

Greenfield alderman shows how his garden grows

By Karen Campbell
Press Reporter

Time is the biggest challenge, says Shane Johnson, of his commitment to his Greenfield lawn.

“You can’t skip watering, and plantings have to be done at a certain time,” he said of the hobby he equates to others’ love of golf or hunting since it requires up to an hour a day to sustain the eye-catching results.

What’s become an oasis for family and friends and a colorful landmark for passersby began in 1977, when he and wife Jan bought the Crestview Drive property.

Now, various sections of the yard reflect his varied interests. The front yard is devoted more and more to perennials such as hostas, day lilies, Asiatic lilies, phlox and coral bells. Shane says the move to the flowers that return each year is a testament to age. While he loves his time outside, as he faces retirement from Parker Hannifin in August and Jan has already retired from Greenfield High School, he is aware of physical constraints.

But a look at the newly installed flower tree of petunias, million bells, and sun impatiens suggests that what the knees and back might lack in strength, imagination more than makes up for. His one-time desire to be an art major is evident in the attention to different colors and heights. And he maintains an openness to change, advocating that a plant “doesn’t have to stay where you put it if it’s not working.”

Jan commends his ability to see things that others might not be able to see. Examples are evident



On the cover — Greenfield alderman Shane Johnson and his wife Jan at their Crestview Drive home in Greenfield.



A broken chimney becomes a water feature.



New cuttings take root at Johnson’s garden shed.

throughout the property. He turned an accident into an art project when a tree fell and knocked down an old chimney. Now it serves as a water element on the back patio which is framed by an arbor that once served as an old porch railing.

Always up for a challenge, Shane prefers growing from cuttings rather than seeds. And this year has every intention of reaping more potatoes, gourds, tomatoes, cabbage, cucumbers and carrots from his vegetable garden due to the installation of an electric fence to combat the ever-hungry squirrels who find his tomatoes equally delicious.

To stay up for the challenges, he feeds his knowledge with a steady consumption of information from sources such as books, WLJT’s Volunteer Gardener, the UT Extension system, internet searches and wandering the roads of rural Tennessee in search of interesting plantings.

“He’s been known to pinch off the ends of plants at restaurants and stop on the road to ask what a particular plant is,” noted Jan.

While Jan’s recent retirement has mostly focused on clearing out her parent’s longtime home, she says her enjoyment of Shane’s efforts comes when she takes the time to sit at their picture window and take in the many colors,

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