

A young girl with long dark hair, wearing a light green short-sleeved shirt, a purple tutu, and purple shoes, is walking away from the camera on a brick path. To her left is a flower bed filled with tulips in shades of yellow, pink, and red. The path is made of reddish-brown bricks and curves to the right. In the background, there are more flower beds and a brick wall.

Celebrate HOME

SPRING 2013

MAGAZINE

www.celebratehomemagazine.com

Seeds of My Soul

All of us have enjoyed flowers, gardens and the promise and arrival of spring. I drift back when I see flowers that remind me of my childhood. My mother had a lilac bush, roses lining the front walk, and a peony patch—all for cutting flowers to grace our home. At Easter, my two sisters and I received corsages to wear with new outfits. Our neighbor, Mrs. Wolf, grew brilliant red geraniums in front of her sun-drenched porch. And each May we scoured the neighborhood for spring flowers to bring to Mary's altar at school.

Memories can be vivid, yet sometimes the details are fuzzy. When I was eight I had my own flower garden. Recently I dreamed of the barren bed waiting to be planted. Why was I the only child in the family to get her own garden? That's the fuzzy part. The flowers are vivid yet how I got there is not. Was it because I was the quiet one of the five kids who enjoyed digging in the earth, watering and being alone?

My dad had a large vegetable garden within a white picket fence and I got the space outside the fence in the front of the garden. Mom helped me plant the first garden but after that I was pretty much on my own. The reward was great. It was mostly a cutting garden of tall snapdragons and zinnias, punctuated with marigold and petunias. I haven't been able to grow snapdragons as tall and hardy since. My flowers were gracious. My dad's vegetables were unforgiving and made me anxious, especially when I sliced right through a root vegetable while digging it up or ruptured a ripe tomato because I didn't twist it off the vine properly.



Stargazers

My husband's trademark flower while we were dating was Stargazer lilies. They are bigger than life with their powerful fragrance, dramatic bursts of petals, and burnt-orange stamens that stain. Bill is bigger than life just like the Stargazer and you can often find him looking at the dark sky with wonder. He still gives them to me, but judiciously, reserving them for big occasions. I'm still caught off guard when the giver and his Stargazers burst in.

Let your children pick out some seeds from the rack and a bedding plant or two and you have a little one who will love the earth and what it can produce. Give a man a bouquet of flowers and let him enjoy getting instead of giving. Treat yourself to a bunch of grocery-store tulips and place them where you'll see them.

Our love of flowers runs deep in our souls. They track with our lives: gifts expressing joy at the birth of a baby; show of friendship; love; get-well wishes; congratulations, and more. Flowers often round out the cycle of life and are there when we are sent off to eternal life.

We hope you enjoy earth's beauty in this issue as we welcome spring. As always, we are ever thankful to our contributors—ordinary people doing extraordinary things. From our gardeners to our crafters to our home cooks and contributors, they all share their love of home and their personalities blossom forth in these pages. We enjoy celebrating home with you.

Barbara Kelley

Barbara Kelley, Editor-in-Chief
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Do you have an original recipe you'd like to share? E-mail bkelley@celebratehomemag.com.

We can come to you! Are you having a party or special event at your home or an activity that relates to the subject of home? Contact us to discuss your idea. If it fits the editorial scope of *Celebrate Home Magazine*, we may photograph your event and write the story.

Celebrate Home Magazine offers a multitude of thanks to our contributors.

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Photography by Cindy Dyer

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BARBARA KELLEY is editor-in-chief of *Celebrate Home Magazine* and owner of Kelley Hospitality. She has 25 years of publishing experience and is also editor-in-chief of *Hearing Loss Magazine*. Barbara, "a sneeze guard heiress," is one of five kids whose dad invented the sneeze guard. She is an Army wife to Bill, although he says when it comes to their home, she is the commanding officer. One of her favorite jobs is being a mom. She blogs at www.barbaragarneaukelley.com.



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H.M. DYER, aka The King of Texas, is a military retiree and a U.S. Customs Service retiree. He bestows kingly dispensations without compensation from his castle in San Antonio. Holder of bachelor degrees from Nebraska and Texas, the King relates, rambles, and rebukes incessantly with his biographical postings and cogent articles on city, state, national and world events and education—especially grammar. He serves as copy editor of *Celebrate Home Magazine*. Visit his blog at www.thekingoftexas.com.



SOPHIA STADNYK revels in the written word and welcomes this opportunity to celebrate her passion. Many of her earliest and best memories come from books and libraries. An attorney with an extensive background in local government law, Sophia writes a regular column on the U.S. Supreme Court for the America Bar Association's *State and Local Law News*, and writes on legal issues for other publications. When not dealing with torts, she likes to dabble in tortes, experiment with heirloom tomato-growing, and tend to an acre-sized plot of shoes and boots.



KATHLEEN ABELA is married to Andrew and is a mother of six who can usually be found in the kitchen, laundry room or the car. Although she is usually cooking mundane things she finds a creative outlet in trying new recipes and almost always tries them out on guests. Second to taking care of her family, Kathleen likes to build up her local community mostly through church or school events. She graduated from St. Thomas Aquinas College where she immersed herself in the Great Books.



JONATHAN BATES owns Food Forest Farm (www.FoodForestFarm.com), a business specializing in educational services and useful plant sales. He has been studying, creating, and working with rural and urban gardens in the Connecticut River Valley and beyond for over a decade. Jonathan loves wild crafting with friends, and working with folks to better the world we live in. He cofounded and teaches with Permaculture F.E.A.S.T., and is a farmer with Nuestras Raices, Inc. He lives in Holyoke, Massachusetts.



JOHN BLACK is the award-winning principal of Verdance Fine Garden Design (www.verdancedesign.com), whose imaginative yet practical spaces distinguish Silicon Valley homes and their owners. A California native himself, John especially enjoys creating low-maintenance, high-style landscapes that are kind to the environment. Having recently survived his own remodel, his pastimes now include tending his sourdough starter, chasing after his two roosters, and wishing for just a little more sleep.



KAREN BYER-STORCH has been a package designer and illustrator, and is now a freelance designer in Springfield, Virginia. She collects Quimper Faience (French pottery—she is French-born), anything turtle-related, and vintage spice tins. She loves cats, books, home decorating and spending time with her daughters. She just recently ended her ten-year search for the perfect red hue for her dining room walls. Having amassed several hundred wine corks, she is now dreaming up cork craft projects. Stay tuned.



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We're looking for writers and photographers to add a fresh and distinctive style to every issue. You don't have to be a professional—just someone who is inspired and wants to share your experience. Now accepting submissions for:

DIY Projects	Crafts & Hobbies	Artist Profiles
Food & Entertaining	Pets	Collector Profiles
Homes & Gardens	Travel	
Family Life	Personal Stories	

Celebrate Home Magazine is available as a free downloadable pdf file on www.magcloud.com and www.issuu.com. It can be purchased as a beautiful printed edition from www.magcloud.com.

For submission guidelines and subscription information, e-mail bkelly@celebratehomemag.com.



NICOLE CODY lives the good life on her organic farm in Possum Creek, Australia, close to a good surf beach and excellent coffee. Her house is overflowing with books, dogs, home-grown produce and friends who always pop around at tea time! In her spare time she's a writer, meditation teacher, enthusiastic cook and gardener. She loves all things magical, and is sure that cupcakes have healing qualities! She blogs about her life at www.cauldronsandcupcakes.com.



KRISTEN CLEM lives in the quiet town of Grove City, Pennsylvania, with her husband, Ryan. She has degrees from Penn State University in art education and fine arts in printmaking. She is currently enjoying her "less-stress" job as a part-time nanny where she gets to use her artistic training to work more one-on-one to inspire creativity in children. She spends her free time visiting with family, making jewelry, treasure hunting at antique stores and auctions, and baking gluten-free desserts for her husband.



SUE CUMMINGS lives in Huntsville, Alabama, where she enjoys lots of newfound passions such as mountain hiking, yoga and target practice with her new 380 pistol. She enjoys being with friends and family, travel, taking in afternoon tea, reading, volunteering at Choose Life, riding her Harley with her husband, going out to eat and cooking less. She enjoys daily morning quiet time in fellowship with Jesus and is learning to live, love, let go and surrender to this incredible thing called life.



EMILY DOERMAN, R.D., is a registered dietitian and certified chef. She had been working as a dietitian for almost two years when she decided to return to school. Emily completed the professional culinary program at the International Center for Culinary Arts in Dubai. She enjoys helping people eat and live healthier through nutrition counseling, cooking lessons, cooking demonstrations, and recipe development. Visit her blog at www.sonutritiousanddelicious.blogspot.com.



CHERI NEUFELD is a recipe developer, food photographer and blogger at Kitchen Simplicity. Mother of two little ones, Cheri and her family bounce around the world living in places like Norway and New York City. Beyond everyday life as a mom, food and blogging keeps her connected. Cheri's passion is to share simple, healthy recipes that bring families together around the table. You can follow her tasty adventures at www.kitchensimplicity.com.



