

Trends 2011

Eco-friendly, sustainable and long-term take root as key influences

By Barbara Ballinger

WHAT'S NEW and exciting in gardens around the country? We asked some of our favorite landscape designers, architects and growers, and here's what they're seeing the most:



Intricate Detailing

"My clients view their landscapes as an investment, much as they would a significant work of fine art," notes landscape designer Laurie Van Zandt. "At homeowners' requests, my designs are reflecting more detail with intricate stonework, container plantings and structures. This applies to the infrastructure of the garden...as well as in the more obvious parts of the garden. They want bang for their buck, with a desire for quality materials and workmanship."



Stumps as Focal Point

The concept of stumperies originated in England in the mid-19th century, says John Algezzi. Most stumperies make use of dead trees on the site, though some feature stumps from another site. These gardens usually are located in the shade and planted with mosses, ferns, lichens and other dwarf shade plants.



Locavore Gardens

One trend worth highlighting, says Craig Jenkins-Sutton, is using garden space to grow vegetables and other edibles. This is an extension of the increasing desire to eat more local foods. Since many consumers live in areas with a small amount of space, installing traditional raised beds in backyards and on roof decks is an excellent strategy.

PHOTO: Laurie Van Zandt

Meet the Experts



John Algozzini, owner of Land Art: Solutions in Plainfield, IL, recently won a design award from the Illinois Landscape Contractors Association; the project highlighted summer color, a water garden and garden art.



Jeff Allen is a landscape designer; his firm, JALA LLC, is in Winston-Salem, NC. Jeff wants budding gardeners to keep this tip in mind: "Gardens don't happen overnight and take time to grow into place."



Steve Chepurny, co-owner of Beechwood Landscape Architecture & Construction in Southamptton, NJ, loves bright-colored perennials that, dried, change hues. "It extends their color another 6-8 weeks," he says.



Kim Conerty, a landscape designer with Kinsella Landscape in Blue Island, IL, loves planting annuals, which give homeowners a fresh start for their gardens each year.



John Cowen has been living and working as a landscape designer in the Hamptons for the past 20+ years. Since 1994 he has operated a design and build company, John Cowen Landscape Associates, Ltd.



Susan M. Dowd is a gardening enthusiast whose articles have appeared in numerous publications throughout the U.S.



Craig Jenkins-Sutton started Topiarius Inc. eight years ago in Chicago, but he's designed gardens far longer. He says, "We love working...on small plots or roof decks. For a reasonable budget, you can make a significant impact."



Lucinda O'Halloran, landscape designer, owns Spirit Garden Design in Seattle. "Gardening has given me more energy and great happiness," says O'Halloran, whose favorite flower is the Evergreen Huckleberry.



Leslie Rohrer is a landscape architect and owner of The Carter Rohrer Co. in Canton, GA, which is just outside Atlanta.



P. Allen Smith, whose firm is based in Little Rock, AR, is an author, a contributor to *The Today Show* and host of PBS's *P. Allen Smith's Garden Home*.



Anthony I. Tesselaar, co-owner of Tesselaar Plants, markets new plants for the home garden, landscape, home décor and gift markets.



Laurie Van Zandt owns The Ardent Gardener and mixes her professional experience in architectural and landscape design to create sustainable gardens that work in harmony with their natural surroundings.

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The areas under big tree canopies, houses with large overhangs or tall city buildings offer a challenge to amateur gardeners, since they receive little sunlight, and many plant materials simply can't grow under these conditions. Even properties that seem wide open and sunny may have areas that are shady, thereby calling for different plant selections, says landscape architect Clara Couric Batchelor, owner of CBA Landscape Architects. The good news is that there are hundreds of choices that thrive in dark, dense, cool and sometimes wet settings. The results can create some of the most lush, colorful and romantic gardens. Many groundcovers are a good choice, since they fill in and feather around tree roots where grass can't. And a shade garden often presents a more architectural looking garden, because of the number of large tree leaves, says designer Barb Ince of Susan Fredman Design Group.



Key questions to ask when planning for a shade garden

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Does the area provide dry or wet shade?

The amount of rain and type of soil should influence your plant palette for a successful shade garden, says landscape designer John Algozzini, founder of Land Art Solutions. Examples: In dry shaded areas, coral bells, hostas, spiderwort and autumn ferns do well but not Ligularia and Japanese painted ferns. Similarly, black and sandy soil are super-dry, so water drains more quickly,



Rocks work well in a shade garden, as they help define an area and require no sun.

