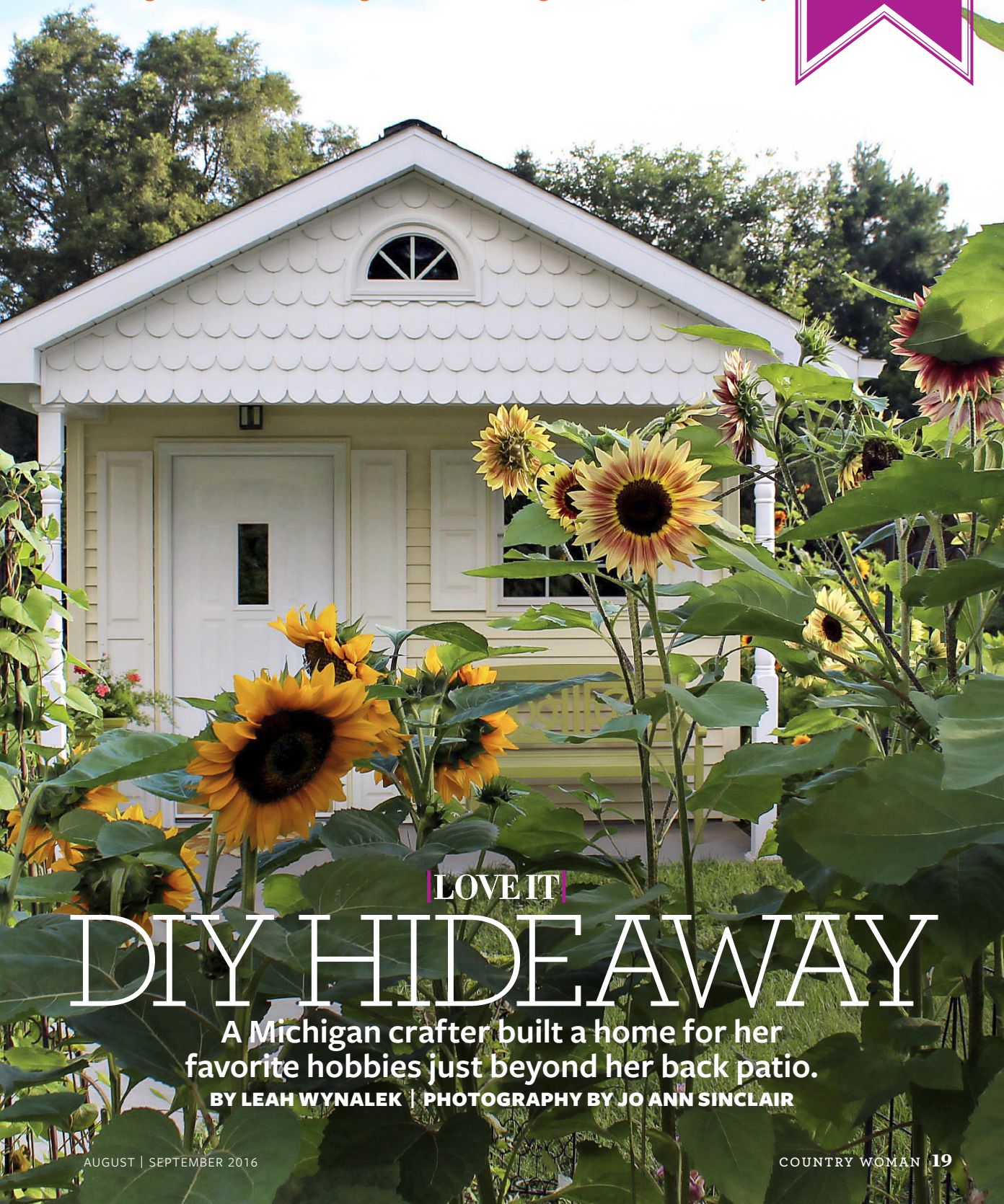


# Welcome Home

Your guide to all things fresh, feel-good and country

Laundry room  
refresh .....24  
Fun lawn art....26  
Tire projects...28  
School finds...32



| LOVE IT |

## DIY HIDEAWAY

A Michigan crafter built a home for her favorite hobbies just beyond her back patio.

BY LEAH WYNALEK | PHOTOGRAPHY BY JO ANN SINCLAIR



**Jo Ann planted** a cheery patch of sunflowers beside her shed (left). To brighten the inside (below), she opens the door for natural light and fresh air.



Perched in her backyard shed, Jo Ann Sinclair pokes the lens of her camera out the window and snaps a small black-capped chickadee snacking at a teacup feeder in the garden. Inside, she's surrounded by a tidy stash of tools, including basket shears and card stock. This shed in Fenton, Michigan, is not a typical storage space—it's a craft studio.

"The door is open and the sun is shining in," Jo Ann says. "It's

just a lot more fun than being closed up in the house. I'm closer to the flowers and the birds."

When Jo Ann and Peter, her husband, hired a builder friend to create the shed in 2014, they were planning to stash her gardening pruners and trowels in it. "My husband wanted my things out of the garage—he's so silly; he thinks it's for cars," she says. "But once we got into it and it just looked like it was going to be a really nice

building, I thought I could use it more as a work space."

With its cute white shutters, scalloped trim and white cedar interior paneling, the shed looks more like a charming little house. Inside, reed coils hang within reach of the marble table where Jo Ann weaves baskets. The desk where she makes easel cards has a view, so she can bask in the sunshine as she works. And there are no screens in the windows—

all the better for bird-watching. "My friends refer to the shed as the bird blind because I can hide in there to get photos," Jo Ann says, laughing.

To decorate her new getaway, Jo Ann used odds and ends that she already had. For instance, the shelf displaying her teacup collection once hung in her upstairs bathroom. "The only things I bought new were the benches that I sit on, the yellow

and red metal ones, and the tool bench," she says. "Everything else came out of the house."

Though Jo Ann has always been a big crafter, this outdoor escape allows her to spend more time at her favorite hobbies, like basket making. "I gave it up for a while because it makes such a mess," she says. "You have to use water, and I splash, and it was all over the carpeting." Now, instead of sticking to summer projects

that she can do outdoors, Jo Ann creates baskets in her shed long into fall, thanks to a small space heater and good insulation.

Backyard crafting escapes like hers are becoming so popular that they have a nickname: she sheds. "It's funny, I had never heard of a she shed until I started building it," Jo Ann says. "I just wanted a shed, and then my friends started referring to it as a she shed."

Whatever it's called, the shed is one space that is all her own. Even when she is not inside it, the hideaway brightens her day. "When I'm washing dishes at the kitchen sink now, I look out and that's what I see," Jo Ann says. "It just makes me smile."



**Card making** is a breeze for Jo Ann at her window-side station. She keeps weaving supplies on another wall (*below*), where she crafts baskets for friends and family.



### For the Birds

Jo Ann shows you how to host more feathered friends in your backyard garden.

**Set Out a Buffet** “If you want to see a variety of birds, offer lots of options. I keep around 15 feeders out at a time, filled with safflower, sunflower and thistle seed.”

**Draw a Bath** “I have several birdbaths and use heated ones during the cold months.”

**Plant Accordingly** “The birds love my sunflowers, and I let them go to seed in the fall. The hummingbirds enjoy morning glories, trumpet vine and bee balm.” ■