PAM PENICK dishes about gardening under the Death Star in Austin, Texas, which, despite the heat is actually a great gardening town. Having ripped out her share of lawn grass over the years, Pam wrote *Lawn Gone!* to help others who are eager to replace their own lawns with something better but just aren't sure how to begin. When she's not designing gardens or blogging, she enjoys watching movies and playing Aggravation with her family until they all get aggravated. Visit her blog, Digging, at www.penick.net/digging.



MARY ELLEN RYALL is the author of *My Name is Butterfly* and *The Monarch Butterfly Coloring Book*, and is currently working on a *Field Guide to the Butterfly Habitat*. She was awarded a Scenic Beauty Award for implementing a monarch butterfly habitat in Shell Lake, Wisconsin. An avid gardener, researcher and photographer, she is creating a private wild butterfly habitat on family land in Fitchburg, Massachusetts. Visit www.butterflywomanpublishing.com. She blogs at www.butterfly-woman-publishing.com.



MICHAEL SCHWEHR grew up in the Cleveland, Ohio, area, lived in Worms, Germany, for two and a half years, and finally settled in Alexandria, Virginia. He is the president, chief PC repair technician and network engineer for JumpStart Computing, an on-site PC repair business at www.JumpStartComputing.com. He loves books, camping, photographing bugs with a macro lens, and trying new things. He owns more tools than he can possibly use, and likes to tinker with computers and recipes.



CATHLEEN GILG owns Cathleen Gilg Interior Design and lives in the historic Harmony, Pennsylvania, which was founded by the Harmonists. Cathy says the Harmonists were celibate so there are no Harmonists left, only a rich history. She enjoys teaching classes and doing anything from faux painting to cooking. She says women "quest" for things for their home and she is happy to go questing anytime. Her advice: before you start a project, put on great music and have a glass of wine so you won't be inhibited. She can be reached at catgilg@zoominternet.net.



CAMILLA HOUGHTON thrives in sunny Siesta Key, Florida, with husband Jim, son Nolan, twins Ellie and Claire, and a little dog named Stella. When she's not wearing her graphic designer hat, Cam pursues her passion for landscape and abstract painting, moves furniture around the house on a whim, and hunts for the next funky ring to add to her collection. She works from her home studio where she can see manatees in the canal by her patio. She loves browsing art galleries and museums for inspiration for her next creative piece.



BRIAN K. LOFLIN is a photographer, author, and teacher with a passion for natural science. Trained as a biologist, he has an inborn curiosity about what things look at high magnifications. (Visit his blog at www.bkloflin.wordpress.com) Four decades of experience shooting advertising, commercial, and medical images led him to teach photography at the University of Texas in Austin. A world traveller, he now enjoys kicking back in Austin with his wife, Shirley, and three cats.



SHIRLEY LOFLIN is a photographer, naturalist and author. Her love for the outdoors was acquired as a little girl and was encouraged and inspired by her naturalist grandmother. She has studied and identified birds and flowers for as long as she can remember. In addition, she has completed many specialized courses in natural science, including the Cornell Bird Biology curriculum. She is an accomplished artist and photographer and today, Shirley uses her photography to accent her enduring love of nature.



DANIEL SCOTT, JR. works in Fort Worth, Texas, as a graphic designer. His art is created entirely from candy wrappers, drink labels, gum wrappers, sugar packets, tea packaging, anything from the marketplace that shows a label. By utilizing marketing brand awareness and color recognition, the labels used in each composition are limited to what's available at that time or collected for future use. In his spare time, he enjoys running, bike riding, playing the guitar and mobile photography. He live in Fort Worth with his wife and two girls.



CYNTHIA STAPLES is a writer and photographer living in Somerville, Massachusetts. She grew up in Virginia near the Blue Ridge Mountains. She has been lucky enough to travel the world. Those experiences plus childhood memories provide endless inspiration. Follow her creative journey at www.wordsandimagesbycynthia.com and view her photography at photosbycynthia.smugmug.com.



ERIC TOENSMIER has studied and practiced permaculture since 1990. A socially-engaged plant geek, he works to promote perennial agriculture as a solution to climate change. Eric is the author of several award-winning books, including *Perennial Vegetables* and *Edible Forest Gardens* (with Dave Jacke). His writing, teaching, and consulting business is based at www.perennialsolutions.org.

Want to contribute to *Celebrate Home Magazine*?

E-mail Barbara Kelley at bkelley@celebratehomemag.com



Feather Your Nest

Lovely finds for your lovely home



Heart Springform Pan— Anytime you want to put a little love in your baking use this heart-shaped pan with a removable bottom. Non-stick Teflon® and the spring release allows cakes and tarts to come out easily and flawlessly. The *Celebrate Home Magazine* kitchen used it in the Queen of Hearts Blueberry Tart recipe on page 48. The pan is by Zenker and made in Germany. Order from Amazon.com's Zenker store. Prices vary from \$20.95 to \$29.99.



Problem-Free Gardening— New for 2013! Looking for a lawn alternative? This colorful carpet is the solution to many gardeners' problems. SedumSod™ is not only instant but colorful and you'll never have to worry about having to water with drought-proof Sedums while enjoying months of foliage with no maintenance. SedumSod™ is a vegetative mat system comprised of the right balance of soil and plants. Simply remove the non-woven fabric for easy installation in your landscape. It's a perfect groundcover along hot, dry borders; use on slopes and banks, areas that are inhospitable to other plants, green roofs, living walls, and dish garden. Edge a stone pathway or plant Sedums in cracks and crevices. SedumSod™ is great for DIY projects—wreaths, topiaries, centerpieces, and more. Prices start at \$16.45. Order from www.greatgardenplants.com.

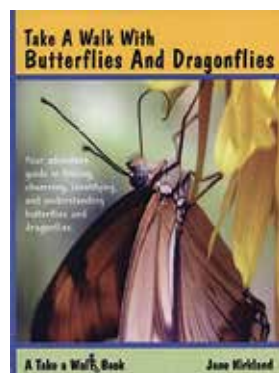


Blue River Traders— Nestled in Manhattan, Kansas, home of Kansas State, Blue River Traders is where you'll find exotic and unique furniture and accessories. Ron Feldkamp designs the furniture and oversees manufacturing in Mexico. The pieces are perfect for furnishing a luxury cabin or lodge, but their selection also inspires one to choose a unique piece to mix with any décor. Blue River Traders is located at 2620 Tuttle Creek Boulevard, Manhattan, KS 66502, but you can also order anything by viewing items on their website. They will custom-make anything you can think of. Just contact Ron and he will brainstorm with you and ship anywhere. Browse the collection at www.bluerivertraders.com.

Shown: TV Buffet with a distressed blue lacquer finish made from Mexican Ponderosa pine with wrought iron accents. 83" length x 22" depth x 42" height. \$1,595

Do you have a product to feature in Feather Your Nest?

For consideration, submit your product information with high resolution photo, brief description, price and website to bkelly@celebratehomemag.com.



Take a Walk with Butterflies and Dragonflies— This field guide by Jane Kirkland shows you how to discover these delightful insects in an extraordinary way. She shares her enthusiasm about how to observe these incredible creatures. There are places for field notes on observations and findings. The book has received the National Gardening Association's Seal of Approval and is recommended by the National Science Teachers Association. The book is part of the *Take a Walk* series and is available for \$9.99 at www.takeawalk.com.



Luxurious Bath Mat— Stepping out of your shower was never this luxurious with the Memory Foam HD™ bath mat. With a combination of CoreTex™ for a precision-knit microfiber for softness and instant absorption and Memory Foam HD™ for engineered maximum comfort, you get non-skid, absorbent comfort every time. Available in various colors for \$24.99 from Bed Bath & Beyond stores and www.bedbathandbeyond.com.



Amy Smyth Made It Notecards— Check out Amy's line of cards with bright colors and graphics with taglines such as "Tired of Texting" and "Going Old School with a Note Card." She has a point—there is nothing like a handwritten note, almost a lost art. It's still important to send a written note that can reveal much more than just words on a screen. Find these at Target or at www.amysmythmadeit.com. The cards are reasonably priced at \$3.99 for a package of 12 note cards with envelopes.

Easy Bake in the Oven Silicone Baking Liners by MIU France are a must for your collection of kitchen tools. Silicone is nonstick and heat resistant up to 480 degrees. These sheets take the place of parchment paper and give you stick-free baking and easy clean-up. They are also easy to store and long lasting. You can only buy this brand from retailers and the three-pack set can be found at Amazon.com for \$19.49.



Wall Stickers from Voilà!— Turn a quiet corner, wall or baseboard of any room into a grassy meadow or a whimsical scene. Voilà's peel-and-stick wall decals come in a range of colors and are completely removable. Browse their large and imaginative selection at www.voilastickers.com.