PHOTO: Courtesy, Laurie Van Zandt

PHOTO: Don Zintek, Photographics 2



Plant materials were kept low to retain views of the mountains; drought-tolerance was another consideration.

drought-tolerant

Rocks, native grasses and shrubs create an eco-friendly Utah site with views

Problem: Needed materials that keep views open, are drought-tolerant, and add color and texture

Solution: Low-lying grasses and shrubs in the back to leave views open; taller plants in front with some small water features

Key plantings: Pinyon Pine (*Pinus edulis*); Native Chokecherry (*Prunus virginiana*); Austrian Copper Rose (*Rosa foetida*); Green Mound Alpine Currant (*Ribes alpinum* 'Green Mound'); Paprika Yarrow (*Achillea* 'Paprika'); Elijah Blue Fescue (*Festuca glauca* 'Elijah Blue')

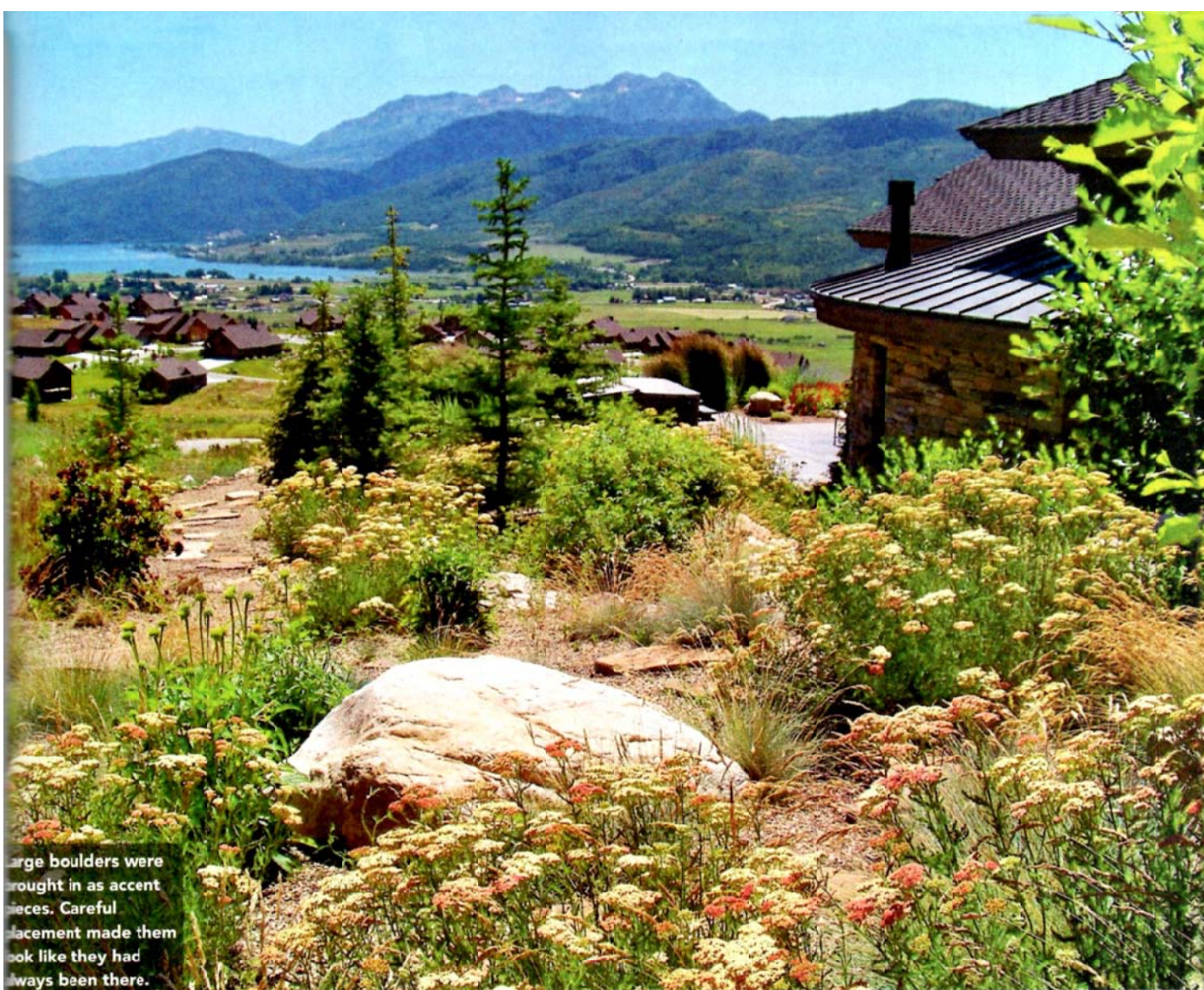
Zones: 3-4

Landscape designer: Laurie Van Zandt, The Ardent Gardener Landscape Design, Huntsville, UT theardentgardener.net, 801-388-8103

