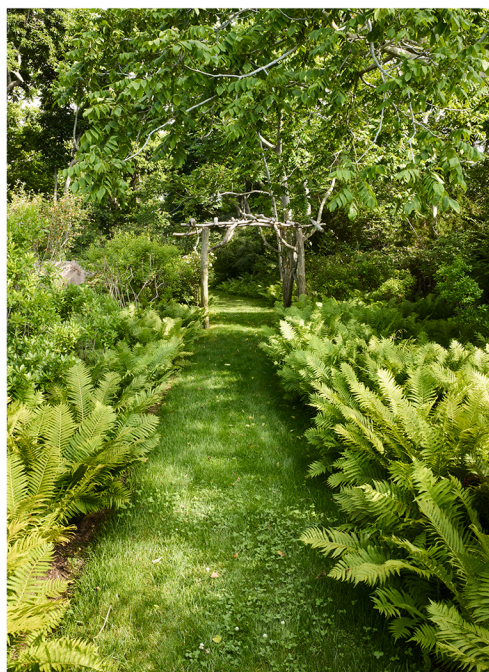




# GARDEN DESIGN MASTER CLASS

100 LESSONS FROM THE WORLD'S FINEST DESIGNERS ON THE ART OF THE GARDEN



Edited by C A R L D E L L A T O R E



RIZZOLI  
NEW YORK



# Time



MARGARET BROWER

Gardens are always a work in progress. Because the very essence of the garden is life, there is no way to avoid the progression of time. A garden is alive, moving through the years along with the lives we live. Therefore, the element of time is a very important consideration for every garden design.

I begin in the past. What, if anything, is already growing in this place that can be included in a new plan? What past memories of childhood gardens might inform an affinity for certain plants? What dreams have been held for the garden's elements, structures, or purposes?

Moving to the present, I make a quick assessment of the space. This is the time to ask questions and make initial suggestions. Then I return to spend quiet, leisurely time to again observe and get a feel for the place.

The new garden must have an immediate presence that excites the owner, but plants will quickly outgrow their initial footprint, and space for growth must be allotted. Plants need at least three years to realize their full potential. Hedges and trees often have a greater chance of success when they are started small and allowed to ease into their full maturity. It takes patience. My choices of plants are also informed by what I have learned from years of horticultural experience: which plants thrive or become invasive, which resist damage of predators, which handle extremes of climate. And the seasons of the year bring new growth, maturity, and dormancy that are important considerations when choosing plants. We want our gardens to have a beauty through all these stages, to have buds, blooms, and berries that interest us in each season. Even in winter, not only evergreen leaves, but also bark and structure and spent blooms should be interesting.

As we experience our gardens, we will find over time those places to observe and

listen, rest and rejuvenate, meditate or play. There will be a special place to feel the warmth of the sun or the cool of the shade, the perfect spot for a lunch or dinner party, the place to escape to with a good book or for a nap. We add more plants, replace others. We consider new areas to fill and plan for additions in the coming years.

This leads us to think about the future. Which trees do we plant for our children or grandchildren? We may never see some grow to maturity, but those following us will. How will a hedge look in three to five years? How will the shade, sun, and climate change in this space? As the garden marks time through the seasons, plants thrive and die, outgrow spaces, bloom and go dormant, become more beautiful. Some seem like friends as we grow accustomed to seeing them and watching them age.

As our garden settles into its environment, it becomes its own ecosystem. Birds, insects, and critters nest and thrive. Now the garden is full of activity and sound. If we are lucky, a balance develops. But change will continue. Plants get crowded and shaded out. A tree may age and fall, leaving a sunny spot that was once a shade bed.

After the initial planting, I always wish I could fast-forward several years to get a better glimpse of what time in this garden will reveal. I am able to visit many of my gardens for maintenance work, but it sometimes takes remembering the past to notice the changes. If I pass a garden where I no longer work, I am curious to see how it has matured. If it has been neglected, I have to resist the pull to fix it. And every spring I am amazed once again that the shoots are emerging from the ground and buds are swelling. It is a kind of magic as we remember the past, delight in the present, and imagine the future.

**PREVIOUS SPREAD:** Nothing notes the passing of a year like fall. Here, with the morning fog clearing through a view to the mountains in the background, a border of hydrangeas and *Miscanthus* grasses reaches full maturity and bloom.

