



**BLOOMING BIZ** Aimee Peterson stands in the back door of her shop, The Antique Gardener in Sutter Creek, California. "It's my first child—going on 18 years," she says.

# HOW DOES HER GARDEN GROW?

WITH WORN SPADES AND RUSTY BLADES AND WATERING CANS ALL IN A ROW. FOR AIMEE PETERSON, ALL THINGS OLD ADD UP TO A DELIGHTFUL OUTDOOR SPACE. FOLLOW HER LEAD TO BRING VINTAGE CHARM TO YOUR PORCH AND YARD.

photos by EDMUND BARR  
words by JODY GARLOCK



**Watering Hole** Aimee decorates her porch with a collection of watering cans, some of which she still uses. "They're made better than new ones," she says. "If I have a choice between new and old, I'll pick the old one every time." The cupboard, purchased at an estate sale, provides stylish storage for outdoor supplies.

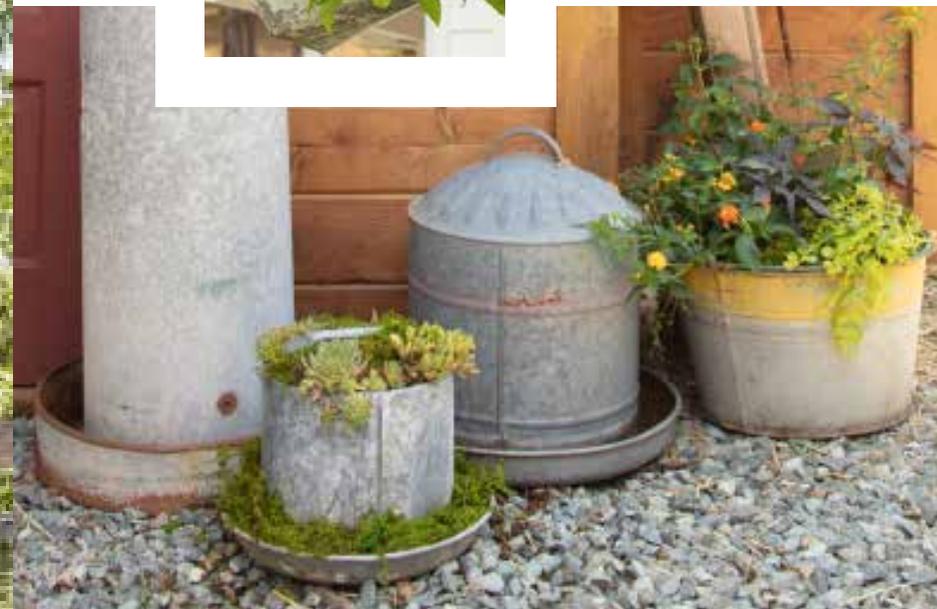
**Entry Point** A piece of architectural salvage was a game-changer for the garden's no-frills fencing. "The second I saw it, I knew it would make the space special," Aimee says. A pair of rusty metal motel chairs—one of her weaknesses—flank the doorway. Aimee scrubs them with steel wool and sprays on polyurethane to maintain the patina but make them sittable.



**Clever!**  
An old produce scale, left, is a ready-made planter. Drill drainage holes, and plant directly on the scale. Top with sphagnum moss.



**Funnel Vision** Aimee loves nothing more than "planted junk," as she calls it. She turned a large funnel, above, into a hanging basket by punching holes around the top for a wire hanger. A piece of screen placed in the stem hole prevents soil clogs while allowing drainage.

