

HOMEMADE GARDEN PARTY

How does a weekend gardener plan a party for 250 friends? Outdoors — with make-ahead foods, assembly-line trimmings, and a sense of humor



If you think of your garden as an outdoor room, why not let it decorate itself for a summer celebration? Robert L. Green, an editor and designer often seen on TV talk shows, does it every summer. He plans a huge buffet, makes much of the food ahead (you'll find recipes on page 123), and invites more than 200 guests—and all for charity. Last year's invitation read: "Goodwill Industries of America, Inc. invites you to celebrate life, exercise a few liberties,

and pursue a lot of happiness at a Bicentennial Picnic at Robert L. Green's 18th-century Tollgate Farm." This year's party will be a Bicentennial country fair with thirteen booths ("for the original Colonies") full of homemade breads and home-grown treats. "Parties are a form of show business," Mr. Green says. "The secret of a good party is the cast: mixed age groups, dependable friends, new faces. Casting is a secret of a good garden, too. Gardens should be visual banquets."

In the fenced garden, above, buffet tables covered with lily-patterned hemp cloths (lilies are a symbol of Tollgate Farm) silk-screened by his friends, des Robert Penny and Dan Carr. Below: 1. Summer s garnished with strawberries, rudbeckia, a lily. 2. T party garden, which actress Vivian Leigh helped plan, between Mr. Green's 1740 Pennsylvania farmhouse and potting shed with weather vane. 3. Seafood mousse garlanded with clematis and ilex. Far right: four guests relaxing.







Homemade garden party *continued*

GROWING DECORATIONS, A GARDEN-CART BUFFET

"Guests may believe that somehow it all just happens, but it doesn't," says Robert L. Green. "Whether it's gardens or parties, you must plan ahead." Because he gardens only on weekends, planning ahead means "easy carefree flowers." He overplants too: "I want my plants to feel that this is a very popular party. Besides, by overcrowding I have fewer weeds." He mixes flowers as he mixes guests. "Flowers have such interesting personalities, even within the same breed. There are the tall and small lilies, aggressive and shy lilies, vulgar and sophisticated lilies."

When it comes to planning the annual party, Mr. Green begins on the menu months ahead. On party day, he fills washtubs and baskets with pre-baked and frozen breads, thaws out the roast ducks, meatballs, and meat loaves. For last minute molds and aspics he has "a lot of helping hands"—a house-party crew of willing friends. For garnishing, he sets up a kitchen assembly line of fresh picked flowers, fruits, herbs. "Party-giving is like gardening. You invite the guests of your choice, with qualities in common—and some surprises—provide them with food and drink, and enjoy watching them mix."

1. A hillside of tawny wild daylilies (*Hemerocallis fulva*). 2. A sun-sweep of marigolds, zinnias; party decorations. 3. Peonies edging path to vegetable garden. 4. Mr. Green, center, with Celeste Holm and her husband, actor Wesley Addy. 5. Garden cart used as a dessert buffet. 6. Bedroom flowers, printed and real, with one of Mr. Green's wallcovering designs, "Basketweave." 7. Breakfast on mats made of Mr. Green's blue and white "Canton" paper. 8. Country lunch in a room designed by Angelo Donghia, with rabbit-patterned tablecloth, "Barnaby Thumper," another of Mr. Green's designs inspired by his farm for & Vice Versa (see page 125).

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