Not too many years ago, this glorious garden was an unassuming alfalfa field. Now, with time and careful planning, the pond surrounded by lush plantings is an ecosystem for fish, frogs, birds, insects, and rabbits.







# Materials



TOM PRITCHARD

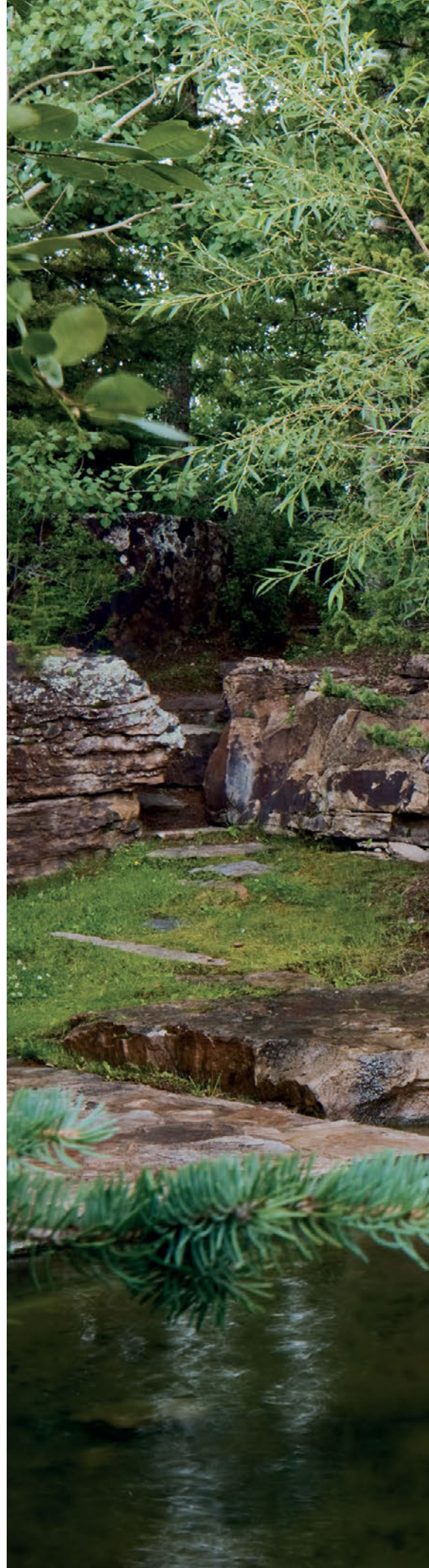
Inspiration for a garden or landscape can come from many places: remembered vistas, garden books thumbed through and marked, travels taken. At our firm, the art of bringing a garden or landscape to fruition most often begins with an exhaustive search for the exceptional plants, rocks, and other elements that will breathe real life into our projects and actually influence our designs. We find that plans and drawings are useful in conveying intent but little else. Drawing a tree as a circle on a page is just that—a circle on a page, a placeholder. We spend much less time in the office drawing and much more scouring specialty nurseries, smaller family-run operations that grow quirky things, nurseries that rescue large plant material from the bulldozer's blade, and even defunct nurseries where plants have languished and become even more wild and characterful—traits essential for us as we create native landscapes.

Where to begin? Explore your own landscape or find your inspiration nearby—you may discover that the key to your design is right in front of you. Then focus on one or two great elements around which your design can grow and evolve. On a recent project in New York State, a saucer magnolia on the grounds was so overtaken by vines and briars that it was all but invisible. Cleaned up and given a season of recovery, this tree became the star of the entire garden, with all other decisions made to honor it.

Search online, or learn to ask around. Sometimes a local arborist or nurseryman can be of help, as they often know of unusual locations where material might be found or collected. And always be observant. A Colorado landscape we created drew its inspiration from the alpine forest of spruce and aspen bordering the property. It was so beautiful and so appropriate that we vowed to re-create that forest and bring it right up to the house.

The waterfall setting was assembled from remarkable materials carefully selected to form a credible landscape element: lichen-covered sandstone ledge rocks; native aspen, spruce, willow, and wild currant; and mosses and woodland ground covers, all deftly woven into a panoramic setting to be seen from the house.

**FOLLOWING SPREAD:** The granite boulders seen here were harvested intact and positioned in their new setting on a residential site on the outskirts of Palm Springs, California, where drought-resistant materials were used throughout. Jacaranda, mesquite, and olive trees, agaves, yuccas, a silvery-blue eucalyptus, and artemisia were all carefully arranged in a setting of sandy-colored decomposed granite.









