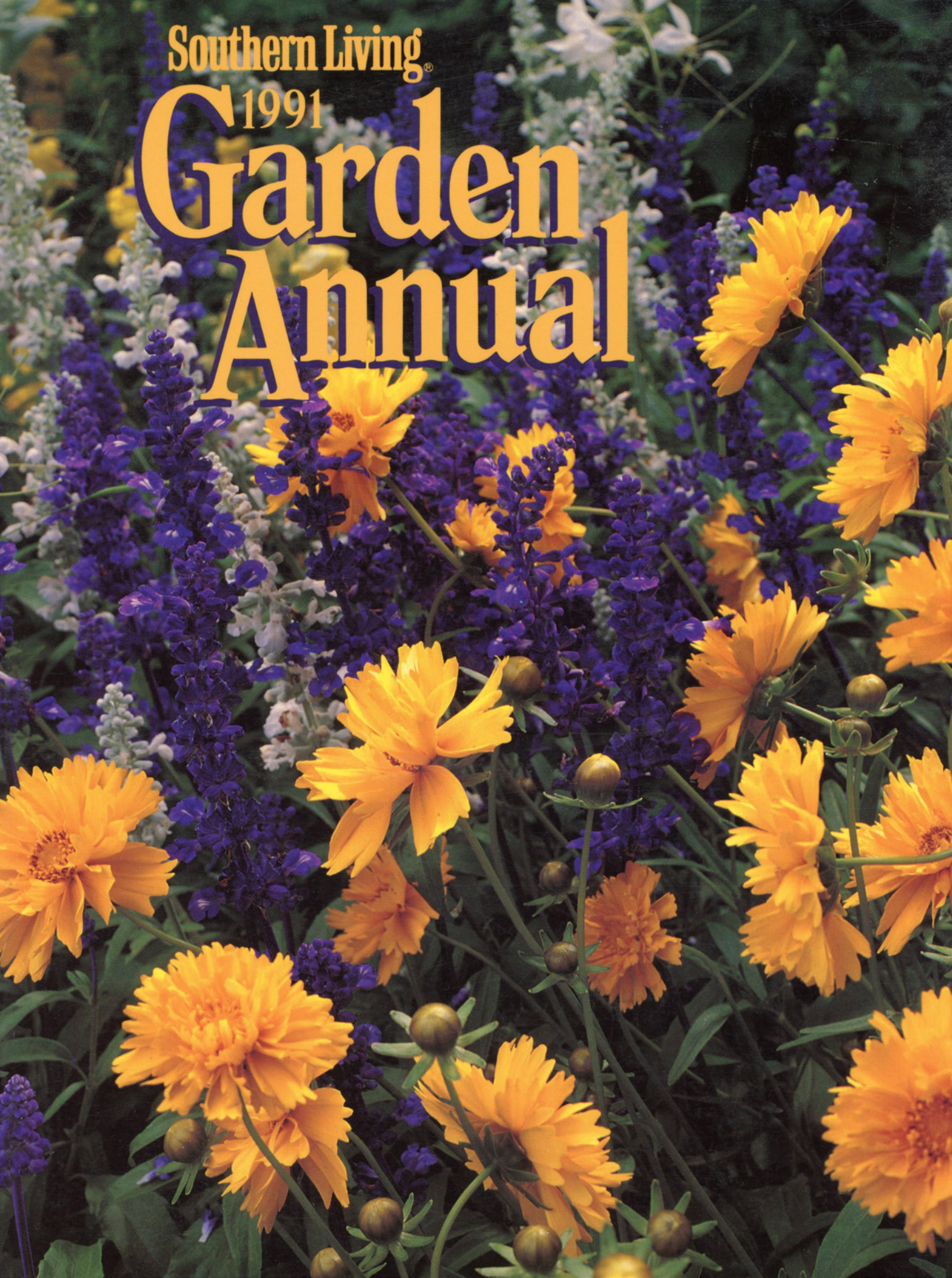


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New Look For the Nineties

"When we bought our house back in 1976, I told my husband, 'Okay, there are only two things we really need to do, and they are put in new windows and a new kitchen floor,'" Cindy Candler remembers. "Eleven years later we did that." The project snowballed, but Cindy and Bobby Candler have no regrets. "We love our location in Atlanta, and we'll be here until they carry us out."

This home is a good example of how simple principles can update a fifties ranch-style home. Architect Norman Davenport Askins recalls, "It was one of those typical ranch houses that are everywhere and the space inside was amazingly nice." So they decided to renovate, introducing vertical lines wherever they could.

"The windows were the primary reason that we even got involved," says Cindy. Askins lengthened the window openings and replaced them with custom casements. "We overscaled the window panes. Everything was real tight, so we opened it up. We just played subtle games that all contributed to a major change. It was simple really."

Covering the red brick was Cindy's suggestion. "I was taking my children to camp each morning, driving along a street where I noticed a fifties brick ranch, same as ours, that they were covering with shingles. I thought, 'Eureka!'"

Probably the greatest change was in the entry. "It is much more inviting, I think. Just a much warmer feeling," says Cindy. Much of that graciousness is due to the insights of Landscape Architect William T. Smith, ASLA.

Originally, the front walk was so close to the foundation of the house that opening one of the old metal windows could endanger guests unlucky enough to be walking by. The walk led to steps on the side of the porch, and the earth began sloping away, giving the house the appearance of sliding down the hill.



(Above) Cindy and Bobby Candler's Atlanta home has a fresh new look. (Right) Before renovation, the sloping lot, brick facade, and metal windows made the house typical of those built in the fifties. (Bottom, right) Changing the entry so you approach the steps from the front rather than the side made it more appealing. Photographs: Van Chaplin

"A lot of houses, existing or brand new, have this slope from side to side," Smith explains. "I try to get an even horizon across the front; I have a need for equilibrium. It's easily handled by putting in a retaining wall."

Once the front was leveled, Smith was able to pull the sidewalk away from the house and reorient the entry. "I felt like I needed to pull people out to get some sense of arrival and perspective of the front."

Smith made the entry gracious by using a generous walkway with a landing where it meets the driveway. "Generally speaking, walkways are too narrow. People always like to cut corners; it's just human nature. By widening it, you have ample space to go either direction. It also enabled me to put a planter there."

Another landing at the base of the steps gives people room to linger, as they always do, and also gives a place for two more planters. Cindy enjoys changing the pots so that some-

thing is blooming year-round.

Askins replaced the double front doors with a single, oversized, mahogany door. Above it, the suggestion of a pediment breaks up the horizontal line of the house while giving emphasis to the entry.

With the construction complete, Smith recommended plantings to further the design. Small groups of shrubs with ground cover going right to the foundation work with the entry. Then the plantings change a bit toward the end of the house, which helps break up the linear feel of it. "And we tied all these plants together with a common ground cover," says Smith.

"I love the plants he suggested; I love the various shades of green," says Cindy. "And it's just such low maintenance; we don't do anything." The plants include four groups of Otto Luyken laurel, dwarf azaleas by the steps, small-leaved hollies that are kept low near the end of the house, and a ground cover of periwinkle. ◇