Above: "Starry Child" creates a sleepy dream land in your child's room (\$27).

Right: "Little House in the..." is a whimsical representation of a grassy meadow. (\$43).



White Wine Worcestershire Sauce— With its first ingredient listed as Sauterne wine, Lea & Perrins® Marinade for Chicken is a special blend of white wine, garlic, and select herbs and spices that penetrates and tenderizes without compromising the wholesome goodness of chicken.

The *Celebrate Home Magazine* kitchen dips one pound of cleaned, boneless chicken breasts in lightly beaten egg, then in a mixture of flour and bread crumbs. Brown the breasts on each side in canola oil. When well-browned on each side, poke holes in the chicken with a fork. Pour in half of the bottle of the marinade, top with fresh or canned mushrooms and simmer for an hour or so. The chicken doesn't dry out and you can season or add more marinade to taste. Lea & Perrins Marinade for Chicken is found in grocery stores or at www.leaperrins.com. If your grocery store doesn't carry it, ask them to.



A sunny canal home reflects the beauty of nature with the colors of sea-glass blues and greens, understated furnishings in neutral fabrics, natural shell and stone accents, quirky finds and original artwork.

Artist-in-Residence

Interview with
Camilla Houghton

Photography
by **Cindy Dyer**

I have been friends with Camilla Houghton since 1986 and have enjoyed watching her transform every house she has inhabited. She is as fearless as I am when it comes to decorating. One afternoon I was visiting her small rental house in Alexandria, Virginia, when, in the middle of our conversation, she declared, "I must paint that fireplace. It's just too blah!" We brainstormed and decided that periwinkle was the color of the day. I assumed we would head to the hardware store for paint, but she ran down to her basement, grabbed three buckets of paint and mixed up her own shade, right there on the spot. In under an hour, the fireplace became the focal point of the living room. She has since moved four times, most recently to a beautiful canal home in Sarasota, Florida, where I visited her last November.

You moved from a condo in Upper Marlboro, Maryland to the Laurel townhouse, then to the single family home in Annapolis. How did your decorating style evolve from each environ?

The condo had kind of a retro style. I installed black and white checked floors in kitchen and baths, painted the walls a pinkish peach, and added blue-green accents in upholstery pieces and painted furniture. The art was mostly vintage. The townhouse was decorated in a more Mediterranean style with hand-rubbed yellow ochre walls, country French and Italian furnishings, tone-on-tone fabrics, and golden neutrals. The Annapolis house was more eclectic.

How would you describe the style of your house in Annapolis? What were your favorite transformations in that house?

It started out as a 70s contemporary split level "Brady Bunch" house, and evolved into a contemporary eclectic home. The first thing we changed was all of the lighting to update the home. I found a beautiful gilt palm-leaf chandelier from Florence, Italy, for the dining room. We did some fun things there, like put in a slide from the basement stairs into the kids playroom, painted murals on the walls, installed a mosaic on the entryway floor, did a powder room with seashells embedded in the walls and an iridescent ceiling, then created an

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Left: The "lounge area" faces the water and is bathed in beautiful light from a bank of windows that face the canal. The furnishings are simple—white leather, linen and cotton pillows, warm wood and natural materials—such as this coconut shell coffee table, which hosts a collection of natural and ceramic shells. Two of Camilla's paintings add her favorite colors—blue and green.

FORM & FUNCTION

"I love IKEA. I have metal and glass pieces from them as well as these cabinets and bookcases that Jim used to create the look of custom built-ins. The grid pattern of the bookcases works perfectly to house books, baskets of office and art supplies, and to display all kinds of objects." The focal point of the wall unit is one of Camilla's mixed media and acrylic paintings, a departure from her loosely-painted and colorful Florida landscapes and seascapes. Entitled "Dark Flight," the 24" x 24" painting won third place in a local art competition.





LIGHT-FILLED ATELIER

Stella keeps Camilla company in her studio. The open floor plan and furniture on casters allows Camilla to move things around on a whim. IKEA Expedit bookcases serve as an open divider and showcase some of her small paint studies and other objects d'art for inspiration.

HOME

English pub complete with vintage door and handcarved transom. My husband's heritage is English, hence the inspiration for the pub. We used his family crest and castle on the carving. The room had a dart board, fireplace with a resin moose head, wet bar, travel souvenirs, a coaster-covered ceiling and my husband's baseball mementos all over the walls. We had great parties in that room!

My absolute favorite change was our master bath. We commissioned a tile mural on a visit to Portugal and had it installed above a beautiful air jet spa bathtub. The room had a modern but distinctly Mediterranean feel. It had limestone countertops, glass block, and a huge double shower. Very luxurious. Gorgeous.

Tell me about your day job.

Design is my love and graphics is my profession. I create logos and branding, annual reports, magazines, brochures, signage, all kinds of printed materials. I've worked for design studios in the past, but find working for myself and my client is best. I started my own design company in 1997. My designs are unique to the client and are current without being trendy.

So you moved to Florida for your husband's work. When you were house hunting, were there specific things you were looking for in a home?

Actually, Jim can live any place for work. The company he works for is based in the UK. It was more of a desire for change. He wanted his boat in the back yard, with palms trees swaying. When we decided

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HONING HER SKILLS

At right: Camilla has studied with artist Joseph Melancon. Her painting style has evolved into loose, colorful works reflecting the landscapes and seascapes found around Sarasota. She has also taken abstract classes with artist Fernando Madrijevos to broaden her skills. From the top: Caspersan Path, acrylic on canvas (14" x 18"); Ora Path, acrylic on canvas (18" x 24"); Ora Gold, acrylic on canvas, 16" x 20")



HOME

to move to Florida, we looked at demographics—we have small children and wanted a town with lots of kids—and we wanted lots of water and culture for us. We found everything in Sarasota. It's a beautiful small city on the Gulf Coast, with water and islands, a lively art scene, and plenty of palm trees! We chose Siesta Key to search for our house. It has a laid-back island vibe that we love.

When house hunting, we were looking for a smaller home (the Annapolis house was huge), built with cement block (termites and hurricanes are a concern), a dock, easy access to the Gulf by boat, lots of light, close to the beach on a quiet street, and move-in ready. Many of the homes on the key were built in the 60s and have been remodeled or need to be. Because of the kids, school and our busy work schedules we had to find a home we could live in right away. I'm in love with contemporary architecture right now, but the style of the house wasn't as much of a concern.

How was the downsizing process from a large house to this smaller footprint?

Downsizing was liberating in the beginning. It felt good to let go of lots of heavy furniture and clutter that we didn't need. There were certain pieces I loved and had to bring with us. One of them is a handmade carved armoire from Indonesia. It was dark brown wood with a trace of hand-painted color. I loved it in my office

in Annapolis. It looked big and bulky in our new house. I considered getting rid of it, but decided to paint it white. It looks great now! I also had to bring my rough-hewn teak tables. They were also used in my office as art tables and a desk. One of them is now our dining room table. We paired it with low-backed white leather and chrome chairs. It looks awesome—still a favorite piece.

Another piece I brought was a huge antique oak dining table. I bought it because it reminded me of a table my grandmother had. It was the perfect family gathering place—perfect in my Annapolis dining room—but not so perfect here. It has a very warm homey feel, but just doesn't work in this small beachy house. It was one of many pieces we brought that didn't work. Most were easy to sell or donate, but the oak table is still waiting for a new home.

What type of architecture are you drawn to?

I am fascinated by mid-century and modern design. I love the clean lines and open spaces. Sarasota has many great examples of this architecture.

How many houses did you tour before you found this one?

We looked at countless houses. I flew down for house hunting trips, but didn't find the right house. We moved to Siesta Key without one. We packed up two cars, towed the boat with bikes inside, and loaded up the kids to spend the summer in a condo on the beach. We had two

months to find a house before school started and our lease on the condo ran out. We were work-ing with a realtor who searched tirelessly to find what we were looking for. We put contracts on four or five of them, but for some reason or another none of them worked out. She must have been exasperated by us. While out on a bike ride one day, I saw a "For Sale by Owner" sign on the lawn of this house. She couldn't believe it. "You've found your own house!" she exclaimed. She had worked so hard for us, we made sure she was fairly compensated.

Do you know anything about the original owners?

There were two previous owners and a "flipper." One of the owners added a room onto the back of the house which now serves as our master bedroom. It blends seamlessly with the rest of the house. The flipper bought the house, which had an original kitchen and baths, and updated them, installed stone floors, mouldings, and generally cleaned up the house.

How would you describe the style of this house?

I'd call it a chic beach cottage. We have references to the sea everywhere. You see the water when you walk in the house. It's a bit cottagey and a bit refined.

What was your first impression ?

