

THE HAMPTONS DESIGN GUIDE 2024

YOUR HAMPTONS
DREAM HOME
BUILT TO PERFECTION
FANTASY
KITCHENS & BATHS
THE GREAT OUTDOORS
READY, SET,
DECORATE!
SHOPPING IN STYLE
THE C&G LIST

FROM THE EDITORS OF
HC&G

THE GREAT OUTDOORS

Landscape architects and garden designers on the East End are turning away from perfectly manicured yards in favor of native grasses, shade gardens and fruits and vegetables that thrive in our climate. The result is low-maintenance, good for the earth and of course, gorgeous.



FROM "2023 INNOVATION IN DESIGN AWARDS," AUGUST 15, 2023. PHOTOGRAPH BY HOLLANDER DESIGN LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS.

WHAT NATIVE PLANTS THRIVE ON THE EAST END?



PANEL OF EXPERTS

Geoffrey Nimmer
Geoffrey Nimmer
Landscapes

Janice Parker
Janice Parker Landscape
Architects

Justin Quinn
James Doyle Design
Associates

Edwina von Gal
Perfect Earth Project

“There are so many wonderful plants native to the East End, and they will all thrive here because they evolved here, *if* you pick the right plant for the right place—dry, wet, sun, shade, deer, and so on. Pick the ones that will thrive without extra irrigation, pruning, watering, fertilizing or spraying. And do try to be a bit more imaginative than just adding mophead hydrangeas and crepe myrtles. They offer no pleasant surprises for you and next to nothing for wildlife.”
—Edwina von Gal

“Native plants have become increasingly popular among clients seeking landscapes that are not only beautiful but also ecologically beneficial. Native plants are well-adapted to the local climate and soil conditions, requiring less water and maintenance compared to non-native species.”
—Justin Quinn

“For trees, I love East red cedar, American holly and Sweet Bay magnolia. They all thrive on the East End. Native grasses like little bluestem and switchgrass thrive and don’t get eaten by deer. They can add so much interest to the landscape in the winter.” —Geoffrey Nimmer

“The East End has porous, free draining soils—for the most part, so plants and trees thrive. To name a few: Sea-beach sedge, beach plum and northern bayberry.” —Janice Parker



“AS A FLORAL DESIGNER FIRST AND A LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT SECOND, I LEARNED EARLY ON THAT THERE ARE NO RULES ABOUT COLOR THAT CAN’T BE BROKEN. I BELIEVE, ‘GO BIG OR GO HOME,’ IS APPLICABLE TO THE USE OF COLOR IN THE GARDEN. BE BOLD! DEEPER YELLOWS AND PURPLE BLUES WILL ATTRACT POLLINATORS AND SATISFY YOUR EYE. THINK: JEWEL TONES (REDS, ORANGES), ACCENTED BY CHARTREUSE. GIVE YOUR GARDEN THE FREEDOM TO TELL A COLOR STORY!” —Janice Parker



OPPOSITE: BROOKE HOLM AND ALAN TANSEY (AUGUST 1, 2023); THIS PAGE (BOTTOM): GIEVES ANDERSON (NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2023)

HOW MUCH COLOR SHOULD BE ADDED TO THE GARDEN?

“I am a fan of keeping color simple in the garden, using white and blue, and focusing on structure and texture. But if you are going to add color, I say go big or stay home. Start with red knockout roses, and then add in orange, yellow and purple.” —Geoffrey Nimmer

HOW TO MAKE WAVES WITH WATER FEATURES

“Habitat is food, shelter, and water. And a natural landscape is maximized for habitat. When you add a simple bird bath or a small pond with planted edges, your water feature—and garden—comes alive.” —Edwina von Gal

“In my designs, water features or fountains are more like sculptures, used often to mitigate unwanted sound. We have so many beautiful natural water features here, so for that reason I haven’t created any natural ponds.” —Geoffrey Nimmer

“I LIKE TO PLACE SCULPTURE IN A SIMPLE DESIGN LAYOUT THAT NEEDS A ‘WOW’ FACTOR... AND THIS IS POSSIBLE IN THE SMALLEST SPACE. ONE LARGE GESTURE THAT MAKES MAGIC, THEN A SIMPLE SOFT PLANTING TO SET THE BACKGROUND.” —Janice Parker



WHICH VEGETABLE AND HERB PLANTS PERFORM BEST ON THE EAST END?

