

HOME & GARDEN

A room of one's own: private work spaces in

By JANE ANDERSON
The Christian Science Monitor

Virginia Woolf had one, Picasso had several, and Charlotte Brontë wished she'd had one. Many of us at one time or another probably have envisioned it: a private work space in the home.

Artists are longtime pioneers of home work areas. Today, people in many fields are warming to the idea. A home studio, workshop, or office, whether for a full-time vocation or for a hobby or craft pursued after hours, has its rewards. It not only helps to solidify commitment to a long-term goal, but also makes it easier to settle down to the project at hand.

Perhaps not everyone can have the "room of one's own" recommended by Virginia Woolf. But even the smallest studio apartment can yield at least a corner for creative work.

Choosing the right location for a home study or studio may take some thought and experimentation, especially when space is tight or several alternatives are available. In many cases, personal priorities must be weighed against family needs.

Joan Wortis, a weaver in New Hope, Pa., says her working area "grew like Topsy." At first, her working space occupied one small room and half of a larger room that also served as the family living room. But this was not the most efficient arrangement for either her family or her work, so she eventually consolidated her operations in the larger room. The small room now is used exclusively as a living room.

Since no one has to walk through the studio to get to any other rooms in the house, it can

be closed off as a separate work space. Mrs. Wortis is usually at one of her three looms by 8:30 in the morning. She works there until 5:30 and is usually back in the studio for a couple of hours in the evening. With the help of an assistant who comes in three times a week, Mrs. Wortis designs and weaves blankets and garments that are sold both wholesale and retail and at major craft fairs.

Mrs. Wortis says that with the workroom so close at hand, she never "gets away" from it: "There is always something to be done." But despite the demands of her work, her home studio allows her to be a part of family life and available when her husband or two teen-agers need her.

"Family members are welcome to come in to the studio, but I am disciplined about my time and they respect that," she says.

Pamela Painter, a published author and short-story writer, has a similar kind of discipline. When her husband leaves for work, she heads for her home office in their Boston town-house apartment.

Situated partially below street level, her study is quiet and private. Shelves and a desk area are the main features in the narrow room, which has a window at one end. Woven floor rugs, random notes dotting the walls, a small sofa, and various baskets on the floor and shelves give it a comfortable feeling.

Ms. Painter prefers the privacy of her office to her husband's study upstairs, which provides the only access to an outside deck. "He feels he has to tidy it up when guests go through," she explains. "I like to have everything out. I wouldn't want to have to keep it neat."

Being organized does not necessarily mean being neat. Her challenge was to develop a system that enables her to find what she wants when she wants it.

Ms. Painter has several projects going at once and likes to keep easy access to her various notebooks, an anthology of short stories, unfinished book manuscripts, and paper work for her editing and teaching responsibilities.

Instead of using drawers, her solution to the piles on her desk ("where nothing ever surfaces") is a system of shallow, open shelves where each project is visible, separate, and immediately accessible without moving anything else. She says this system has been a "monumental" change and recommends it to anyone who has to deal with a lot of paper.

Ms. Painter uses an L-shaped arrangement of two simple wooden tables for her desk area. There is room for a typewriter, lamp, a writing surface, and another set of open shelves, where she keeps personal correspondence and bills in wire baskets.

"People don't have to buy an expensive desk," she says.

At first, Ms. Painter used a regular four-legged chair. But she developed a "built-in winte" every time she had to make the quarter turn from her writing table to the typewriter.

"I didn't know what was driving me crazy. I had never worked in an office so I didn't know about swivel chairs."

She discovered the swivel chair idea while reading Stephanie Winston's book, "Getting Organized," along with several other ideas she says "changed my work life."

An efficient and inviting work space can be just as helpful for someone with a serious endeavor outside a regular job.

When Bonnie Lingoski comes home from her full-time job at a frame shop, her pastel work is ready and waiting in her studio.

"I can sit down and start working on it because it's set up all the time. Sometimes I have to make myself do it, but once I sit down I really get involved," she says.

Miss Lingoski says she is in her studio almost every night for as much as two to three hours. But since her work is always ready to go, she can pop in for a half hour or less.