We walked in the door and saw a nice wide water view through the back windows. The house felt bright and clean and ready

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BEACH HOUSE CASUAL

"I love the dining and lounge area. It faces the water, has huge windows for lots of natural light, and has furnishings I love. It's all white leather, warm wood, natural materials, like the coconut shell coffee table. It also has my capiz shell chandelier that makes a tinkling sound when the breeze blows through. It's beautiful."



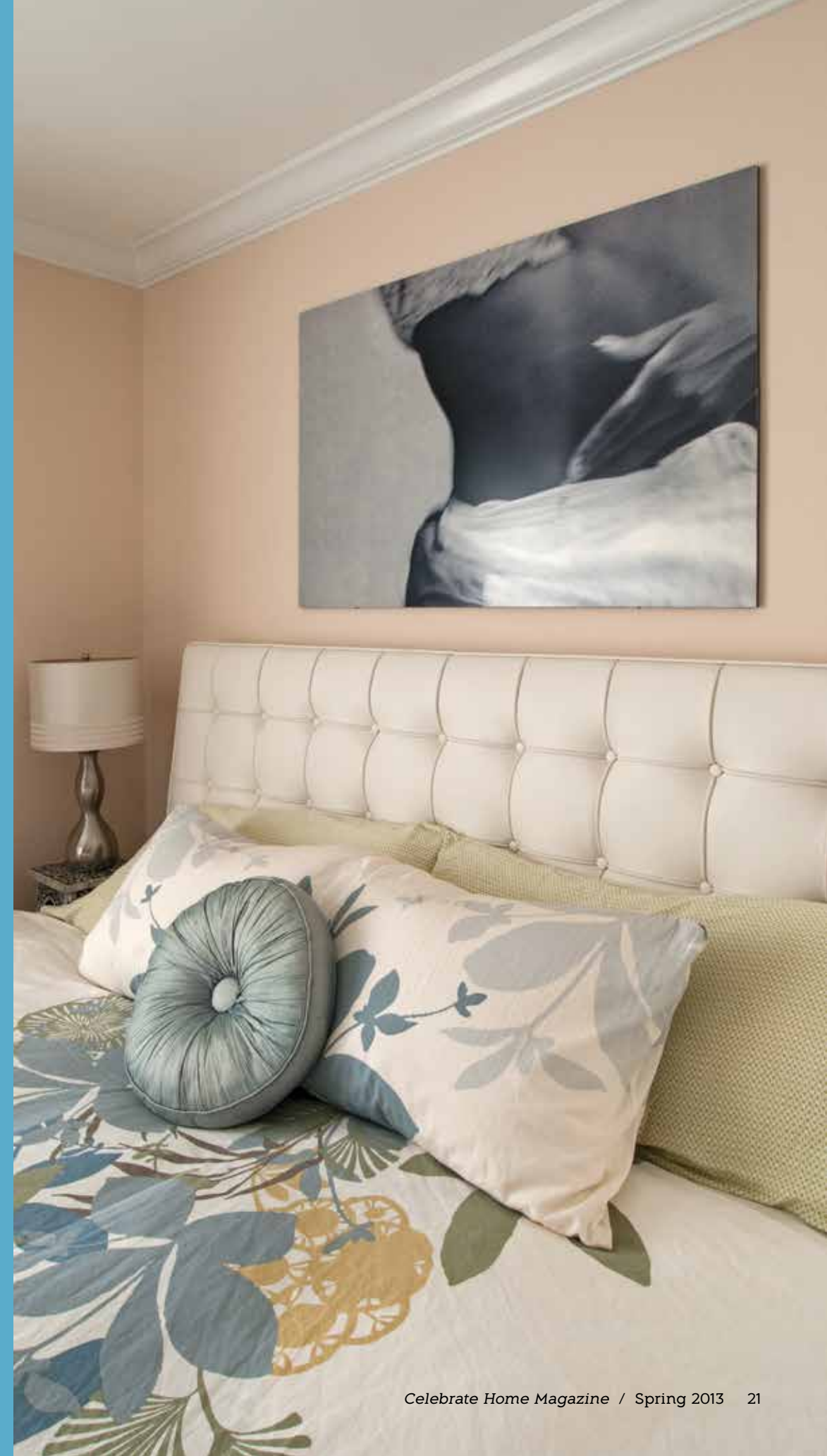


SEA-INSPIRED VIGNETTES

Left: Decorative elements in the master bathroom take their inspiration from the sea with ceramic fish, real starfish and small shadow box "shellscapes" created by Camilla.

RESTFUL RETREAT

Right: One of Camilla's favorite pieces of art is an image of a Cuban dancer, photographed by family friend Isabel Chicquor. It hangs in the light-filled master bedroom, which overlooks the canal. The bedroom is her second favorite room in the house. Says Camilla, "It's a sanctuary. Light, clean lines, simple."



SUNNY SIDE UP

Left: Camilla's very whimsical "Sunny Side Up" series (acrylic on canvas, 24" x 36"; one of a pair), brighten two walls in the galley-style kitchen.

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for us. We immediately saw the possibilities in this house. Our kids ran around claiming bedrooms, everyone wanted a water view. Not all could have one, but we realized our neighbors have a Ferrari, so our son was content with the Ferrari view!

Did you immediately have a vision about what you wanted to do with the house?

I knew right away I wanted to create a comfortable beach house that had a bit of shimmer. I like reflective surfaces, so I planned on using lots of glass, metals, light colors and natural sea elements. The biggest challenge was deciding how to utilize the space. I had to carve an office and art space, family room, and dining area, all out of one large space. Furniture moved many, many times! I like to live in a space for a while before committing. We knew

right away where the dining table should be but all other spaces were up for grabs.

What changes did you make to the home after you moved in?

After we had lived in the house for a year or so, and I'd rearranged it countless times, we settled on a layout that flowed and worked for us. We then installed built-in cabinetry for the TV console, book, and art supply storage. I found a beautiful capiz shell chandelier for the dining area and ceiling fans to keep things cool. I painted the walls in the family room and kitchen a pale sea glass color. It's soothing and gives the house a nice cool feeling. Great for hot Siesta Key summers!

We expanded the patio with matching pavers, widened the front walk and driveway, and added a lovely path around the

house. I had to paint the exterior of the house as soon as possible. It was a peachy fleshy color that I couldn't stand. It's now a pale denim blue with bright white trim that works with the water, sky and bright light here on the key. I researched Bermuda house colors for my inspiration when choosing the blue for the exterior.

Do you choose a color for a particular reason?

I love color. I've found that even though I love bright color, I can't live with it. I'm a high-energy person, and feel better in a calm environment. I like to paint walls, which is good, because I change my mind, and have tried bright orange, green and blue walls. They feel great for awhile, but eventually feel too intense.

I love natural color, colors found in nature. A soft muted grassy green, sea glass blue, rocky neutrals. Florida is such a bright place that a few pops of color are enough for me now, either in artwork or as small accent pieces. I love bringing in single hibiscus flowers to brighten my desk or the kitchen counter. The blossoms are huge and exotic and only last a day or two, which makes them even more special. I have four different hibiscus colors in my garden, so I can pick depending on my mood.

Right now, sea-glass blues are all over my house. I can't get enough of it.

Do you have plans for more remodeling or decorating?

I'd like to open the kitchen up a bit more. We have large windows that face the back

of the house and pool. We're thinking about changing those windows to slide open to reveal a bar that is part inside, part outside. I want to add more glass to the kitchen with new backsplash tile. We need some kind of waterproof covering out on the back patio, either a pergola or lanai. Someday, we'd love to add a second floor to part of the house for a large art studio and guest space.

I'm planning to re-work the main living area again soon to allow for a larger art space. Our daughters love to craft and make art, and want to do it with me. I think the bright lounge area may soon be a studio!

Is Jim involved in the decorating decisions?

Thankfully Jim is almost always happy with my decorating and doesn't mind a surprise new color or repurposing of space. He cares and enjoys what I do, but doesn't usually have strong opinions himself. He travels extensively for work, and is gone many weekdays. When he gets home on the weekend, things may be very different! I tend to let an idea percolate for a while while I consider every side of it. Jim wants decisions made quickly. I'll run an idea by him, but most times I find it easier not to ask! However, expensive changes or improvements are decisions we make together.

What is your favorite room?

I love the dining and lounge area. It faces the water, has huge

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Coconut Breeze, natural palm fibers and acrylic on canvas, 20" x 24"

"I love natural color, colors found in nature. A soft muted grassy green, sea glass blue, rocky neutrals. Florida is such a bright place that a few pops of color are enough for me now, either in artwork or as small accent pieces."



