

# garden guide

## Room for a view

Reclaiming a garden on a steep slope

■ Nancy Spiller has a killer view. The home she shares with her husband, Tom Weitzel, in the Adams Hill section of Glendale looks toward the rugged peaks of the San Gabriel Mountains over a sea of rooftops. She isn't the first to enjoy the scenery. Author John Steinbeck lived in the vicinity, as did photographer Edward Weston and Hollywood actor James Caan. And now a new generation of artists, recognizing a good thing, is moving in.

Though Spiller and Weitzel didn't see it at first, the view is even better from the slope behind the house. When they moved in, their backyard was such a tangle that they rarely ventured into it. Then Pasadena landscape contractor Robert Cornell stepped in. He cleared away tons of ivy and vines, uncovering several tiers of retaining wall underneath. "Old gardens often have good bones," he says, "but you have to clear away the undergrowth first to find them."

So the garden would look as old as its walls, Cornell retained a well-established grove of prickly pear cactus. Then—because the steep slope is challenging to work in—he filled out the garden with plants that don't require much pruning, spraying, or other maintenance. For annual color, cosmos were sown; they reseed freely and pop up year after year.

— Sharron Cohoon

COSMOS IN WHITE, red, and pink bloom among watsonia (strappy green leaves) and Mexican sage (purple flower spikes).



DEIDRA WALPOLE