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8 Across—Gardener. 43 Down—The *New York Times*. 27 Across—Author. 32 Down—Teacher. 16 Across—Rock steady. 55 Down—Hippie at heart. If your two-word answer is Anne Raver, you've mastered today's "Gardening Life" puzzle.

After almost 20 years as its garden columnist and environmental and science writer, Anne Raver is practically synonymous with the *New York Times* to gardeners. Even so, she didn't hesitate to walk away from what many might have considered a dream job. In 2006, Anne chose to move from the city to a piece of land near Baltimore, Md., which has been her family's farm since 1795. She went home to care for her ailing mother.

Anne says that in high school she was an "egg-head kid" who liked reading, acting and band. Her guidance counselor helped her find a small liberal-arts college in Ohio: Oberlin, where she majored in English. She fondly recalls the place as one where "nerds found other nerds."

Even though she didn't set out specifically to enter the newspaper business, fate led her down that black and white and, eventually, green path. She's been a news and feature reporter for the *Cambridge (Mass.) Chronicle*, the *Beverly (Mass.) Times* and the *Boston Herald*, where she worked under Features Editor Betsy Buffington Bates, whom she considers one of her greatest mentors. Anne calls her "the Auntie Mame of the newspaper business" and says she learned a lot more than writing (including how to drink a martini at the Ritz) from the inimitable Bates. When her role model became Sunday Editor at *Newsday*, Anne followed her and began writing about life in the garden. She notes that her one-time neighbor and former Editor of *Horticulture*, Tom Cooper, also encouraged her to begin writing about gardening. He asked her to do a piece on Beatrix Farrand.


Anne's plant knowledge came about through self-education at botanical gardens and from the many pas-


sionate gardeners she has interviewed. But, like most gardeners, she learned the most by trial and error in her backyards—from the sandy loam of Long Island to pots on a rooftop in Brooklyn. Nowadays, on the family farm, Anne and her partner, Rock Singewald, have a new set of challenges and opportunities. The land is preserved under a conservation easement. The homestead houses farming interns from a local farm camp. Anne and Rock enjoy an apartment in the barn's former hayloft, where they can look out upon the hayfields, their homemade greenhouse and their garden. They both enjoy experimenting with plants, redworms, composting, starting seeds, pruning and wildlife habitats.

Anne has always gardened with concern for the land and nature. She has been an organic gardener for more than 40 years. She has never used pesticides, even at the risk of losing crops, in favor of building local insect and bird populations. She employs native species and a wide range of plant types to aid them.

In 1995, Anne authored *Deep in the Green: An Exploration of Country Pleasures*.

It is a collection of her essays about gardening, the natural world, family and friends. She hopes to someday complete a memoir about returning to her roots on the family farm. Until then? Once a writer, always a writer. Anne still freelances regularly for the *New York Times* as well as other publications, including *Country Gardens* and *Landscape Architecture*.

Anne is grateful that her positions at *Newsday* and the *New York Times* took her to gardens, natural habitats and ecosystems around the world. She has met great botanists, plant explorers, gardeners, landscape architects and designers. When asked to describe herself, the award-winning writer simply says she's been a decent storyteller, with a good sense of humor, and that she hasn't been too bad at interviewing people either. I'd add we've all become richer thanks to her efforts. 

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Garden Writer Anne Raver

by MARIA ZAMPINI ~ photograph by ROB CARDILLO