To achieve that, we carefully studied those woods, observing that trees have a great variety of branching depending on their proximity to other trees in the forest. Those in the middle are light-starved and sparse; those on the edges are one-sided. All had branch spacing much more open than cultivated trees, and most important, all retained their dead branches—absolutely essential to the look of a real forest. This quest presented a real challenge, but we eventually heard of a high mountain meadow being cleared for an elk habitat, and from there we were able to choose from a full range of native trees characterful enough to create a convincing forest.

For a very modern desert house in California, we imagined groves of gnarly trees and spiky desert plants set amid boulders and silvery ground covers—not lawns and flower beds, but a dramatic natural landscape conceived in stark contrast to the sleek lines of the house. Mindful of the continual overconsumption of water throughout the valley, we limited ourselves to considering drought-tolerant plants and trees: vintage olives, thorny mesquite and acacia, Madagascar palms, and boulders, the most drought-tolerant of all.

As it turns out, the boulders were the hardest to source. In our mind's eye, we were remembering gracefully shaped and weathered boulders encountered on our travels in Japan, but locally available boulders were more debris than inspiration. The answer came on a trip over to the nearby mountains, where we noticed groups of weathered granite rocks in a field, looking for all the world as if Isamu Noguchi himself had arranged them. Through a little detective work and persistence, we located a farmer with similar fields who welcomed us to dig, thus providing us with a variety of already arranged perfect boulders. Once installed, they looked so credible that the house appears to have been built around them, exactly what we were striving for.

Never settle for inadequate materials. If what you are imagining can't be found, then it's time to reimagine. That said, we've also discovered that where there's a will, there's often a way—it always pays to be persistent!









# Place



LAUREN SPRINGER *and* SCOTT OGDEN

Gardens that reflect what grows on the surrounding land—be it county, state, or region—imbue a settled beauty and sense of place. Native flora is also vital for regional birds, insects, and other fauna. Plants from memory blend with a garden maker's vision, giving personal touches. Yet an understanding of where a garden resides leads to the richest potential. A region's and site's soil, lay of the land, climate, and seasonal rhythms have evolved to support a palette of native plants, and those conditions also determine what other plants will thrive—typically those from regions with many of the same seasonal rhythms, climate, and geology.

Wind-resistant finer textures and lower statures, along with sun-reflective sage green, blue, or silver leaves predominate among plants growing in steppe, dry prairie, and chaparral in oft-parched mineral soils. Lusher, greener, larger-leaved, taller plants populate prairie and woodland regions and their moist, humus-rich soils. Long-lived succulents and fiber plants with bold water-storing forms protected by spines define hot, dry desert regions. We may grow some of each type of plant, but wisdom holds that environmentally attuned plant selection engenders sustainable stewardship—well-suited plants, whether native or from similar habitats, need little intervention, allowing for a healthier, lighter touch on the land. Such a palette also gives a garden regional resonance and resilience—plants look right because they are thriving and they belong.

Plants respond to their native region's seasonal rhythms. Temperate climates promote four distinct seasons; the cadence is different in hot, dry, or cold regions, where many species bloom in shorter, magnificently prolific bursts. In parts of western North America, exposed rock and soil and brown tones of dry or dormant vegetation are the norm. Often people treat these as deficiencies to fix with

lush planting and irrigation. Design built around texture rather than floral abundance and pervasive greens actually works better in places where native landscapes take seasonal siestas. Such textural compositions give a sense of place, are often more sustainable, and can be equally beautiful.

What does a garden where plants and place are deeply integrated look like? In a hilly urban neighborhood in central Austin, Texas, a classic, older Mediterranean-style home is enveloped in the curvaceous embrace of mature native live oaks. A precipitous hill falls off in back, shored up with rustically built local limestone walls and traversed by steps of the same pale native stone. The garden keepers retreat to this sanctuary in the soft shade of the oaks, hidden from view, with the sense of well-aging architecture and plants growing in romantic, carefree abundance like those they grew up with along the Gulf Coast. Native Texas hill-country understory plants mingle with Southern heirloom plants. Mexican agaves and succulents also relish the respite from the hot Texas sun provided by the high oak canopy and the good drainage of the walled hillside. The environment is similar to their native haunts in the underbrush and on rocky cliffsides farther south.

