time you've made it there, you're ready to run away from home and move in. Riana is a petite woman defying 60 with working hands and a delightful, hard-



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1. Neatly organized tools line the walls of Riana's workshop. 2. A mosaic head sports island flair and a trailing plant. 3. Flattened spoons add a unique touch to a table. 4. A pretty planter fits perfectly into its garden surroundings. 5. A chair beckons visitors to stay awhile.

to-place accent. Her passion for this plot radiates off her as she speaks of the nearly 20 years she's put into it. "I'm an artist and a very visual person," says Riana, "but first, I'm a gardener."

Homegrown Inspiration

Dutch-born, Riana was raised in the East Indies on a coffee and rubber plantation. "My mother had these tropical gardens and of course, I was greatly influenced by the island itself: the panthers, the people, the striking, hot colors. It's all become part of my garden."

A short walk around the 2 acres confirms this. The garden is a remarkable concert of colors and texture, yet when you look closer, you see its art is made from familiar items most everyone has around or can find at flea markets. Artfully placed rocks in tree branches, old bicycles, vintage signs and rebar scraps complement the surrounding foliage.

"When I see something, say a big gear from a tractor or headlights off an old farm truck, it just stirs something in me. And I know I'll find the right place for it. I try to play the shape of the object off the shapes of my plants," says Riana. "I move it from garden bed to garden bed until it just feels right."

Trash to Treasure

Even Riana's renowned mosaic statues, which attract sightseers across the globe,

are constructed from common items picked up from junkyards and hardware stores. This includes everything from broken mirrors to china plates to flattened spoons. While most mosaic artisans use nippers, a pair of heavy-duty scissors, to cut tile into exact pieces, Riana doesn't. "I'm not like that; I just break things."

She then forms the odd pieces into such things as "the suggestion of a flower, the suggestion of an animal; it's what makes this art form so attainable."

Anyone Can Do It

Riana claims that even her large-scale projects (like the garden chair pictured at right) are an art form that anyone can learn – and the photos of students and their projects pinned to her workshop walls prove it.

The images show Riana teaching everyday gardeners how to shape the lath (a wire mesh used to hold stucco on houses) and spread cement over it. On the second day, students learn how to decorate their pieces using bits of this and that to form a pleasing mosaic, taking inspiration from all around them.

"There is always a bit of clumsiness to the work, which I love. I find perfection in the imperfection of it. Unlike clay, which you can sculpt exactly, lath will always have a mind of its own – very much like a garden. It's what attracts me to it," notes Riana.



Mosaics in The Making

Want to give it a go? Start with these helpful tips from Riana...

- If you plan to leave your mosaic container outdoors, use nonporous china or tile for your design.
- Stones and rocks add a beautiful, earthy look to planters, but don't place them too close to the top edge of the pot. They can pop off as you handle your container or as you tend to plants.

- Mirrors, pieces of glass and glints of metal, such as flattened silverware, add life and sparkle to a mosaic project – and can be obtained for next to nothing.

If you plan to use glass, purchase a glass-cutter tool, available at hardware stores or stained-glass specialty shops for around \$10.

- You can add color to your grout by mixing in an acrylic paint.

- Having your mosaic materials organized will speed up your art project.

"Whenever friends are over, we'll sit outside by the fire, and I have my sorting buckets all around me. I organize stones and pottery pieces by size and color."

- Keep the grout on your mosaic masterpiece moist as it cures. Otherwise, it might crumble on you. Lightly mist it with a spray bottle, making sure the water doesn't puddle.

- Have fun! Don't worry about making everything look perfect. Sometimes, the best creations are the result of unique imperfections.

1•2•3 project

Create this simple mosaic container

Decorated with colorful bits of tile and stone, this whimsical container will brighten up any corner of the yard. What's better is that it's easy – and inexpensive – to make. Just follow these simple 1-2-3 instructions to create your one-of-a-kind masterpiece.

SUPPLIES:

Terra-cotta pot
Tile, smooth stones, glass beads, broken china and the like
Hammer
Chalk
Nipper (optional)
Polymer fortified thin-set mortar
Butter knife
Sanded grout
Gloves
Wire brush
Cloth

budget tip

Stone, glass beads, even broken china can be used to create mosaic masterpieces.



1 Wrap a tile in a cloth, glaze side down, and strike it with a hammer. Lay out the pieces on a flat surface to work out the design and chalk the design layout onto the pot. Shape tile pieces with a nipper, if desired.

2 Mix a polymer fortified thin-set mortar with water to a peanut butter-like consistency. Wipe on the tile with a butter knife and stick on the pot, leaving a 1/4-inch space between pieces for grout. Adhere the mosaic design pieces first and then fill in the background. Let set overnight.

3 Mix a sanded grout with water to a peanut butter-like consistency. Slather the grout liberally with gloved hand over the pot's surface, rubbing it into the spaces. Wipe excess off with a cloth. Brush off grout from stones with a wire brush, then rub with a cloth to eliminate brush marks. ✨