



Former horse farm manager Corinne Lapin-Cohen has found a creative new career as a botanical artist, with her own teaching studio in Katonah. TANIA SAVAYAN/THE JOURNAL NEWS

Going GREEN

These local gardening and
flower enthusiasts turned
passions into careers

By Bill Cary | wcary@lohud.com

This time of year — as each spring day seems more gorgeous than the one before it — everyone with a dreary indoor job dreams, at least a little, of doing something else, perhaps a job that would keep them outdoors for most of the day. And weekend gardeners wonder whether there's a way they could do this gardening thing full time.

Well, it turns out there's a wide range of jobs out there, from florist to arborist to botanical artist, that will keep you in the garden for much of the day.

Here's a look at six local people who walked away from their cubicles to find gardening-related jobs that they're just crazy about.

Meet our career-changers, 6B and 7B

CORINNE LAPIN-COHEN, BOTANICAL ARTIST, KATONAH

Old job: Manager of Green Barn horse farm in Goldens Bridge.

New job: Artist and teacher at Corinne Lapin-Cohen Botanical Art in Katonah.

How she did it: After being diagnosed with colon cancer in October 1992, Lapin-Cohen had to cut down on her training tasks and farm work.

"I was given a 1 percent chance of survival, which I didn't know at the time," says Lapin-Cohen, who is now cancer-free. The labor became so burdensome that she had to close the farm in 1994. "I had always wanted to learn to draw the plants I knew so much about," recalls Lapin-Cohen, who studied art history at Russell Sage College in Troy, and worked as a naturalist at the Audubon Center in Greenwich, Conn.

"This was a great way of combing both passions." The woman who'd grown up obsessed with the black-eyed Susans in her grandmother's front yard — and maintains magnificent gardens of her own — began to take botanical art classes at

the New York Botanical Garden and soon was teaching there. Now she teaches in her Katonah studio. "I am so lucky to be able to do what I love."

What she loves: "One of the things that I love the most is seeing people grow and discover a love, not just for painting and for drawing, but for gardening and for observing their surroundings with an artist's eye," she says. She loves showing her work. Her "A Fork in the Road" exhibit at the Putnam Arts Council in Mahopac runs until early June, and her "A Spin on Green" show at ArtsWestchester in White Plains runs from June 17 to July 30.

Best advice for career-changers: "I never worried about making a living from this career change; I didn't have to. I was only following a passion and not a plan. It just evolved," Lapin-Cohen says. "I would suggest that if there is something in your life that you are passionate about, that if you simply cannot not do it, then do it."

— Chris Serico



Botanical artist Corinne Lapin-Cohen near her patio garden at her Katonah home. TANIA SAVAYAN/THE JOURNAL NEWS