At the base of the eastern Rockies, an expansive meadow garden seamlessly planted amid agricultural fields comes alive with shimmering backlit blossoms and grasses bending to the ever-present wind. The garden keepers grew up on the vast flatness of South Dakota and Kansas, and their meadow reflects that wide-open serenity of their childhoods on the shortgrass prairie along Colorado's Front Range. They—and the wildlife they cherish—feel right at home. By concentrating many species of showy prairie natives into a smaller space than one would find them together in the wild, and by adding a few adapted

In this small Austin garden, textures give year-round beauty. The semiarid subtropical climate allows palms and small trees to luxuriate under live oaks while cacti, agaves, aloes, and succulents enjoy a sunny dry berm.













non-natives, the floral bounty and length of the bloom season are intensified to rival the visual effect of English borders the homeowners admired on their travels. Just as importantly, this intense and prolonged bloom provides the wild creatures they care about with a mecca of food, shelter, and places to rear their young.

By choosing plants that are at home and thrive in the climate, soil, and seasonal rhythms, one honors the place where the garden resides. In return, the inclusion of some plants that connect with cherished memories, hopes, and dreams allows the garden to honor its keeper. Plants with a place in the heart and a place on the land hold the key to making sustainable gardens of pleasure and meaning.

**FOLLOWING SPREAD:** In central Texas, low-angled sunlight highlights the bold textures and spines of succulents through drought and dormancy. When rains do come, regionally native rain lilies (*Zephyranthes* cultivars and species) respond and come to life in a floral celebration.



# Relationships



MIKE KAISER

An ancient scrub oak that arches over the fountain and rill, spilling into the pool, was carefully preserved to lend age to the composition of this garden in the shadow of Mount Olympus in Greece. The greenhouse from which this view is seen serves as a favorite location for dinner parties, and in early evening the setting sun illuminates the house, garden, and mountain in dazzling colors, all reflected in the cool, dark surface of the pool.

**FOLLOWING SPREAD:** The details of the garden walls, gates, and even the rustic rope-bound fence were inspired by a recent visit to Lutyens's Great Dixter in England and draw from the language of Tudor architecture. Plant selections were guided by the overall color palette, consisting of blues and pastels, each intended to unite home and garden as one.

When creating a garden, it is essential to consider the complex relationships between the land, the home, and its inhabitants. My work as a landscape architect grew out of my fascination with the architecture of the home and my conception of the garden as a magical place where architecture and landscape become one. Designing a garden that is a seamless extension of the home requires a deep understanding of the house and how it reflects the personalities and desires of its owners.

Ideally, home is a sanctuary. At its finest, it encompasses comfort and beauty while capturing the unique characteristics of its inhabitants. The garden is the extension of that refuge into the outdoors, a place where we experience the transitory pleasures of nature and light, the change of seasons, and the passage of time. Designed to complement each other, architecture and landscape can merge into a nurturing, harmonious whole.

Every family has its own idea of the perfect home and garden. To make that vision a reality, I begin by getting to know my clients: how they live, entertain, relax, and play. I ask questions ranging from the practical to the personal. Will they harvest vegetables for cooking or cut flowers for decorating? In what rooms do they spend the most time when they are indoors? What inspires them? I ask about the aesthetic and emotional qualities they are seeking from their outdoor spaces, as well as the ways in which they want those spaces to connect with the rooms inside. I want them to see their gardens as places where special moments and memories are made.

Next, I study the house along with the surrounding landscape. I need to understand the scale and flow of interior spaces, the arrangement of furniture, and the way in which the home visually and functionally connects to the outdoors in order to make thoughtful

decisions about how adjacent outdoor rooms relate to the home and its inhabitants.

This exploration must be guided by several key design principles, including scale, enclosure, intimacy, privacy, and solar orientation, as well as what I like to call screening of the objectionable and framing of the favorable. We can draw from the language of the architecture in the creation of outdoor rooms by careful repetition of materials, forms, and patterns. Masonry walls, paved terraces, level changes, landscape hedges, swaths of lawn, and carefully positioned canopy trees are all devices designers can use to define outdoor spaces and reinforce the relationship of house to garden.

The revitalization of a historic Tudor home in Holladay, Utah, provided the perfect setting for exploring these dynamic relationships. Invited by frequent collaborator Greg Tankersley of McAlpine to extend his architectural vision into the landscape, my firm and I sought to complement the interior spaces with a series of outdoor rooms in every direction. The theme of each garden emerged from its visual and physical relationship to adjacent interior spaces and reflected the owners' interests and lifestyle.