Access 5, acrylic on canvas, 12" x 16"



Nolan, Camilla, Ellie (holding Stella) and Claire



- 1 Blue and green accents pop up all over the house in paintings, ceramic bowls and vases and pillow covers.
- 2 A tropical oasis frames the pool by the canal. A small, fenced yard located by the sitting area contains a small garden and play area for Stella, the family Yorkiepo.
- 3 Camilla's antique bronze fairy sculpture made the trek from Maryland to Florida and was transformed from a woodland fairy to a beach goddess with the addition of a shell-covered pink bra.
- 4 A capiz shell-covered lighting fixture is the highlight of Camilla's favorite room—the dining and lounge area overlooking the canal. Contemporary leather and chrome chairs combine with a worn wood table for texture and contrast.
- 5 The angelic faces of twins Claire and Ellie hide their rambunctious and mischievous personalities.
- 6 The master bedroom opens to poolside with this seating area.

- 7 A dresser in the master bedroom showcases Camilla's collection of eclectic rings, which was featured in the winter issue of *Celebrate Home Magazine*.
- 8 The front door, surrounded with starfish mobiles, welcomes guests with tropical landscaping surrounded by a rock bed.
- 9 Paintbrushes, ceramic glove molds and a revolving art gallery area are nestled into the built-in storage unit in the studio.
- 10 Collections of shells, both natural and ceramic, are clustered in bowls throughout the house.
- 11 A tufted headboard serves as a backdrop to fresh tropical linens in shades of blue, green and gold in the master bedroom.
- 12 Camilla's paintings are found throughout the house. "Sabal Inlet," a 14" x 18" acrylic painting on canvas, hangs in the master bath.
- 13 A ceramic water fountain is the latest addition to the front entrance.
- 14 Camilla with son Nolan



windows for lots of natural light, and has furnishings I love. It's all white leather, warm wood, natural materials, like the coconut shell coffee table. It also has my capiz shell chandelier that makes a tinkling sound when the breeze blows through. It's beautiful. My bedroom is my second favorite. It's a sanctuary. Light, clean lines, simple.

I love the wonderful IKEA built-ins in your studio.

I love IKEA. I have metal and glass pieces from them as well as cabinets and bookcases that Jim used to create the look of custom built-ins. The grid pattern of the bookcases works perfectly to house books, baskets of office and art supplies, and to display objects. I use one of them as a room divider for my office and art space in the family room. When I look up from my computer, I can see straight through to the water. Great solution. We also used IKEA elements in the kids' bedrooms to create tiki-style loft beds.



Woman on a mission—Camilla's favorite haunt is The Women's Exchange, Inc., in Sarasota.

What inspires you?

I'm inspired by the sunshine, palms blowing in the breeze, the sparkle of sunlight on the water, landscapes, nature, travel and art.

How would you describe your personal style?

Kind of quirky. I'm always changing and evolving. I thrive on change. I also love collecting.

Kitchy sculptures made of sea shells are charming on a shelf in the bath, glove molds, Mexican ceramic birds, real coral from antique stores, vintage ceramics, all kinds of things that strike me in form or color.

I also love old Florida style vintage bamboo furniture. I have a coffee table I found at a junk shop that I repainted glossy black for the family room. It adds a hint of the tropics to the room without being overpowering. My desk chair is a Goodwill find that I cleaned and reupholstered. I have to be careful because I love airy open spaces, but come home constantly with new finds.

You have many unusual paintings and illustrations throughout the home.

All of the art in my house is by myself, friends, or purchased from the artist. I have a few favorite pieces—one of them is a large photograph of a Cuban



This fantasy painting by Mihail Kivachitsky, a Russian-born artist in Sarasota, is one of Camilla's favorites. www.mishastarart.com

dancer made by my friend Isabel Chicquor. She was a college friend of my parents. I always admired her work and asked her opinion on mine every chance I got.

She came to visit in Annapolis after a show in New York City. She had done a one-woman show of some of her Cuban photography. I fell in love with this piece and bought it on the spot. It's an honor to own one of her major works. It hangs over our bed.

Never a dull moment in the Houghton household—Camilla, Stella and Nolan are in calm repose while the twins and friend Elena practice tumbling moves.

The other is a painting by a Russian artist who now lives in Sarasota. It's a fanciful work of a woman with sea grape leaves on her head and a flying fish in the background. It suits our home perfectly! My favorite newly-discovered plant is the sea grape, which I planted in our yard, and the mullet fish in the water behind the house that jump out of the water all the time. The painting hangs in the family room—you can look at it and see our sea grapes and fish at the same time. I love it!

If money were no object, what would you change next?

Let's see...a second floor studio with open air porches on front and back, raise the roof for a

bigger view out the back, a new ultra sleek kitchen, a luxurious master bath. I'm a big dreamer!

I hear you're the master of furniture rearranging.

I love furniture on casters so I can roll to a new position at a moment's notice. When I was still trying to decide how to purpose the space in the house, I wanted everything on casters. They drive Jim crazy. He doesn't want his furniture moving out from under him.

Where do you like to shop for home decor?

I love to shop consignment stores. I look for high-quality pieces, and get them at a fraction of their value. I've always been *continued on page 30*





AHOY, MATEY!

Left: Jim's boat is at-the-ready for an impromptu ride through the canal. "Jim and I have to pinch ourselves. We can take a walk on one of the most beautiful beaches in the world. The sand is cool and snow white and silky to the touch. The water is clear and bright turquoise. We used to take all of our vacations in tropical places, like Mexico and the Caribbean islands. Now we don't have to. We live on vacation! We can ride our bikes to the village for dinner, run and play on the beach, boat and fish, swim in the pool..."

LAIID-BACK STYLE

Right: The dining room/lounge room overlooks the pool and the canal.



thrifty, but also love the recycle-upcycle aspect of consigning. Also, if I don't pay much for an item, I don't mind painting it or replacing it. That works perfectly into my change-loving personality. I also love Home Goods and other discount/value-oriented shops. Many items are seconds, but after a month in my house they'd be seconds anyway! With a dog and three children, we don't need anything precious!

I love decorating magazines and design shows and absorb whatever I can, but use my own sensibilities to decorate. Trial and error is fun for me, and I'd rather make a mistake myself than pay someone else to do it!

What are your favorite shopping haunts?

The Women's Exchange is a great consignment shop for accessories and furniture, even an occasional piece of clothing. Proceeds go toward scholarships for local art students. I had my eye on a mid-century sofa recently. No room for it now, so I had to pass it up, but it was so cool and comfy. I'm waiting for my current family room sofa to die so I can replace it with something completely different. It's great for home accessories too. I've found art from other folks' travels, like my birds from Mexico and jade trees from Asia.

What is it like living by the water?

We love having the boat right outside the house. At a moment's notice we can pack a cooler, and head out for a day on the water



© Camilla Houghton

Jim and the kids enjoy fishing right off the boat in their backyard.

with the kids. Sandbars are especially fun. The water here is clear and shallow, so we can anchor the boat at a sandbar, swim, fish, catch crabs and other sea life (we let them swim in a bucket for inspection, then set them free), and enjoy the Florida sunshine.

Our canal is lively with many kinds of fish, sea birds and manatees. We have a wide area in the canal that's out of the flow that the manatees come to rest and play in. I've spent many afternoons watching them from the sea wall. They're amazing, huge, and gentle creatures. We have kayaks to enjoy the canals at a slower, close-up viewpoint.

Then there's "sand management." For the first year or so,

it seemed we had sand everywhere! We found it on the floor, on every towel, in every bag, on bikes, all over the garage, lining the washing machine, on the dog and in our beds. We have since put a large area rug in the garage that catches lots of it, a private outdoor shower—which is a luxury and a necessity—and shoes stay in the garage. It's not perfect, but helps us "manage" the sand.

Do you sometimes feel like you're on vacation because of laid-back vibe of Sarasota?

Jim and I have to pinch ourselves. We can take a walk on one of the most beautiful beaches in the world. The sand is cool and snow white and silky to the touch. The water is clear and bright turquoise. We used

to take all of our vacations in tropical places, like Mexico and the Caribbean islands. Now we don't have to. We live on vacation! We can ride our bikes to the village for dinner, run and play on the beach, boat and fish, or swim in the pool.

What has moving to Florida been like for the kids?

The kids missed Maryland, but as they've made good friends here, they love Florida. The only drawback now is the absence of snow. They love being able to play outside every day.

It must be fun gardening in a tropical climate.

I've learned a lot about palm trees since moving to Florida. The Sabal or Cabbage Palm is the Florida state tree. It's native and very hardy. We have clusters of them in the front of the house. We also inherited two gorgeous and massive queen palms. They are the prettiest ones I've ever seen. Jim loves coconut palms, so I planted a large one by the pool for his birthday. The cool thing about palms is they can be transplanted at a very mature age. You can instantly have full-grown trees in your yard.

We have some large bougainvillea plants on the side of the house. One over the outdoor shower is a beautiful hot pink. It also brightens my laundry room.

What do you like best about living in Florida?