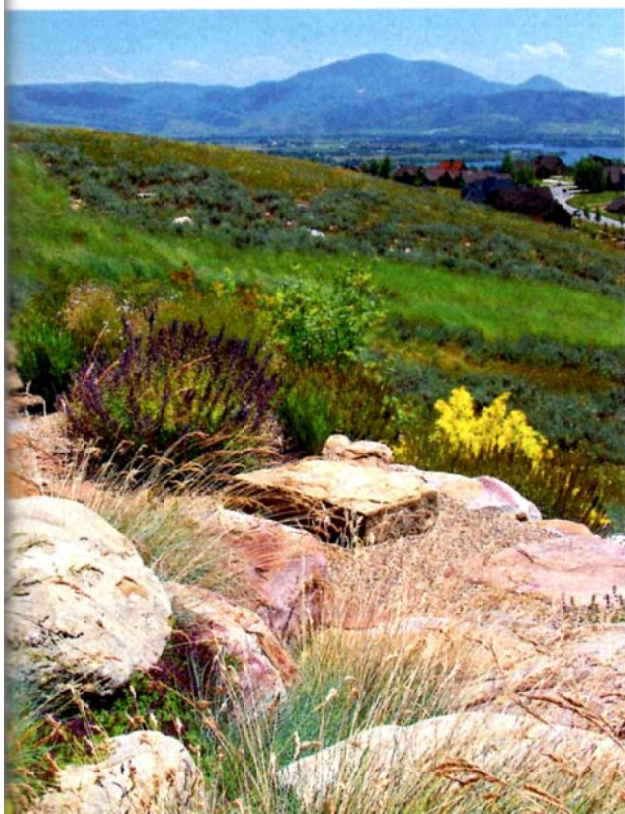
Landscape installation: Grass Plus

For a development in northern Utah where residents are encouraged to plant drought-tolerant gardens, landscape designer Laurie Van Zandt of The Ardent Gardener Landscape Design helped a couple design an environmentally-correct ½-acre yard with materials that blend in with the open space, which consisted primarily of sage, grasses and a few trees. Her solution was more native and ornamental plants and grasses with colors in a range of tans, buffs and silvers, and varied textures, so that all mimicked the existing materials and replaced what had to be removed due to excavation when the house and driveway were constructed. To keep views open, she

kept plantings low in the backyard, which meant mostly grasses, yarrow and gallardia. Two new patios were constructed from stamped concrete, which was acid-stained in gold and rust hues to mirror the high desert palette. In the front yard, Van Zandt planted larger shrubs, Pinyon pine, Chokecherry and crabapple trees, and drought-tolerant Austrian Copper roses and catmint for fragrance. For interest and to break up the dry feel of the garden, she placed a small recirculating waterfall and a pond. Van Zandt also sited many large rocks and boulders as accents by the patios. The overall effect is a gradual transition from a newly built environment to the existing one.



Large boulders were brought in as accent pieces. Careful placement made them look like they had always been there.



using native plants

Van Zandt looked to the existing surrounding landscape for inspiration. To keep views open, she focused on low-lying materials, plants and grasses. She chose silvery sage and grasses in a range of hues, from light to dark green. A mix of textures was represented—from fine blades of grass and evergreen needles to both small and broad leaves. Several native Chokecherry trees were planted to tie the home to its site and the site to its surrounding native landscape. Perennials in beds, by patios and along walkways add some color for accent. Because of the strong winds coming off the mountains, Van Zandt found that a different bark mulch needed to be used than she usually specified. “Since I arrived from California, I found that the fine bark that I had used to keep down weeds ended up blowing away. A larger bark mulch or the small mulch topped by crushed gravel works better and keeps in nutrients needed for the soil. It happens to look nice, which is a nice accidental design decision,” she says.

Planting grasses and other materials selectively around boulders and rocks made them appear more natural; spareness was key here.