On the south side of the house, the architect added a spectacular glass conservatory containing the home's central gathering places and the family's collection of treasured mementos from a lifetime of travel. Not wanting to compete with the buzz and color within, we created a simple lawn outside the conservatory surrounded by a semicircular hedge of pleached European hornbeams to provide privacy and shade. To the east, the formal dining room and outdoor terrace overlook a restrained, meditative walled garden, where the gentle murmur of a bubbling grotto provides just enough sound









to accompany any gathering. By contrast, the western side of the house, where a new swimming pool and poolhouse echo with children's laughter all summer long, was the perfect site for an exuberant display of perennial blossoms.

Whether a designer is tasked with creating a series of outdoor rooms in the English Tudor tradition like the ones I've

just described or planning a single, modest garden, considering these relationships between landscape, structures, and people is essential. For me, taking the time to explore these unique personalities and characteristics is an exciting process, yielding unexpected insights that leave a human imprint on the natural world and bring the outdoors into the most intimate spaces of the home.



# Layering



LAURIE DURDEN

In the gardens I design, I strive to create a feeling of simplicity. I gravitate to gardens that are easy to look at, whose beauty reveals itself spontaneously as the seasons progress. The garden's essential elements—structure, circulation, views, textures, and colors—converge into a single composition where the more ephemeral moments can be revealed and heighten the senses.

But this simplicity is deceptive. A garden contains a myriad of layers, beginning with the site and expanding to include the enclosures that give the garden shape, and then the plantings that bring it to life throughout the year. As a designer, I am always thinking in layers, regardless of the style or size of the garden.

The ability to see individual pieces of the puzzle while keeping the larger picture in mind stems from my graduate school days, when I had the opportunity to spend the summer as a garden intern at Dumbarton Oaks in Washington, D.C. Created in the 1920s by legendary landscape architect, Beatrix Farrand, the gardens at this historic estate are still maintained according to her specifications in *The Plant Book for Dumbarton Oaks*. I was so fortunate to work with such talented gardeners, several of whom had been there long enough to recall working with Farrand. Each day, I was immersed in pruning and training plants, general gardening techniques, and the history of the garden. In the evenings, I poured over *The Plant Book* to understand Farrand's intentions with regard to scale, enclosure, transitions, focal points, plants, and maintenance.

From this formative experience, I developed my own point of view from which to employ layering in garden design, in terms of how I use the space and how the plantings reveal their intrinsic beauty over time. Each project starts with learning as much as possible about the site and the respective owner's vision for the property. I then establish the garden's

bones. This includes determining what kinds of enclosures and structures to use—from the ground plane and the walls (constructed or planted) to the ceiling or tree canopy and openings for views.

It's also important to consider the various spaces within your garden and how they relate to one another. Whether you have space for formal garden rooms or simply want to create a single, layered space, borders, thresholds, or nonlinear pathways can offer a sense of discovery and delight. The surrounding landscape also plays a key role. The garden may draw inspiration from the landscape or provide a striking contrast.

These spaces and structures furnish a set on which to layer the seasonal moments. The garden's joy is contained in these moments: combinations of color, scent, light, and shade that shift with the passing of hours, days, and seasons. Creating these moments involves sequencing—a strategy employed recently during the refurbishment of the gardens at the Duke Mansion in Charlotte, North Carolina. Almost all the flowers are white to complement the white house, and there are large masses of white flowering shrubs that bloom from early spring until late summer. An ever-changing scene creates many mini-seasons within those months; as one plant's bloom is waning, another comes along to steal the show. Against a backdrop of hollies, boxwood, and other evergreens, a parade of flowering plants and trees bloom one after another.

There are additional layers to keep in mind, including form and texture (stiff versus loose, fluffy versus weeping); variations in green (bright versus dark); fragrance (try jasmine, magnolias, gardenias, old roses, or peonies); and plants to attract birds and bees. This will create a garden that offers a rich and memorable garden experience throughout the year.

A mix of hardscape materials, including flagstone, pea stone, brick and terra-cotta planters, are layered with the plant palette in this Charlotte, North Carolina, garden. A white-painted iron bench and planters at the back of the space echo the flowers within the parterres, adding yet another layer.