The best thing about living in Florida is the bright sunny

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Above and right: Sarasota's lively arts scene inspires Camilla, particularly the annual Sarasota Chalk Festival, a ten-day cultural festival celebrating all forms of street and performance art. Last year's theme was "Circus City, USA." More than 500 artists participated, creating giant paintings in 3D and 2D using chalk as their medium and the road surface as their canvas.



weather. I live for light and color, and this place gives it to me. It makes it hard to stay inside and work. When we first moved here, I felt like I had spring fever all year long.

I also appreciate the lively art scene in Sarasota. There's always a new art exhibit, play or festival to attend. There are lots of galleries, Art Center Sarasota, co-ops and Towles Court which is an artist resident village. The Ringling Museum of Art has a very nice permanent collection and a full range of traveling exhibitions. The museum grounds include theaters (one of them was transplanted from Italy), the Ringling Ca' d'Zan Mansion and a circus museum. Great fun for the kids.

Art Center Sarasota is where I take my painting classes. A great venue for local artists. They hold juried exhibitions four to five times a year. I enter as often as I can. I've even won a few awards.



Siesta High, acrylic on canvas, 16" x 20"

"The best thing about living in Florida is the bright sunny weather. I live for light and color, and this place gives it to me. It makes it hard to stay inside and work. When we first moved here, I felt like I had spring fever all year long."

The quality of local art is amazing and there are so many serious artists and artisans here. The annual Chalk Festival is spectacular. Chalk artists come from around the world to participate. We also have the Ringling College of Art and Design. I'm secretly hoping one of my children will be inspired to go there someday. I plan to take a course there soon.

How has the move inspired your creative pursuits?

I've been a visual artist my whole life, constantly trying new media and new styles all the time. I love learning new

processes and techniques. Since moving to Sarasota, I've taken acrylic painting classes with Joseph Melancon, and a workshop with Robert Burrige. They are both so good at what they do and so excited about it. They live and breathe painting.

I'm inspired by artists who can capture a landscape and its atmosphere in a way that's all their own. We just saw a show of California artist Gregory Kondos's work. He uses broad areas of color with more detailed areas, a light filled palette, lots of sky blue and pinks, greens, yellows—very appealing and inspiring. My work is still evolving—something between landscape and non-representational painting.

What creative projects do you have in works now?

I'm working on a mosaic to cover a new mailbox Jim built for me. The one we inherited was falling down, and I wanted a solid, never-tilting version.



Siesta Mist, acrylic on canvas, 16" x 20", won honorable mention in a competition at the Art Center of Sarasota.

I designed a column for an inserted vintage ballot box found on eBay. Jim built it for the holder out of cement block. It's now waiting for me to install the mosaic. The design for the mosaic was inspired by our environment—types of fish that live in the canal, mangroves, and water. The materials I'm using are scavenged (trash day can be treasure day) ceramic tile, sea shells, glass from broken wine bottles, marbles, glass bubbles, and traditional vitreous glass.

I'm also excited about working on drawings of some of my houseplants inspired by Jim Dine's plant art. They're rough and loose, but also botanical. He switched from pop art back to drawing toward the end of his career. I've always drawn and have the itch to hold some charcoal again.

I'll also continue painting with acrylics this summer. Paths are a recurring theme in my work; I plan to do a series of beach paths. I have a beach bike with a large basket on the front. I love to take it into the different beach accesses and photograph the paths. I like to go at different times of the day to catch the changing light. Some have flowing grasses, others sea-grape trees, some stored boats waiting for a sail. Paths have so many possibilities.

No room is complete without... art on the walls and an unusual accessory or two or three....and a comfy place to sit. **CHM**

Right: Camilla's latest project is creating a sea-inspired mosaic mailbox column, incorporating recycled material such as broken pots, broken wine bottles and tiles.



Below: In their Annapolis home, Camilla created a mosaic "rug" for the front entrance.



Dress Your House for Spring

Written by **Cathleen Gilg**

The age-old ritual of spring cleaning is not extinct. It makes sense to air out your home after the long, stuffy days of winter. In addition to dusting, fluffing draperies and wiping blinds, there are lots of fun little things you can do to make spring come alive inside. Interior Designer Cathleen Gilg shares her whimsy and common sense to dress your house for spring.



Wash your windows, inside and out, so the light gleams more clearly and crisply through the glass.

Remove the heavy duvet cover or comforter from your bed and replace it with a lightweight mattelessé coverlet. Switch to lighter-weight sheets and fabrics.

Pay attention to the 2013 Pantone Color of the Year, emerald. It's a perfect color for spring. Refresh your home with splashes of emerald.

Add touches of light and bright colors throughout the house—throw pillows, blankets, lightweight tablecloths or sheer fabrics.

Think white, think linen and think cotton! White is always crisp and clean throughout spring and summer.

Bring blooms inside. Use vases, water pitchers, baskets, terracotta pots and other fun containers. If you choose silk flowers but you like the fragrance of fresh ones, add a floral scent to fool the nose.

Put a bowl of fresh, seasonal fruit on the kitchen table or counter.

Rearrange your furniture settings for a more open, airy feel.

Throw away your winter magazines and replace them with current issues with lovely spring covers.

Tuck away your everyday dishware if you have other sets, and use ones that are colorful or flowery. Pick up colorful and fun plates and serving platters at sales.

Host an event that will have you and your guests outside on the porch or deck—a tea party, a lemonade party, or a happy hour.

Freshen your home with new hand lotions, soaps, and hand towels.

Jump into spring and freshen up with a new hairdo, makeup, and wear lighter fabrics.

Switch from a heavy winterish red wine to a fresh, crisp white wine. Pour yourself a glass, lean back on your new pillows and everything will look wonderful!



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Jam Session

A Beginner's Guide to Making Jam

Written by **Sophia Stadnyk** • Photography and styling by **Cindy Dyer**

If you can boil water, you can make jam. *Really.* Most jams have only three ingredients: fruit, sugar, and pectin, and take 15 minutes or so to cook. The real work lies in getting everything ready beforehand. The payoff is homemade jam where the first thing you taste is the fruit. Interested? Let's begin!

What You'll Need

First, you'll need to assemble a few basic supplies:

Glass (not plastic) jars with screw tops and canning lids

These are generally sold together by the dozen. The jars come in various sizes, but the pint-size ones work best. Jars are sold seasonally at grocery stores, online at Amazon.com, or at hobby and craft shops. Ball® is one brand, but there are others. You can also buy the lids and screw tops separately if you are recycling jars.

Pectin

Pectin comes in a powder or liquid form and is sold by the box at the grocery store or online. I've had better results with the powder form, but the choice is up to you. Look for Sure-Jell® (powder), Certo (liquid), Pomona's Universal Pectin (sugar and preservative free), Ball®, and other brands. If you want a more preserve-like result, get a low-sugar version (for a less-sugar recipe).

This is important: each brand has its own specific instructions and jam recipes. These products are not interchangeable. Make sure you read and follow the jam recipe instructions inside the package you are using, and, as with all recipes, read

the instructions thoroughly before you start. All of these recipes and more are also available online at the manufacturers' websites, so you can make a shopping list before you buy your pectin.

Sugar

In a word, *lots*. Jam (and jelly) are essentially sugar flavored with fruit. You'll know how much sugar to use based on the pectin instructions. If you want to use less, buy a pectin specifically made for low-sugar jam. Sure-Jell® makes a good one.

Pots, Bowls, and Utensils

You'll need at least one measuring cup; a large metal or wooden spoon; two large pots (a heavy one for cooking the jam and a canner-type large pot for boiling the filled jars to sterilize them).

You'll need a large bowl for the prepared fruit, another one for the sugar, and a smaller one for keeping the lids and screw tops in. A ladle or glass measuring cup is useful for filling the jars with the hot jam. Get a timer, or watch with a second-hand. A jar-lifter will come in handy.

Fruit

The most important ingredient is fruit. Not all fruit is suitable for jam (alas, bananas). You can check online for jam recipes at pectin brand websites before you commit for what fruit works best. If you've never made jam before, you may want to start with blueberries, raspberries, or apricots, since these require minimal prepping. Note that overripe fruit will give you a "soft set" (less firm jam). As for how

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What You'll Need...



FOOD & ENTERTAINING

much fruit to get, the pectin recipes should give you both a rough amount (pounds), plus a finished amount to use (cups of prepared fruit). You can mix and match fruits (berries), but check your recipes.

The Process

First, run your jars through the dishwasher or thoroughly wash them in soap and hot water. Do the same with the new lids and screw tops, and place them in hot water.

Measure the sugar into a bowl. Prepare your fruit as directed (stemming, peeling, pitting, chopping), discarding any blemished portions and any unripe fruit, and place it in another bowl. I'd recommend not using a food processor as it's too easy to accidentally end up pureeing the fruit. The aim is to avoid a fruit smoothie effect, as one of the joys of jam is its lumpiness and the recognizable pieces of fruit in it. A potato masher works well for crushing berries in batches. Jam uses chopped fruit so it doesn't have to be the same size or perfectly done, far from it. The cooking will boil down much of the chopped or crushed fruit into syrup in any event.