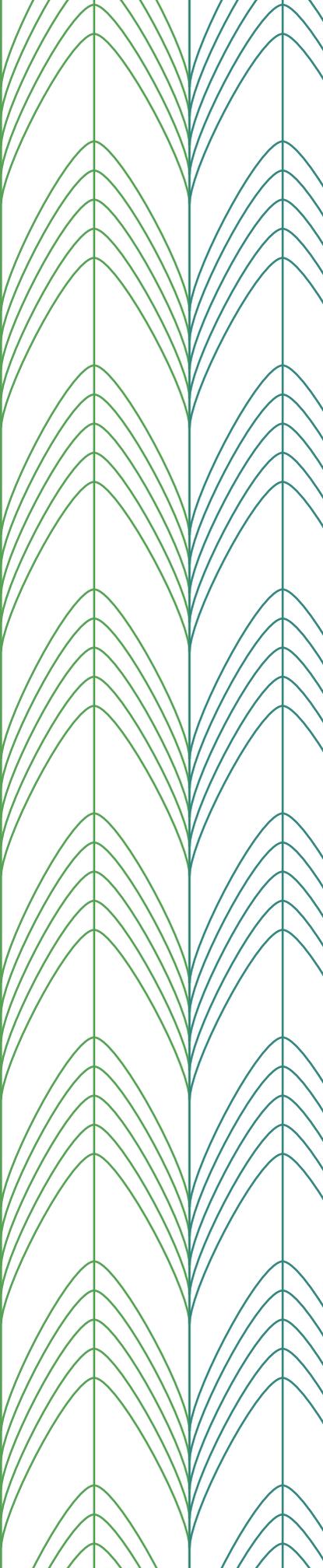


**Steely Resolve** "I love to plant in galvanized containers because they're durable," Aimee says. Chicken feeders and a waterer team up with a fruit picking bucket outside her chicken coop, above. Aimee drills or punches drainage holes in containers she plants in, then adds a layer of gravel. "The gravel keeps the holes from getting plugged," she says.

**Spread The Word** The old-time mint green fertilizer spreader, right, caught Aimee's attention at an auction, even though she was on a mission for a garden tractor. For \$5, it was hers. "I'm always looking for anything interesting that can hold plants," she says. Bonus: The holes that allow fertilizer to pass through work for drainage.



**Wash Day** "Every garden should have a sink," Aimee says of her new (old) favorite thing. Her husband plumbed the porcelain beauty, likely from the 1950s, to a garden hose faucet. A weathered wood backboard hides fencing and provides hanging storage that includes a funnel Aimee runs twine through. Her teen son made the flower from roofing tin and an old faucet handle.



**Vine Time** What do you get when you cross a well-worn shovel with a rake and a hoe? A trellis! Stick the ends of three long-handle tools in the ground about six inches so they're at an even height. Tie the tops together with twine. If you don't have climbing vines like Aimee's cucumbers, it's a rustic sculpture.



**Art Show** For Aimee, an outbuilding is a blank canvas awaiting vintage touches. Rusty handsaws and a cultivator tine form a sun (or flower) art piece screwed onto the side of an old bunkhouse. Rainy the rooster struts in front of vintage motel chairs. "They're great to mix and match—and nice extra seating," Aimee says.

### Deerly Beloved

Containers aren't just for flowers. A chipped concrete deer, *right*, nestles in a tub of ivy and creeping wire vine. "I think statuary like this looks more natural with greenery around it," Aimee says. The humble container is a repurposed washtub.

### Step By Step

Antique grinding stones, *below left*, serve multiple functions. They add character to Aimee's garden, are stepping stones on muddy days and are in-ground planters. Aimee cleverly grows herbs in the center holes. She says flea markets are the best places to find the hefty stones, designed for sharpening tools. They tend to be about four inches thick, so need to be buried a bit in the ground.

### Caged Beauty

Gobble, gobble. That's a clue to what the rusty contraptions, *below*, are. Give up? They're turkey feeder covers! Originally used to prevent the birds from walking in feeder dishes, they now protect Aimee's zinnias from her free-range chickens and deer. She typically uses them on young plants because her chickens like freshly dug areas. "The covers were getting a bit difficult to find, but now I'm starting to see them again," Aimee says.

Resources, see page 110