# Editing



NANCY GOODWIN

Gardens are living works of art filled with plants coming into or out of growth, bloom, or seed and resting in between. Most are compositions of plants chosen for many reasons—color, form, soil, location, climate, exposure—and with luck, they grow as expected. However, over time they may begin to sulk or grow too aggressively. The color may not be what was expected, and vigorous seedlings may have smothered more delicate plants. Like people, some plants don't age well.

After a few years, incompatibility among plants may become obvious and the original vision might be lost. Old plants create new problems, and new plants may enhance those difficulties. For example, cyclamen and hellebores grow best in similar areas with neutral to alkaline well-drained soil and shade. But hellebore leaves grow so large, they completely hide the cyclamen, which are in active growth throughout the winter. One solution is to cut the leaves off the hellebores, but that can be an enormous task and will leave their buds vulnerable to intense spells of below-normal temperatures if done too early in the fall. The better solution is to grow the two genera far enough away from each other that they can't seed into each other's territory and to remove small hellebore seedlings if they appear.

A tree in the garden impacts the environment as it grows: many surrounding smaller trees, shrubs, and herbaceous plants may no longer receive enough sun. Other plants, which like the new shade, often grow so vigorously that the tree, originally intended for the winter beauty of its trunk, can no longer be seen.

The death of a large tree alters the garden dramatically and may require redesigning an area that primarily has shade-loving plants. When my large, old white oak died, I found myself suddenly faced with the problem of a garden originally designed for shade now in

full sun. I left it for a year and was surprised at how well many so-called shade plants grew with more sun. There were only two that I had to move into shade—*Pachysandra procumbens* and *Iris tectorum*.

Gardeners age along with the garden and may require different ways of gardening. Our knees hurt, and our backs are stiff at the end of the day. Suddenly raised beds seem worth exploring. Simplicity in the garden takes on a new meaning. Climate change means some plants grow better while others suffer, so a new palette of plants must be considered when old favorites no longer tolerate new temperature extremes and moisture conditions.

It is important to keep an open mind and a critical eye, so study the garden in all seasons—preferably with a good friend. A second pair of eyes may see what you miss when looking at individual plants for which you have special memories or associations. After ten years or so, the trees and shrubs may have outgrown their space. That cute little dwarf conifer may grow to twenty feet or more and almost as wide. That doesn't mean it has to be removed. Intelligent pruning can let in light, reveal hidden vistas, and provide an opportunity to revise adjacent plantings. Focusing on the small but sometimes rare plants while overlooking the larger ones leads to an overgrown garden with many plants reaching for a place with better light while the more aggressive ones continue to expand. The simple solution to unwanted change is to remove or prune the offending plants. The more complex, radical approach is to start all over.

Creating a garden is more like creating music than art. Recurring themes tie the garden together through the seasons. Unlike a painting, the garden is never finished, never the same twice. Themes, especially color

When hellebore leaves have been removed, their flowers—as well as those on neighboring plants such as crocuses and snowdrops—complete the glory of the moment and the viewer does not have to peek under the leaves to see the beauty of the composition.





schemes, may remain year after year and peak in the proper season, but details change each day and every year. Photographs taken in different seasons of different years at different times of day will document these changes more honestly than personal memory.

When editing, remember the importance of history. You can change the details of a place without changing the shape of the land or destroying the evidence of its past. We have a property with a house on the highest point and a river flowing along one boundary. During the 1930s the entire hill was altered

for erosion control and instead of steep slopes, our predecessors created terraces, with flat areas alternating with short, steep banks, ditches, and gentle slopes. We cleared out the little weed trees, kept the mature ones, and planted the flat areas with snowdrops, which preserve and feature one element of the past as well as the solution to a major problem. Every winter the snowdrops bring the past into view and prominence.

Gardening is one of the most elusive arts. Keep the music with the art, and believe you will get it right next year.



# Maintenance



LAURA WILLSON

In the horticultural world, *maintenance* is a dirty word. However, if gardeners make it a priority during the design and implementation phase, the amount of maintenance a garden will require can be greatly reduced.

A well-managed garden is a thing of beauty, and maintenance is what separates a ho-hum garden from a gorgeous one. While this stewardship may not be glamorous, it can be *very* satisfying. The hours spent weeding, pruning, planting, staking, deadheading, dividing, tying, feeding, editing, spraying, watering, thinning, grading, mulching, and composting help the gardener build a relationship with the garden. The hard work enhances plant knowledge, increases intuition about what works best in the garden, and inspires new ideas.