Before you begin the jam cooking, place the jars within reach of your jam pot. Fill the other pot or canner with some hot water about halfway and set it on low heat out of the way. Follow the recipe and instructions for the pectin you are using. Do not use less sugar than the recipe calls for. (If you are worried about a "set failure," or jam that doesn't gel, you can add a bit more pectin.)

Be careful when cooking the fruit and the jam mixture as this can burn easily. Don't use high heat and stir constantly, and by this I mean stir almost all the time. You don't want any burned bits at the bottom of the pot as these will show up as black specks throughout your jam. Some jams will have a whitish foam form as they cook and this is perfectly normal; you can skim this off with a spoon and discard it.

The jam mixture will need to come to a "rolling boil." You'll know you have this when the jam level rises in the pot and the mixture bubbles and froths even when it's being stirred. The mixture will have that "Double, double toil and trouble/Fire burn, and cauldron bubble" look.

Once the jam is ready, use a ladle or glass measuring cup to transfer the jam into the jars. Be extra careful as this is very hot and sticky: not a good combination. Avoid dripping the jam onto the jar rims as this will interfere with the seal. Fill the jars to within one-eighth of an inch of the top.

Dry off the warm lids and screw tops and place them onto the filled jars. Screw on, but not too tight. Pick up these hot jars with an oven mitt and set into the pot with the hot water. Add enough hot water to cover the jars by an inch or two. Cover the pot and let the pot come to a gentle (low heat) boil. Follow the directions on the pectin instructions, but these should boil for ten minutes.

When done, either use the jar lifter or scoop out the water with a ladle and then lift out the jars with an oven mitt (careful, these will be hot!). Set them to cool on a towel or cutting board. As each jar cools, a vacuum seal of the lid should form, which means the lid doesn't spring back or pop when you press the middle with your finger. If it doesn't seal, take off the lid, dry or replace the lid, and repeat the water-bath process with that jar. Otherwise, refrigerate that jar and use it first.

Jamlicious

If you have followed the directions, you should have glorious jam that's ready to eat immediately. Admire the jam immensely as the light shines through the jewel-toned jars. Taste the difference when you spread it on a piece of toast. After all, you knew that condiment when it was still just a fruit!

Keep the jars in the fridge once they've been opened, but otherwise, store the unopened jars in a cool, dark place for up to a year. Jams that have been opened and refrigerated are good for up to four weeks. Some jams take a week or so to set; if your jam remains runny, don't despair. It's still perfectly delectable. Keeping it in the fridge will firm it up, or you can serve as an ice cream topping. The pectin manufacturers also have instructions on re-doing cooked jam in the event it doesn't set.

Once you've tried the basic recipe, you'll see what I mean about making jam—nothing to it! **CHM**

See our visual step-by-step guide on page 40-41.



1

Wash the strawberries and cut off and discard the tops (which are great for the mulch bin!).



2

Cut each strawberry in half.



3

Mash the strawberries into a mushy consistency, but avoid the "smoothie effect."



4

Transfer berries into a measuring cup so you can determine how many cups of berries you have.



5

Add the pectin. Follow the recipe and instructions for the pectin you are using.



6

Some recipes call for lemon juice. I added lemon juice according to instructions for the pectin.



7

Fold in pectin and lemon juice.



8

Transfer berries to pot. Stir until you get a rolling boil. Avoid high heat and stir constantly.



9

Pour in sugar; keep stirring to avoid mixture burning.



10

Skim off foam and discard.



11

Pour mixture into jars. Fill within one-eighth of an inch of the top.



12

Dry off warm lids and apply to each jar.



13

Add screw top lids, but don't tighten too much.



14

Pick up jars with an oven mitt and set into the pot with the hot water



15

Add enough hot water to cover the jars by an inch or two.

Jam vs. Jelly vs. Preserves vs. Marmalade vs. Butters

Jam is made from crushed or chopped fruit cooked with sugar, and often pectin and lemon juice. Jam is almost a puree of fruit, but with recognizable pieces of fruit.

Jelly is clear and made by cooking fruit juice and sugar with pectin as a jelling agent and lemon juice as an acid to maintain a consistent texture. Jelly is firm and has no pieces of fruit. A popular jelly is pepper jelly, which may have random bits of jalpeño pepper, but that is the exception.

Preserves use whole fruits or pieces of fruit or vegetables.

Conserves are preserves made with two or three contrasting fruits or a mix of fruits and nuts.

Marmalade is jam made with citrus fruit and peel.

Butters are made with fruits such as apples, apricots or pears and are lightly flavored with spices such as cinnamon and cloves.

Follow the directions on the pectin instructions, but these should boil for ten minutes.

When done, either use the jar lifter or scoop out the water with a ladle and then lift out the jars with an oven mitt (careful, these will be hot!). Set them to cool on a towel or cutting board.

As each jar cools, a vacuum seal of the lid should form, which means the lid doesn't spring back or pop when you press the middle with your finger. If it doesn't seal, take off the lid, dry or replace the lid, and repeat the water-bath process with that jar. Otherwise, refrigerate that jar and use it first.



Recipe by **Barbara Kelley** · Photography and styling by **Cindy Dyer**

Milky Way Croissants

These are a great breakfast treat, especially for overnight guests, so keep the ingredients on hand—Milky Way® bars, refrigerated crescent roll dough, and raspberry preserves. You can also substitute dark or white chocolate chips for the Milky Way®, but you won't have that chewy caramel.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 can refrigerated crescent rolls
- 1 Milky Way® bar, coarsely chopped
- 1/2 cup raspberry preserves
- 1 egg white, lightly beaten with a fork or whisk

DIRECTIONS

Pop open the crescent rolls and separate according to the package directions. Spread each triangle of dough out on an ungreased cookie sheet.

Spread each triangle with a teaspoon or so of raspberry preserves. Put about a teaspoon of the chopped Milky Way® bar on top of preserves.

Roll the triangles according to package directions into a crescent roll. Brush each croissant with lightly beaten egg white as this will give it a nice glazed and browned look when baked

Bake for 20 minutes in a 375° oven. Serve hot. Yield: 8 croissants

Beyond Toast

Jam isn't just for bread and peanut butter.

Try it in cookies, tarts, and even meat, fish and poultry dishes. Stir it into butter for a fruity spread. Use it as an ice cream topper or mix in with plain yogurt. Put pretty ribbons on the jars and give your jam as gifts.

Jam Session

Recipe by **Barbara Kelley** · Photography and styling by **Cindy Dyer**

You Pick 'Em

Spring and early summer is a great time for an outing to a farm where you can pick your own fruit. Make it a family outing: pack a picnic and bring home the harvest to use for your jam-making and extra for eating or cobblers. Check local papers and online for seasonal pickings.

Go to www.pickyourown.org for places in your area, what to bring, and tips for fruit picking. Fruits vary according to the season and location; for example, spring in the Northeast is generally great for strawberry picking.

Jam and Cheese Appetizers

This is an elegant but quick and easy appetizer. You can substitute soft cheeses like goat cheese or cream cheese, depending on your taste and what you have on hand. In winter, use pecans.

Filo dough shells (these are mini shells about 2 inches in diameter and can be found in your grocer's freezer, usually one dozen to a pack)

1/2 pound Brie cheese (do not remove the rind)

1/2 cup apricot jam

1/2 cup slivered almonds, lightly toasted

Thaw filo cups for about ten minutes and place on baking sheet. Toast almonds by spreading them in an ungreased pan. Bake in a preheated 350° oven for 5 to 7 minutes, stirring occasionally until brown. Set aside.

Cut Brie into one-inch chunks and place one chunk into each filo shell. Do not remove the rind from the Brie as it gives the cheese a pungent flavor. Top the cheese with a teaspoon of apricot jam, then top with slivered, toasted, almonds.

Bake for 10 minutes at 350° or until bubbly. Serve immediately.

Yield: 12 pieces

Jam Session





Recipe by **Barbara Kelley** · Photography and styling by **Cindy Dyer**

Mornin' Jam Muffins

This is a basic muffin recipe but adding your favorite flavor of jam or preserves gives an ordinary muffin some punch! Jam muffins have been around for years and they have always been a delicious way to add strawberry jam to breakfast.

INGREDIENTS

- 1-3/4 cup all-purpose flour
- 2-1/2 teaspoons baking powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 3/4 cup milk
- 1 egg
- 1/3 cup canola oil
- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1/2 cup strawberry jam (or any flavor you prefer)
- 1 tablespoon orange zest
- 1/4 cup confectioners' sugar

DIRECTIONS

In a large bowl sift together flour, baking powder and salt. In a separate bowl, mix together the milk, egg, oil, sugar and orange zest.

Stir the liquid mixture into the flour mixture until moistened. You can use an electric mixer on low.

