

My husband has issued an ultimatum. He told me I have to quit writing stories about local nurseries because every time I visit one I bring home more treasures to plant in our garden. Plus I'm dipping into the fix the roof and paint the deck fund. But I promised to leave the checkbook at home on the rest of my visits for this year. So----Pssst! Wanta hear about another nursery that's to die for? (Don't forget to bring your checkbook.)

My husband and I discovered Savage Plants on Bond Road on the way to Kingston about seven years ago. Savage Plants is on the lefthand side of Bond Road driving towards Kingston.

Savage Plants is not named after mean plants it's the last name of the owners. Jim Savage has operated a nursery related business since 1968. He is a designer and landscaper by trade (29 years to be exact), but his dream was always to have his own nursery. Wife Joan and daughters Hollie and Robin are as enthusiastic about plants as he is.

Hollie remembers growing up hearing her dad say how much he wanted his own nursery. The property their nursery is on came up for sale and was ideal because a nursery had once been there. The Savages bought the site, and cleared off everything that had overgrown. The greenhouses were destroyed by neglect before the purchase so they even had to clear them away. Visitors to the nursery today will be amazed by the beauty and even splendor of all the displays. The nursery has a permanence to it.

There are several display areas. Sue Skelly from Reflective Gardens has created a sculptured bent cedar fence around a perennial garden. Hollie said it was originally planned as a completely formal garden but it's evolved into a garden of wild combinations with an informal fence and formal straight paths. The plants are herbaceous, perennial, and grasses. It's a feast of color and texture. And it's so sunny and warm, giving a hint of sunshine and warmth even on a cloudy day.

Another new display this year is called "the rock garden." At least that's the name Hollie and I came up with. Jim loves collecting specimen trees and he loves rocks. Max Nosich a supplier of huge stones, stone sculpture and alpine and specialty trees has sorely tempted Jim. The outcome is a group of stones that remind the observer of a forest of rock. The trees in this area were once grouped together in protective sawdust. But now the sawdust, trees and stone carry us through a pathway shrouded in beauty and a feeling of permanence. Don't worry though, you can still take the trees home for your own garden.

A few years ago Jim and his crew installed a cascading waterfall and pond. Robin and Hollie designed, selected and installed the plantings around this feature. A pump house is at the back of this installation, but it is incorporated harmoniously into the planting area. It's hardly noticeable now but will soon be covered with flowering and textural vines to hide it even more.

The displays and plants throughout the nursery are enough to tempt gardeners whether seasoned, jaded or novice. One of the best features is that most of the plants are grouped according to their light and water needs. Hollie really enjoys grouping the plants together. "It's fun for us to design within the groups – we do landscape without the planting," she said.

Holly and Robin worked in the Nursery on summers and holidays when they were attending college. Hollie said, "At first you don't want to do what your parents do for a living, but you get over it. Now I've become obsessed with gardening." Hollie and her husband bought Joan and Jim's old house. Hollie and her mom had spent hours and what seemed like years landscaping the garden and now "I inherited it," she said (gleefully).

Jim is involved nearly full time with the design and landscaping part of the business, Hollie, Robin and Joan run the business ordering plants, greeting and helping customers and of course taking care of all the nursery plants. They are all having a great time fulfilling their dreams.

Some of the Nursery's specialties are ornamental grasses, Japanese maples and specimen trees. "We try to find unusual plants and different perennials," Hollie said. My current favorites from their offerings are the hydrangeas, hostas, ferns, euphorbias, rugosa roses, grasses. Oh heck, I love it all. Especially the new stone birdbaths made from granite and marble that Max Nosich recently delivered. You won't be disappointed if you visit Savage Plants on Bond Road. Say hi to Hollie, Robin, Joan and Jim for me. Tell them I'm coming back as soon as my husband forgets how much I spent last time.

You can email comments to Peg Tillery at gardenmentor@yahoo.com or in care of this newspaper.