Maintenance begins with horticultural expertise, including field observations, appropriate plant selection, scale and size of plant material, proper soil preparation, integration of architectural aspects, and reasonable and realistic expectations.

The most important element for low-maintenance success is proper plant selection. Plants thrive in the conditions that are optimized for their growth. Stick with plants that are suited to the garden's soil composition, sunlight, water availability, and potential pests and save hours and dollars in maintenance!

Another benefit of reading the landscape and interpreting the layout to suit the space is a finite plant selection. Selecting a large quantity of a few perennials such as sedums or asters will create eye-pleasing swaths that won't need constant editing. Generally speaking, a well-designed garden requires less editing than one that is haphazard.

Sustainable gardens that use native plants layered for color, texture, and seasonal interest are low-maintenance ecosystems that are attractive and beneficial to wildlife. Layering—where you use graduating heights, coordinating

colors, and various plant materials—is an effective tool to reduce both weeds and the amount of mulch used. A sustainable garden will also require less watering, making it beneficial for the gardener and the environment.

Recently, I have begun to focus on creating meadows. Ornamental grasses, pollinator-friendly plants, and wildflowers help create a more natural landscape that can require less maintenance than a traditional lawn. Unlike turf grass, meadows are typically mowed only once or twice a year and usually have minimal water requirements. A drought-tolerant plant palette and the use of local and native plants can reduce the amount of maintenance required as compared with exotic, finicky, and demanding plants. Again, sensitivity to the site and the environment from the design stage forward is key in creating and maintaining a sustainable garden.

At a certain age, all gardens need a face-lift. After caring for a garden for years, it can be difficult to envision taking the steps necessary to keep the garden great. Change is hard but often necessary. At these times, I advise bold, assertive moves. Transplanting clusters of plants to other parts of the yard creates space for new ideas and exciting palettes. It's possible to blend old and new and take the space in a different direction while honoring the garden's roots.

A garden is alive, which means it is constantly evolving. Garden management is not a one-and-done project; rather, it's a commitment that will span years. Wise planning may not take all of the work out of stewardship, but it will reduce the load significantly. While maintenance is an ongoing endeavor, it ought not to be thought of as a negative or a necessary evil. With proper planning, insight, and realistic expectations, a low-maintenance garden can be achieved. By applying principles such as the right plant and the right place for the right person, one can successfully maintain a sustainable, productive, and gorgeous garden.

Sustainable, plant-based garden design and maintenance includes a spring-flowering display of alliums, which complement the golden blooming perennial *Packeria* in this Newport, Rhode Island, garden.







# The Novice



ANN BROOKE

This essay is about how to begin as a novice. So what is a landscape, and how is it different from a garden?

For simplicity's sake we often use the terms interchangeably, though they do have different connotations. A garden is a planted area. A landscape is the environment in which you live—your house and its surroundings. You can have a landscape without plants, but you can't have a landscape that is beautiful to look at and a pleasure to live in without design.

Start by thinking about your surroundings. Make a list of the things you would like to have and the things about your garden that drive you crazy. Whether you hope to do the actual work yourself or plan to hire a contractor, following this process of thinking about design is an essential first step. If you do it yourself, it will provide you with a plan of action. If you hire a contractor, you will need to be very clear about what you want or you will end up instead with what the contractor wants.

All you need to get started thinking about designing your own landscape is a pencil and paper or a note-taking app on your phone. You are going to make three short lists about your property:

- What do you have that you like? Are there large shade trees, a beautiful old stone wall, or climbing roses over the front door?
- What drives you crazy? Is the first thing you see when you drive in garbage cans? Is the lawn a muddy, scraggly mess? Is there never enough seating when friends come to hang out?
- What do you want to be able to do in your new space? Make a list of activities, such as sitting around a fire on cool evenings, being able to entertain ten (or twenty) people outdoors, lying in a hammock and reading, hearing the sound of running water, or growing your own salad greens and herbs.

These three lists will help you set your priorities and budget.

Your next job is to collect a picture gallery of things you love and can't live without. Browse online. Look through books and magazines. Take photos of any landscaping you see that looks the way you imagine yours will be when finished. Remember, imitation is the highest form of flattery, so don't hesitate to steal ideas from other people.

At this point, no matter what your budget or how much of the actual work you plan to do yourself, *get some help*. A good landscape or garden designer can help you come up with a realistic plan and establish priorities, a budget, and a practical schedule.

