

Fairies Living at the Bottom of Our Garden?

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I take tremendous pride in our gardens and the continuing progression of blooms from early spring to late fall. Recently, a guest asked if I'd ever noticed fairy houses in the gardens. I can say that I never noticed anything other than what I suspected were birds or mice scrambling under the leaves and a huge array of butterflies flitting from flower to flower. However, I went to the garden to double check. I made my rounds just like I do every day.

What? There under a canopy of Verbena Bonariensis and Zinnias was a beautiful little "house." Constructed of twigs, spruce boughs and missing items I'd forgotten, it had within a tiny bed covered with a hand-



dyed pink spread (from my "beads and trinkets" box. I'd made this fabric many years ago and it's been stored away in a box in my shop). The bed had a birch twig headboard and a fluff of lichen on top of my spread. Outside a clam shell appeared to be set up for an outside bathtub. There were glimmery spots on the leaves and really sparkly places on the twigs and in this house. There was a harvest table set with acorn cap bowls and a tiny mirror leaning against the wall. I'd never noticed this before. How did it get there?

Really curious, I searched harder. Could I be dreaming. The turquoise planter saucer that I've been using as a birdbath looked like somebody had converted it into a tiny swimming pool. The imaginary cement



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gnome cottage given to me by my assistant gardener had been moved from where I had placed it under the anise hyssop plants to the edge of the “pool.” It was a beautiful day, warm sun...a great day for a swim. There was a diving board! Johnny Jump Ups were floating in the water. Tiny nasturtium leaves floated like lily pads. Too Much!

I wonder if my assistant gardener had anything to do with this? She is a woman with many gleeful secrets. Does she have tiny friends who moved here when I hired her to help me?

More surprises! Way in the back, on the other side of my garden is a dead-end path that passes by the Ageratum Blue Horizon to the stand of Monarda didyma. The old basil plants had been removed and layers of Sweet Annie had been placed on the fresh earth. A tiny white fabric tent was erected right on the straw in my garden path. The tent poles were twigs with felt banners at the tops. There must have been a party about to begin. Birch tabletops were set with acorn cap bowls filled with greens and red berries. Soft blossoms of pearly everlasting and red rubin basil were spread over the floor of the tent. It looked like a glad celebration was about to begin. I imagined trumpets sounding and the jingle of little bells. I wished I could have stayed through the night to see what would happen next. This morning, I checked the scene again. The tables were tipped over. The bowls were on the ground. The tiny tent was still up.

For several years I have had a plaque mounted on the wall of the restaurant “There are Fairies at the Bottom of Our Garden.” I thought it was just make-believe. When my gardening assistant comes tomorrow I think I shall ask her a few questions.

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