

## GARDENS: JANET FISH

### The Artist Cultivates Her Palette on a Vermont Hillside

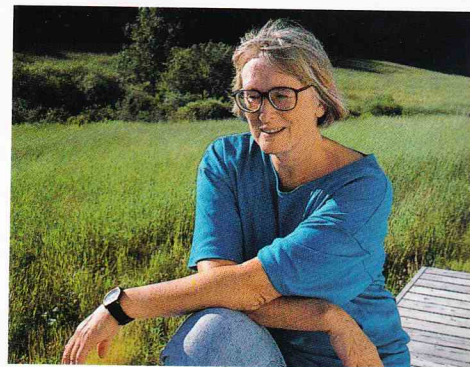
By Elaine Steiner

"I NEVER THOUGHT I'd be interested in a garden," says Janet Fish. "My first house was in the woods and had a lot of scrub trees. I started planting things just to make it look pretty and to see what would grow there—that place was so shady. It turned out to be mostly daylilies, foxgloves and astilbes that survived. Then we moved here, where it's really sunny. But I planted the lilies and the astilbes anyway, and they just took off!"

If horticulturists or psychologists can make a connection between the hand that sows the seeds and their subsequent growth patterns, Janet

Fish's garden in southern Vermont is one to study. As exuberant and spontaneous, as generous and expansive, as the artist herself, her garden beams in the sunlight of a warm midsummer day. Blocks of bright color explode against a background of green. Canada geese nest in a small wild pond; a great bronze goose, the work of the artist's mother, guards a larger pond. Fish comes from a family of artists—her mother is a sculptor and a painter, her grandfather was a painter (one of the American Impressionists), an uncle was a sculptor, and her sister is a photographer.

**"When I'm painting, I use my garden as a prop."**



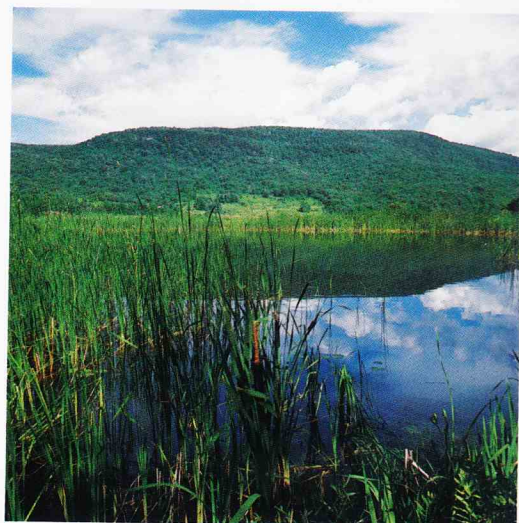
Artist Janet Fish (above) has created a garden composition on three of her 120 acres in a small rural valley near Rutland, Vermont. "I try to have a variety of flowers in each bed so they're more interesting to paint," says Fish.

BELOW: A pond filled with "vicious bass" and cattail rushes sits in front of the house. "I avoid weeding whenever possible, and the daylilies and astilbes that grow along the banks really hold their own against the weeds," she says.



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"If there are flowers going in my garden, I paint them," Fish says of her signature floral backdrops. ABOVE: *Of Kite*, 1986, she notes, "It was summer, and I was painting the garden as it bloomed." Poppies, petunias and tiger lilies lend a bright seasonal atmosphere.



ANN CHAMBERS

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