“Potatoes, of course, lettuce, tomatoes, corn, pumpkins and more. Herbs love free-draining soils, so they love the East End. Try basil, rosemary, sage, thyme, oregano and cilantro. Parsley will never let you down.” —Janice Parker

“This is a great place for farming; just about everything grows well here. But there is a reason why most people end up with baskets of tomatoes and zucchinis; they are so reliable.” —Edwina von Gal

“Rosemary, sage, parsley, thyme and mint are all extremely easy to grow here.” —Geoffrey Nimmer

BEST FRUITS TO GROW IN THE SUMMER?

“RASPBERRIES! THEY ARE SO EASY TO GROW AND SO MUCH BETTER THAN ANY YOU CAN BUY.” —Edwina von Gal

“Berries! What could be better than blueberries, blackberries, raspberries and more?” —Janice Parker



“Raspberries, blackberries, persimmons. The fruit is delicious, and they are not prone to pests and fungus.” —Geoffrey Nimmer



OPPOSITE: BORN WALLANDER (OCTOBER 2023); THIS PAGE (BOTTOM): JOSHUA MCHUGH (MAY/JUNE 2023)

TOP 5 WHAT CLIENTS WANT NOW

1 “Clients often express a desire for low-maintenance landscapes. They want outdoor spaces that enhance their property without requiring excessive effort and expense to upkeep.” —Justin Quinn

2 “Pickleball courts.” —Janice Parker

3 “My wish is that all clients would ask for one essential: peaceful gardens that work with, not against, nature.” —Edwina von Gal

4 “Clients are increasingly seeking eco-friendly landscape solutions that minimize environmental impact and promote conservation.” —Justin Quinn

5 “Privacy and unique hardscaping materials.” —Geoffrey Nimmer

SHADE GARDENS TOP TIPS:

“Pick the right plants, shade plants for moist or dry conditions. Shade plants don’t flower much in the summer, so go for a simple mix of textures. You can hardly go wrong with native ferns and *heuchera* (autumn bride).”
—Edwina von Gal

“CHOOSE JUST ABOUT ANY FERN: JAPANESE FOUNTAIN GRASS, DUKE GARDENS, LEATHERLEAF MAHONIA, MONKSHOOD OR BLACK COHOSH.”
—Geoffrey Nimmer



“Do not overwater! Use ground covers, not grass, and use bright colored foliage, if possible. Some favorites are: substance hosta, astilbes and hellebores. Annual favorites for colorful leaves in the shade include caladium, canna, coleus and begonia.”
—Janice Parker

WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR FIGHTING INSECTS AND PESTS?

“Don’t fight them! Get to know what it is you are thinking to kill: very often they aren’t actually pests, and most often, if you wait a bit, some natural predator (ladybug or bird) will come along and eat them. Never use insecticides, including the ones called organic. They kill the good with the bad and interrupt the pest/predator natural cycle. Tick spraying is the worst! It doesn’t reduce the incidence of Lyme Disease and it is wiping out all our beloved insects, including fireflies and butterflies. Spray yourself instead.”
—Edwina von Gal

“LEAVE THE INSECTS ALONE, WE SHOULDN’T BE SPRAYING AT ALL. IT CAN BE PART OF A LANDSCAPE DESIGN TO USE PLANT MATERIAL THAT IS NOT PRONE TO PESTS AND DISEASE.”
—Geoffrey Nimmer

WHERE DO YOU LOOK FOR GARDEN INSPIRATION?

“All styles of landscape design throughout history resonate with me, as long as there is a strong respect for the land and respect for nature. Designing landscapes is nothing new. The Romans were outside soaking in their baths in the second century BC. In India and the Middle East, there have been garden structures found 10,000 years older than that. The notion that paradise could be created on earth took root early and is still with us.”
—Janice Parker

“Touring public gardens, art galleries and museums, sometimes old movies, design books and my fellow landscape designers.”
—Geoffrey Nimmer

“I look to nature. She knows what will do well and look wonderful. Why else do we travel to natural places for relaxation?”
—Edwina von Gal



OPPOSITE (LEFT TO RIGHT): ISABEL PARRA (AUGUST 15, 2023); NEIL LANDINO JR (AUGUST 15, 2023); THIS PAGE: ANASTASSIOS MENTIS (SEPTEMBER 2023)

