



Photo by John Cross

Barb Lamson is a master gardener who has worked on her garden for more than 40 years.

# 40 years

By Cathy Jones

**G**reat gardens don't just happen — they evolve over decades.

Master gardener Barb Lamson's yard has been a work in progress during the 40 years she and her husband, Dave, have lived in their Mankato home, and gardens have been a part of her whole life. She has fond memories of her grandparents' garden. Grandma raised the perennial flowers and Grandpa raised the vegetables.

Barb and Dave raise flowers and vegetables, too, but their backyard has become shady enough to force them to move the vegetables to the community gardens at Good Counsel.

Their backyard garden has evolved over the decades. When they started their family and bought the house in 1968, the backyard was just flat, open grass, and water collected in a low area that has since been improved with loads of compost. They planted

a flowering crabapple tree for shade and put up a swingset and sandbox for the kids, but they resisted planting lots of flowers because kids will be kids and pick them.

"Whatever your family's needs, you should plan for that, because children need space to run and jump," she said.

As it turns out, the spot that had the sandbox wouldn't grow grass, but it's got some of the best soil in the



Submitted Photos

# *of evolution*

A dream backyard in progress



