

How Hank's Garden Grows

BY MARJORIE MEGIVERN

Acertain street in Bonaparte Retreat I could be labeled a genuine tourist's attraction, thanks to the gardening wizardry of Henry "Hank" Dunn. His landscaping artistry at 8951 East Calabash Drive has made it a showplace.

A square, three-tiered flower box of generous proportions rises pyramid-fashion and dominates the front yard. It is topped by the stone figure of a seated boy whose water jug produces a charming fountain, but the real charm is the sparkle of color on every tier: bright pink begonias, purple salvia and a few golden mums among the assorted greenery of plants both familiar and exotic.

Everywhere you look there are similar attractions on a smaller scale. Miniature flower beds surround the trees. Boxwood elder, punctuated by pink and red impatiens, hugs the trim white house. Hydrangea and azalea bushes wait their turn to bloom, hanging baskets of geraniums brighten the back patio and a border of sunny marigolds march down the driveway alongside golden and silver euonymus. Here and there, lifesize figures of swans and chicks and fanciful creatures add a touch of humor to the garden.

Henry Dunn accomplished most of this display surrounding his home in his first two months of residence here. Retiring nine years ago, the Louisiana native moved here with his wife five years ago from Long Island.

"I got to work right away on the yard and in two months had it about where I wanted it," he said. "Then I was bored; had nothing to do."

Since he claims gardening has always been his hobby, ("his PASSION," his wife corrected), he quickly found a part-time job keeping the grounds at nearby Oyster Bay. Now he devotes 20 hours a week to beauti-



STAFF PHOTO BY MARJORIE MEGIVERN

HANK DUNN and his faithful dog Bambi show off their front yard in Bonaparte's Retreat I, where begonias are the favorite flower.

fying that part of Brunswick County, and at least that much additional time to the home beautification project.

Despite the planning and order apparent in his landscaping, Dunn is somewhat spontaneous about his planting. "I just start with what I like; I'm a great lover of begonias," he said.

His acquisitions are not confined to commercial garden shops. He found and moved some lovely dogwood trees from the woods; a basket of deep green ajuga ground cover he brought to Brunswick County four years ago now covers everything in the rampant fashion of kudzu. A tall, spiky dark red plant rising from a marigold bed is a puzzle to Dunn. "Somebody from

New York gave the seeds for this, but I have no idea what it is," he said.

At 68, Dunn is a strong, agile gardener, but he is smart enough to devise the easiest way to nurture his plants, proudly displaying a sprinkling system that literally hides among the greenery.

"This is just for the tough areas," he said. "Watering is a problem, because water is so expensive in Brunswick County. We drink it, but I use well water for my front yard."

This is a one-person operation. Mrs. Dunn, although a former floral designer, wants no part of her husband's gardening. "I got tired of it," she said.

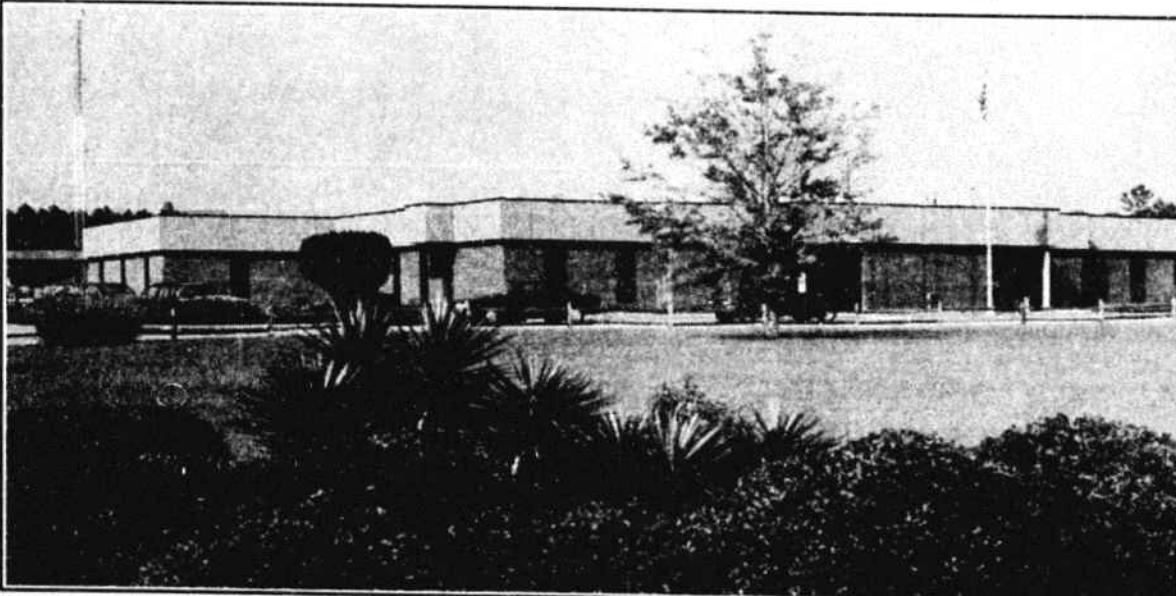
Glamorous flowers, plants and trees are not the only product of Dunn's green thumb. A sizeable vegetable garden is another. A backyard plot flourishes with tomatoes, eggplant, cucumbers, beans, peppers and watermelon. "My ambition is to grow watermelon this big," Dunn said, holding his hands about three feet apart.

He'll probably reach his goal, considering the energy and determination this amateur gardener puts into his work. Even with the Oyster Bay job and responsibilities of his presidency of the Bonaparte's Retreat Homeowners' Association, Hank Dunn will surely find the secret to bigger and better watermelons.

And he'll solve the mystery of the red flower.

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