



CT
CONNECTICUT

The Bird-In-Hand

NEVER FINISHED — AND LOVING IT

SUSAN CRANDALL had long wanted to own and run a bed-and-breakfast. About a half-dozen years ago, she took the plunge and began looking for one to buy. She looked in Connecticut and up into western Massachusetts, in the territory she covered — and still covers — in her “day job” selling advertising for an industrial publication.

The Bird-In-Hand best fit the list of requirements she had. The house in Coventry, Conn., is unique, once being a tavern and dating from 1731. Crandall also considered loca-

tion. The inn is about 10 miles from the University of Connecticut in Storrs, which helps provide year-round business.

Crandall maintains two acres of landscaped grounds. She has an herb garden and flower gardens and especially likes her trees: from the magnolia that blooms in mid-April along the driveway to the kousa dogwood, *Cornus kousa*, that blooms in early July; from

the giant sugar maple, *Acer saccharum*, next to the patio to the weeping hemlock, *Tsuga canadensis* ‘Pendula’; and from the paper-back maple, *Acer griseum*, to the Japanese umbrella pine, *Sciadopitys verticillata*.

“There’s always something in bloom,” she said. “It was all well planned out.”

The trees and gardens are not without their challenges, though. The previous owner of the property had not done a lot with the grounds, which had been worked on extensively by the owner before that.

“They didn’t do much with it besides mow the lawn,” Crandall said. “When I came in, there were maple saplings in the gardens. I’ve been trying to do the restoration work, which is hard to do. It’s backbreaking work. When you’re looking to buy, I don’t think you recognize how much work it will be. But no gardener ever does.”

Things are coming along, however.

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PHOTOS BY DAVE CIMMA

It’s taken innkeeper Susan Crandall years of hard work to get the grounds of the Bird-In-Hand back in shape, but the progress is obvious.

“I think people like sitting on the patio under the trees, and you can look out and see the gardens from there,” she said. “I have a spot in the house, in the entryway, where there’s a big window. I like to sit and look out into the garden from the inside.”

And then this cook/bottle washer/saleswoman/B&B proprietor heads back outside to work on the landscape.

Gardening for her establishment is not unlike gardening for your home.

“A couple of the gardens are finished in terms of getting things cleared,” she said. “But a gardener is never finished.” — *Allen Lessels*