



LOVE SHACK: A Brent Anderson creation.

Photo: MAARTEN HOLL

Humour at the hospital

Continued from page 11

"The dogs made all the paths," Susan says — if you can't beat 'em, join 'em. A hornbeam arch, supported by bamboo, marks another track. This natural curve has taken only two years to turn shapely, but it will fill out to hedge size.

Past a cool area, where hostas, astilbes, clivia, more wild roses and Japanese anemones waltz in the shade, she leads us to The Love Shack. This tall, thin building is shaped with cartoon humour.

Brent made it. When he first built it, I went 'oh no'. It was like getting a next-door neighbour, but it's blended in now.

It was originally made as a playhouse for the couple's two children — Sophie (8) and Monty (5). But, thinking ahead, Brent added a loft for adult visitors to sleep in. That's how it got its nickname.

"Brent's nephew came and spent his honeymoon with us. We thought that was a really strange choice, but we did it up for them. When we were getting it ready we kept referring to it as The Love Shack."

It even has iron heart-shaped plant holders. Susan has softened the building with a climbing

hydrangea, a box hedge, and planted a foot-soothing patch of chamomile under a seat. At the foot of the stairs leading up to its wee porch, a shattered Corsa de Fiori plate has been preserved for all time.

"The kids broke it," she says. "They freaked out — they thought they had broken the Crown jewels."

Susan has arranged the broken pieces so the beauty of the picture, now a mosaic piece, is still evident.

Even the washing line is set in beauty. "That was one of those areas I contemplated for years. It's part of your home," says Susan, defiant in the face of fashion.

So, as she stands with pegs in hand, she is in the centre of another cottage garden circle. One of the stand-out plants in here is a purple rhimania, which looks like an upside-down foxglove.

This is a whole garden formed by curves.

"Squares are pretty formal, aren't they? Curves are more flowing and relaxing. Somebody told me that squares are something that man created, not something made by nature."

This is definitely Mother Nature's domain.