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An Outdoor Office Sprouts in Bamboo Garden



Landscape Horticulture students Virginia Oswald and Joseph Tychonievich play in the whimsical outdoor office they created in the Chadwick Arboretum & Learning Gardens.

Tucked between Howlett Hall and the Parker Food Science Building, a new outdoor office has been installed in the [Chadwick Arboretum & Learning Gardens](#). Like many offices, this office is equipped with a desk, a chair, a filing cabinet, a trashcan and so on. However, the Bamboo Garden Office is a little different. Gerbera daisies are blooming in the drawers of the filing cabinet and the desk is a mass of flowering annuals covering the computer keyboard. The chair's seat cushion is actually a carpet of Portulaca, while some white cleome is bursting from the nearby trashcan.



The Bamboo Garden Office features gerbera daisies blooming in the filing cabinet drawers.

Learning Gardens student employees Virginia Oswald and Joseph Tychonievich created the whimsical planting after being inspired by George Schenk's wonderful book, [Gardening on Pavement, Tables, and Hard Surfaces](#). In the book, Schenk explains that plants can be grown successfully anywhere that some soil can be mounded. The book illustrates many beautiful examples of gardens on tabletops, flat stones, and slabs of pavement. Intrigued by

the concept, Virginia and Joseph spotted an extra desk and filing cabinet that were being thrown away, and the idea for an office garden was formed.



The whimsical office planting was inspired by George Schenk's book, "Gardening on Pavement, Tables, and Hard Surfaces."

The office planting was created entirely with surplus furniture and leftover annuals kindly donated by the OSU Annual Trial Gardens. The desktop and cabinet-top plantings are simply mounded potting media. Though it looks like everything would wash away in the first rain, the planting has proved to be very stable. A few days after the office was planted, we had several days of rainy weather - and the new plantings held up perfectly well. After a number of weeks, the desk is fully grown, the chair cushion is thick, the trashcan is overflowing and the filing cabinet has a pronounced plume.



The tabletop gardening techniques used in the outdoor office have proven to be quite stable, as well as fun to look at.

Joseph and Virginia, who are both Landscape Horticulture majors, hope the office planting will bring a spirit of whimsy and fun into the gardens, but also want to provide education and inspiration to students and visitors about this unusual form of container gardening. The office garden is an example of tabletop gardening in its most light-hearted and whimsical form, but the concept of planting on flat surfaces can be used in many ways. It is a low-cost way to expand garden space into paved areas, and tabletop plantings can be used to make gardening accessible to elderly or disabled gardeners

who can't bend down to garden at ground level. And, as the office planting has already shown, it is a great way to make people stop and smile.

So, if you are stuck in an actual, depressing, plantless office, take a moment to come out and enjoy office furniture as it should be: covered in bright flowers, rather than stacks of paper.

Watch a narrated slideshow of this story with additional photos here: [An Outdoor Office Sprouts in Bamboo Garden Slideshow](#). Free [Quicktime](#) software is required to view the slideshow.

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