Miss Lingoski has had a studio in every apartment she has lived in. Her present studio space is part of a five-room apartment in Somerville, that she shares with a roommate. The studio has space for her portfolios and simple furnishings, which include a long table, one smaller table with an adjustable lamp, and an overhead directional lamp. The room has good south light for the times she is able to work during the day, and a door that opens to an outside porch for the warmer months.

To keep things simple, Miss Lingoski currently works only in pastels. "I decided to stay with one medium because if I wanted to go into pen and ink or some other medium, I'd need more room and more tables."

She spends most of her time in the studio drawing, but uses it for the business end of her work as well. By setting goals for herself she is able to exhibit work in the Boston area and enter competitions.

Winter gardens need planning too

By PAT LEUCHTMAN
Recorder Columnist

It's winter and for the first time in a couple of years we have substantial snow cover. Snow can make the traveling difficult, but it is welcome all the same. We need the snow because of the drought and because of the protection it offers many crops during the long winter. And it is beautiful to look at.

At our house most of the snow-watching takes place at our kitchen-dining table which sits in front of the big south windows. We sit in the quiet of early morning over the first cup of coffee and watch the blue night give way to the first gray light of the winter morning. On winter weekends we sit and watch the noontime sparkle on our fields of snow. And at teatime we watch the shadows of the barn and apple tree lengthen until evening engulfs the whole hillside.

With such a beautiful white landscape to admire this year I've been giving some thought to the elements that make it attractive, even though it lacks the color and variety of texture that is so important in the summer garden.

People usually give a great amount of thought to the summer garden and are used to planning for effect, but it is also possible to plan a winter garden, or at least to plan the view from the window where you are most likely to sit gazing and daydreaming.

As in planning any garden, your choice of planting materials for the winter garden will depend on the exposure, whether it is sunny or shady, windy or sheltered. Perhaps there are unsightly features like basement bulk-

BETWEEN THE ROWS

heads or storage for the trashcans that you would like to hide. A hedge is a good idea in cases like these, but to be most effective the hedge should be an evergreen so that it will do its job all 12 months of the year.

In the winter garden, form is important, and certain winter trees have a heavier growth and make a more dramatic silhouette against snow or sky. The density and bulk of evergreens make a contrast to the tracery of deciduous trees.

Some deciduous trees that are particularly attractive in the winter are the pin oak, the sugar maple, the American linden and the white birch. They are all hardy in our area.

The pin oak is a tall tree and has a handsome and regular pyramidal shape. The sugar maple is most noted for its flaming foliage in the fall, but in the winter its orderly branches reach out and the light gray bark is elegant against the snow.

The American linden is another tall tree. Its vase shape has an unusual rounded top, and in the summer its greenish flowers are a great favorite with the bees.

There are isolated white birches in our pasture, and the white bark is brilliant against the blue skies or encased in ice as it so often has been this year. Many people prefer to plant white birches in clumps of two or three and this is effective, too.

Three pine tree species are handsome

additions to the winter landscape. The Swiss Stone pine is very hardy. It grows slowly and has a narrow pyramidal shape with a slightly rounded top. It has long soft needles just like the white pine.

The Korean pine is similar but forms a slightly wider pyramid. It is especially good to grow because its large edible seeds are appreciated by birds and animals.

Often the Austrian pine is grown as a Christmas tree and it has that ideal shape. It has dense foliage with long, stiff dark green needles and it is easy to grow. Few things are more picturesque than caplets of white snow adorning a dark evergreen.

There are two shrubs that make very interesting accents and conversation pieces in the yard.

The first, Siberian dogwood, is notable for its color. Its deep red stems are a striking contrast to the winter snow or against a planting of evergreens. They ultimately reach a height of 6 or 7 feet and have a simple, upright growth habit.

Harry Lauder's walking stick is as slow-growing and carefree as all the hazels, but its fantastically turned and twisted branches are sure to provoke comment. It, too, will reach a height of about 7 feet.

The winter garden is naturally simpler in design but can be just as pleasing to the eye as the summer garden. There is a subtle beauty in the play of light and shadow, the contrast between the delicate tracery of deciduous trees and shrubs and the density of evergreens. Don't write the winter garden off just because there is neither leaf nor bloom.



Recorder Photo by Chuck Blake

WINTER GARDENS can be planned to give dramatic views and picturesque contrasts.

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