If you can afford it, get a master plan; if not, at least get two or three hours of consultation and some sketches. If you don't think you have space or funds for everything you want, the designer can offer alternatives. The sound of running water, for instance, can be as simple as a small wall-hung fountain. Salad greens and herbs can be grown in pots rather than raised beds. If you don't have enough shade, a pergola or shade sail will provide instant protection from the sun.

Lastly, to answer the comment I have had from everyone just starting on this adventure—that they had no idea how much it would cost—I'll refer you to a wonderful little book about Marian Coffin, a famous landscape architect, called *Money, Manure & Maintenance: Ingredients for Successful Gardens of Marian Coffin*. The order in which author Nancy Fleming lists these ingredients gives you a clue to their importance. Don't be discouraged, though: landscaping is easily done in phases, and nobody gets it right the first time. If you've ever moved the furniture around in your house, you'll know that change is the only constant and everything is a process. Luckily, this particular process is one that is universally valued and enjoyed.

For a garden at the entry to a home on New York's Hudson River, a natural rock formation is complemented by plants that feel as if they've sprouted naturally, creating a loose arrangement of color and texture.







# Spring Bulbs



JACQUELINE VAN DER KLOET

From the moment I started my study to become a garden and landscape designer, I have been hooked on plants. I already had my own garden and loved to experiment with combinations of perennial plants and small ornamental shrubs. Nature has always been my biggest source of inspiration, and therefore I created natural combinations by repeating mixtures of plants that grow well according to the local circumstances of light, shade, moisture, or dryness. The result was airy, frivolous combinations, different from the conservative ones which feature one plant species per group.

My own combinations are different and inspiring because of the sequence in flowering periods, the shape and color of the flowers, the texture of the leaves, and the changing silhouettes that follow the actual flowering period.

At some point I discovered spring-flowering bulbs and decided to treat them in the same way I treated the perennials and shrubs. So I started to make mixtures of bulbs that flowered from early till late in the season, each one suitable for the various areas in my garden, which range from deep shade and moist to sunny and dry. The results were overwhelming: a range of long-flowering spring bouquets as a starter, before the perennials and shrubs begin to flower; they were an early and very cheerful announcement of a new garden season.

The key to success? A number of rules, which are quite simple. First, start with a small area in your garden, to which you want to add a mixture of bulbs. If this goes well, then proceed with other areas. Make sure you choose bulbs according to the circumstances of light and moisture. Good bulbs for shaded, moist areas are—from early to late in the year—snowdrops, white squills, blue squills, glory-of-the-snows, windflowers, most varieties of daffodils, corydalises, trout lilies, snowflakes,

and Spanish bluebells. Moist areas with more light are great for striped squills and *Camassia*.

Good bulbs for warm, sunny, and relatively dry areas are crocuses, grape hyacinths, hyacinths, various *Fritillaria* like crown imperials, tulips, and ornamental alliums. An extra note on tulips: they are the absolute queens of the spring garden, the long-stemmed variety as well as the botanical tulips, which are closest to the original tulip. The original tulip comes from the rugged high plains in Central Asia, where summers are hot and dry and winters are quite cold. That is why all tulips always need a warm and sunny spot that is well drained.

Before planting your bulbs, make sure that there is good drainage: you don't want your bulbs to rot in wet soil. The planting depth is normally three times the height of the bulb. Putting the bulbs in the soil with their noses upward will give them a good start, but it's not necessary—they always will find the way to grow.

Plant your bulbs in time, way ahead of the first frost, and water them just after planting: they need to make roots before the frost arrives to be frost-resistant. And finally, the way you plant is how you achieve a natural effect. Mix all the bulbs that you have chosen for a specific area in a wheelbarrow, then take a handful of this mixture, scatter it between the perennials, and plant them where they fall. This means that some of them will be planted in small clusters and others will be singles, farther away from the clusters—and that is the way it should be!

To get down into the numbers, I use the following per ten-square-foot area: eight to ten bulbs of long-stemmed tulips or larger varieties of narcissi; fifteen bulbs of botanical tulips or small varieties of narcissi or small ornamental onions; three bulbs

*Cheerful, frivolous, and elegant:* those words come to mind when looking at this combination of pink lily-flowered tulips 'Jacqueline' and 'Mariette', dancing in a mixture of white geraniums (*Geranium sylvaticum* 'Album' and *Geranium macrorrhizum* 'Spessart') and blue columbines (*Aquilegia vulgaris*).



