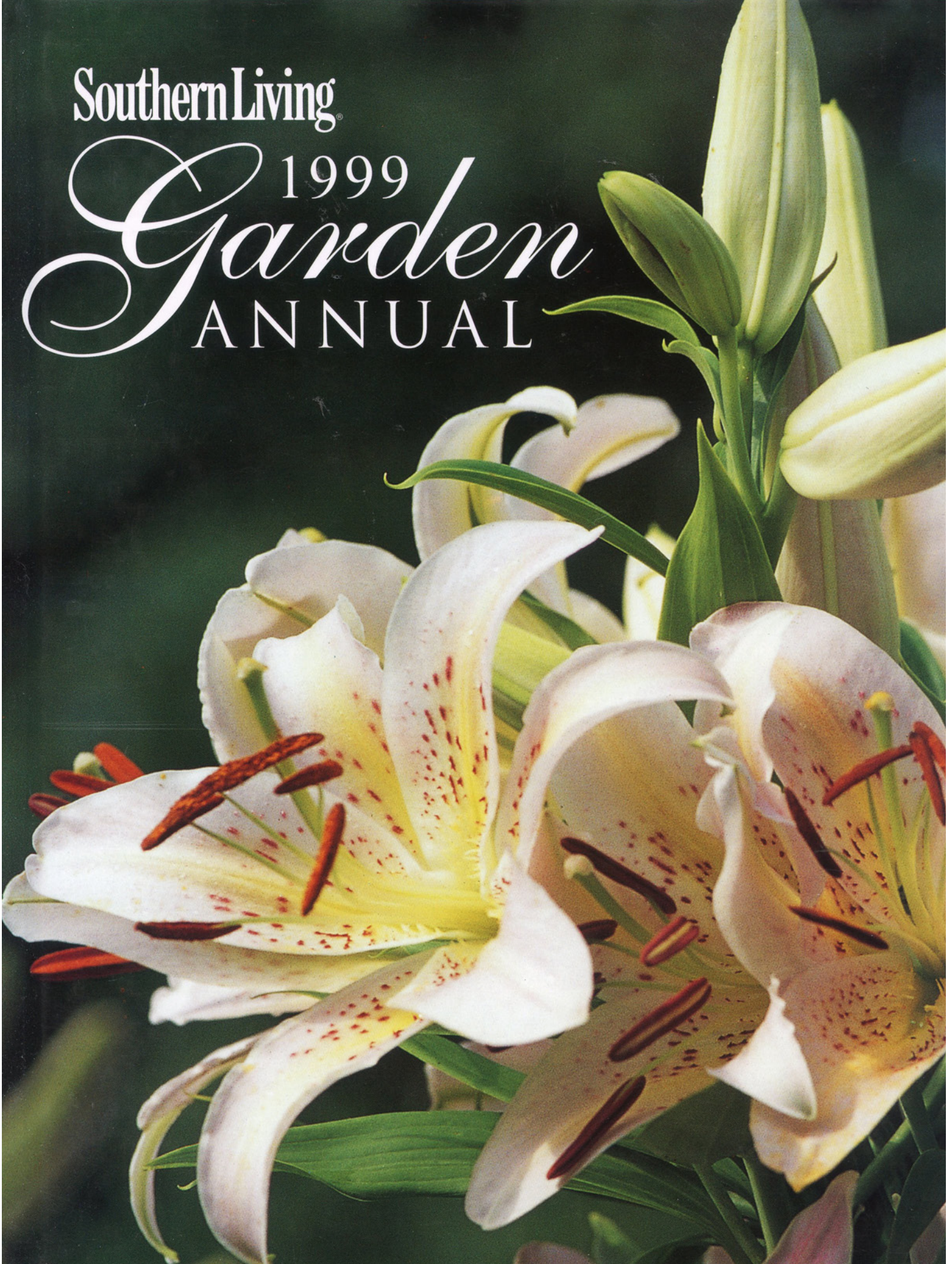


Southern Living®

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Margaret's Secret Garden

Margaret Deimling's secret garden isn't around back. It's right in front of the house. But to see it, you have to walk a few steps up the driveway. It's all part of an ingenious solution to a common parking problem.

Her previous narrow driveway ran straight into the garage under the house. Cars that pulled in couldn't turn around—they had to slowly back out. So Atlanta landscape architect Bill Smith cut into the slope in front of the house and added a turnaround and guest parking area. Then he designed a small flower garden that's the first thing Margaret sees when she opens her front door.

But you can't see this sunken garden from the street. It sits about 4 feet below the front lawn. Only the top of a brick retaining wall hints at its presence—that and the blooms of New Dawn roses peeking over the wall in spring.

Detail is everything in a garden this small. Bill didn't miss a trick.

Here are some of the highlights.

- At the head of the turnaround the brick landing ties together the retaining walls and new front steps.

- The Chippendale bench matches the porch railing. It also acts as a focal point when you look down from the top of the steps.

- Dyed concrete in the driveway complements the colors of the house while also reducing glare.

- A strong backbone of evergreen shrubs and ground covers lends year-round visual interest.

Margaret's secret garden is such a hit with her neighbors that it won't be a secret long. "We live in a neighborhood where people walk a lot," she says. "And whenever I'm out in the yard, people always stop and tell me how much they love to look at the flowers." *Steve Bender*



Imagine this much privacy without even a fence. Only the roses are visible from the street beyond. The Chippendale bench repeats the look of the porch railing.