HYDRANGEAS 101



“There are a couple of native ones like *hydrangea arborescens* and *quercifolia* that have flowers with real nectar. They are beautiful in a mixed planting. But really, can we move away from masses of mophead hydrangeas and into what is happening in gardens now?” —Edwina von Gal

“I know that blue mop head hydrangeas represent the quintessential Hamptons landscape. But I find them problematic, which I attribute to our climate crisis. All the *hydrangea paniculata* —*grandiflora*, *tardiva* and *limelight*— are reliable, low-maintenance and long-blooming plants.” —Geoffrey Nimmer

“I love most hydrangeas, limelight in particular. But don’t overlook *Hydrangea quercifolia* (oak leaf hydrangea)— they have giant flowers in varied tones in the summer, orange foliage in the fall and a lovely peeling bark in the wintertime. You will always enjoy looking at this plant. You can always add in a vertical element like *Astilbe* for form and interest.” —Janice Parker



HYDRANGEA ARBORESCENS



WHICH FLOWERS LOOK BEST IN ARRANGEMENTS?

“MY VERY FIRST MEMORY IS OF A PEONY, IT WAS AS BIG AS MY HEAD! I HAVE BEEN IN LOVE WITH PEONIES AND FLOWERS EVER SINCE. LOOK FOR SPRING FLOWERING BULBS (TULIPS, IRIS, DAFFODILS AND CAMASSIA ARE ALL DELICIOUS IN A VASE). TRY CUTTING BRANCHES OF TREES, AS WELL.” —Janice Parker

“The classics: Roses, peonies, dahlias, zinnias. Then amsonia, echinops and echinacea, that you could pick from your meadow.” —Geoffrey Nimmer

“Wild ones.” —Edwina von Gal



PEONIES

OPPOSITE LEFT: HOLLANDER DESIGN LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS (AUGUST 15, 2023); THIS PAGE (TOP): BJÖRN WALLÄNDER (OCTOBER 2023)

WHEN SHOULD YOU START PREPPING YOUR SUMMER GARDEN?

“Start planning your garden in winter so that you will be ready to purchase material as soon as it is available. Get it in the ground in the spring so that it can be established for full-on summer glory.” —Geoffrey Nimmer

“MANY DECIDUOUS TREES AND SHRUBS CAN BE PRUNED IN LATE WINTER—BUT CHOOSE A WARM DAY. SEVERE CUTTING AND SHAPING SHOULD BE DONE WHILE PLANTS ARE DORMANT SINCE SUMMER PRUNING TENDS TO INHIBIT GROWTH. IT IS EASIER TO SEE BRANCHING STRUCTURES AND MAKE DECISIONS ABOUT WHERE AND HOW TO SHAPE YOUR SHRUBS AND TREES WHEN THERE IS NO FOLIAGE. SUCKERING GROWTH IS MUCH EASIER TO SPOT AND CUT OUT NOW. BUT, WAIT TO PRUNE SPRING BLOOMERS LIKE MAGNOLIA, RHODODENDRON, FORSYTHIA, QUINCE, ANDROMEDA, AZALEA AND SPIREA, TO NAME A FEW. IF THEY ARE LEGGY AND WILD, THEY CAN BE PRUNED JUST AFTER THEY BLOOM.” —Janice Parker



WHAT LANDSCAPE DESIGNS ARE TRENDING IN THE HAMPTONS?

“There seem to be two main design camps: the old-fashioned boring aesthetic with ultra-uptight plants that look like they’re ‘trapped in shapewear’ or the new relaxed look, bursting with life, that’s new and different almost every day. Guess which one is better for the environment and better for you?” —Edwina von Gal

“Low maintenance, sustainable, organic landscapes, with year-round interest.” —Geoffrey Nimmer

“Many clients are looking to extend their living space into the outdoors. They want areas where they can relax, entertain guests and enjoy nature’s beauty.” —Justin Quinn

“People are aware now more than ever that their homes are also a sanctuary. There is a great desire and need for extended season outdoor living. Outdoor pavilions with heaters, plush furniture and fireplaces are in demand. Fire bowls are a beautiful all-in-one addition to the landscape that work perfectly in smaller settings.” —Janice Parker

OPPOSITE: NICK SARGENT (JULY 1, 2023); THIS PAGE: ANASTASSIOS MENTIS (SEPTEMBER 2023)