

**SPECIAL SECTION**  
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**Stone House Farm**

BEAUTY, BLISS AND BOUQUETS

A 300-FOOT PERENNIAL BORDER welcomes visitors from the street, along with hollyhocks peeking over a picket fence. Inside, there are locally made furnishings and views of gardens from every room. The Stone House Farm Bed & Breakfast is a gardener's dream come true — with a homemade breakfast waiting in the morning.

Featured twice on the local historical society's garden tour, the Amherst, Mass., inn also has gardens to explore at the rear of the building, cottage gardens and woodland gardens to stroll through, and an extensive cutting garden that is in bloom nearly all the time.

Innkeeper Candace Talley came to the Pioneer Valley as a result of a life change at age 40, returning to New England from St.

Louis because "the happiest times in my life were in the Northeast." She purchased the 1904 yellow stucco farmhouse and attached barn and began to restore the place, creating the gardens in the process. When Talley's two daughters went off to college, she opened the B&B and has been expanding the landscape ever since.

There are fresh flowers in every room at the Stone House Farm. Breakfast is made using the farm's

own eggs and syrup from maple trees on the property, with fresh raspberries in the fall. Pets are not allowed in the rooms, but there's no reason to be lonely as you get acquainted with the farm's household cats, Araucana chickens, mallard ducks and Nubian goats. There is always a cheerful hustle and bustle

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Innkeeper Candace Talley also teaches art classes at the Stone House Farm, where fresh-cut flowers from her garden are a specialty.

— half of the barn is home to the animals, while the other half serves as a studio where Talley teaches children's art classes.

In May, the Stone House Farm holds a popular perennial sale featuring hardy plants from the garden. It also offers five- and 10-week subscriptions for cut flowers that are grown here. If the subscribers live within 10 miles of the farm, they can even have the bouquets delivered. Talley's customers often comment that their last bouquet is still fine when the new one arrives!

Talley's assistants in the garden include her goats, which eat all of the extra flowers and maple leaves.

"I call the goats my bioconversion units — they turn garden debris into little brown pellets that I use in my compost!" she said. "As a reward, I save the maple leaves all winter to feed them. That's their favorite treat." — *Laura Eisener*