Spoon about 2 tablespoons of the batter into greased, regular-sized muffin tins. Drop about a teaspoon of jam on top of batter then top with about two more tablespoons of batter.

Preheat oven to 400° and bake for 15 minutes. Let cool in tins for 5 minutes then remove and cool on a rack. If desired, top with sifted confectioners' sugar. Yield: 12 muffins

While jams and jellies come in dozens of flavors and varieties, from the standard grape jelly to the more exotic chocolate jam, nine flavors account for more than 80 percent of total U.S. production. The most popular are grape jelly and strawberry jam. They are followed by grape jam, red raspberry jam, orange marmalade, apple jelly, apricot jam, peach jam and blackberry jam, in that order. An additional 28 flavors are commonly produced that account for less than 20 percent of total production.

Source: International Jelly and Preserve Association

Jam Session

Recipe by **Barbara Kelley** · Photography and styling by **Cindy Dyer**

Jams and jellies boast quick energy, delicious flavors and only 48 calories per tablespoon (less for jellies made with low-calorie sweeteners). On a tablespoon-for-tablespoon basis, jams and jellies have about half the calories of butter or margarine and they contain zero fat! That tablespoon of butter is also loaded with 102 calories, not to mention 12 grams of fat, 7 grams of saturated fat and 31 milligrams of cholesterol.

Source: *International Jelly and Preserve Association*

Queen of Hearts Blueberry Tart

Simple jam tarts are an old-fashioned treat and we're bringing them back with a new twist using preserves and fresh fruit. The easy crust is spread into a springform pan like sugar cookie dough. The heart-shaped tart just makes it more lovable. The tart gets even better after a day as the crust absorbs the jam.

INGREDIENTS

- 1/2 cup unsalted butter, softened at room temperature, not melted
- 1/3 cup sugar
- 1/4 teaspoon vanilla
- 1 cup flour
- 3/4 cup blueberry preserves for tart filling
- 1/2 cup blueberry preserves for glaze
- 2 teaspoons Grand Marnier or other orange liqueur
- 2 cups (approximately) fresh blueberries, rinsed and dried

DIRECTIONS FOR CRUST

Cream the butter, sugar and vanilla with a mixer. Blend in flour until combined. Spread the soft dough in a 9-inch springform pan (one with a removable bottom). The dough will resemble cookie dough, and will spread thinly, but it will cover the pan. Use fingers to make sure dough is evenly spread on bottom and up sides, about 1/4 inch from the top. Bake in preheated 375° oven on middle rack for 5 minutes and remove from oven.

DIRECTIONS FOR FILLING AND TOPPING

Spread 3/4 cup of blueberry preserves on the partially-baked crust. Return it to the oven and bake for about 15 more minutes or until crust is brown. Let cool completely and top with the fresh blueberries.

Glaze: Heat 3/4 cup blueberry jam in microwave and press through a strainer to retain the juice (discard any remaining berries). Stir in 2 teaspoons Grand Marnier into the glaze. Use a pastry brush to brush the glaze on top of the blueberries. Store at room temperature.

The crust with baked preserves can be made a day ahead and topped with berries and glazed when ready to serve. Serves about 8.

Check out this issue's Feather Your Nest shopping guide on page 10 for information on where to purchase the heart-shaped springform pan.

Jam Session



Recipe by **Barbara Kelley** · Photography and styling by **Cindy Dyer**

Tommy Cooper, owner of Fire & Spice Gourmet on Nutt Street in Wilmington, North Carolina, located in the Cotton Exchange, gives this recommendation for fish. "I use Rose & Ivy Brand Southern Pecan Pepper Jelly with speckled trout we catch locally." The jelly's ingredients are sugar, sweet peppers, vinegar, pecans, pectin and the famous Scotch Bonnet Pepper. It is homemade by Bell Buckle Country Store, Inc., www.bellbuckle.com.

Rockfish with Southern Pecan Pepper Jelly

INGREDIENTS

- 1 pound rockfish or other white fish fillets, boned and skinned
 - 2-3 tablespoons butter
 - 1 jar of Southern Pecan Pepper Jelly
- Non-stick cooking spray
Salt and pepper to taste

DIRECTIONS

Spray baking dish with non-stick cooking spray. Season fish filets with salt and pepper and place in baking dish. Dot top of fish with butter. Turn on the oven broiler to preheat. Set fish aside.

Pour the Southern Pecan Pepper Jelly into a saucepan and heat on low until warm but not boiling. (You don't want it to thin down too much.) Place fish under broiler and broil for about 7-9 minutes or until flaky. Fish should not be overcooked. Remove from broiler and put on plates.

Drizzle the warm Pecan Pepper Jelly over the fish and serve. Keep the warm jelly on the side for anyone who wants more. Yield: 4 servings



The average child
will eat 1,500
peanut butter and
jelly sandwiches by
high school graduation.



Recipe, photography and styling by Cheri Neufeld

Cheri Neufeld's blog, **KitchenSimplicity.com**, inspires people to get into the kitchen—helping them make great meals from scratch. Each post features a recipe that has been thoroughly tested, made, and photographed by Cheri, a serial expat living in Winnipeg, Manitoba, with husband, James, and kids, Max and Alli.

Pan frying chicken breasts is a great and healthy way to make a "burger." These Crispy Prosciutto Chicken Burgers have become a favorite at our house. When following the proper techniques of pan frying, the chicken stays moist while the prosciutto becomes nice and crisp. We love the tropical flavors of pineapple on our burgers and the french fried onions add so much flavor. I definitely don't miss the grill when these are on the menu.

Crispy Prosciutto Chicken Burgers

INGREDIENTS

- 2 chicken breasts
- 4 slices prosciutto, cut in half
salt and pepper, to taste
- 4 hamburger buns, split
butter, for buns
- 4 slices cheese (Monterey Jack and Swiss are our favorites)
- 4 pineapple rings
french fried onions
mayo, mustard and barbecue sauce, for serving

DIRECTIONS

Cut the chicken in half width-wise to create 4 thin chicken breasts. If necessary, cover with plastic wrap and lightly pound with the heel of your hand until evenly flattened. Cut each piece in half, creating 8 thin medallions. Season each piece of chicken with salt and pepper. Place a slice of prosciutto on each piece and press down lightly so that it adheres. Preheat a pan over medium-high heat. Add a small amount of oil and cook chicken, prosciutto side down, until the prosciutto is crisp and the chicken is white along the edges. Flip and cook until the chicken is no longer pink in the center.

Spread buns with butter and toast under a broiler until browned.

Assemble burgers with 2 chicken medallions, one slice cheese, one pineapple ring, a sprinkling of french fried onions and the condiments of your choice. Yield: 4 burgers

Spring Brunch





FOOD & ENTERTAINING

Recipe, photography and styling by **Cheri Neufeld**

Strawberry Salad with Sugared Almonds

INGREDIENTS

5-6 cups salad greens
1 cup sliced strawberries
1/2 cup sliced almonds
3 tablespoons sugar
Strawberry Poppy Seed Dressing (recipe below)

DIRECTIONS

To make the sugared almonds: Heat a small non-stick skillet over medium heat. Add sugar and almonds. Cook and stir until nuts are golden and coated with the melted sugar. Spread on a sheet of foil to cool.

To serve: Toss together the salad greens and strawberries. Top with almonds. Serve with Strawberry Poppy Seed Dressing. Serves: 4

This salad is a great way to enjoy fresh berries. You get a double dose of strawberry goodness with a good drizzle of Strawberry Poppy Seed Dressing. I also love adding the crunch of homemade sugared almonds. They add a little bit of pizzazz and complement the strawberries so well. This is my favorite way to add strawberries to the main meal, instead of as just dessert.

As with most salad dressings, this gets better as it sits in the fridge. So, if you can, make it a couple of hours ahead of time (although it still tastes delicious when served right away).

Strawberry Poppy Seed Dressing

INGREDIENTS

3 tablespoons red wine vinegar
1/4 cup sugar
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/2 teaspoon ground mustard
1/2 cup canola oil
3/4 cup sliced strawberries
3/4 teaspoon poppy seeds

DIRECTIONS

Place the vinegar, sugar, salt and mustard in a blender. Pulse to mix together. With the blender running, slowly drizzle in the oil until the mixture is creamy. Add the strawberries and process the mixture until smooth. Stir in poppy seeds. Refrigerate until ready to serve.

Spring Brunch

Recipe, photography and styling by **Cheri Neufeld**

The refreshing flavor of lemonade with added oomph and the fruity-tart flavor from rhubarb, mellowed out with vanilla bean—it's spring in a glass. And, it's such a pretty pink hue—it would fit right in at a little girl's birthday party or a baby shower. Just double, triple or quadruple the recipe for a crowd.

Sparkling Rhubarb-Vanilla Lemonade

If you don't like the look of vanilla beans in this drink you can substitute a teaspoon of vanilla extract, stirred in after the syrup has been cooked.

Rhubarb-Vanilla Lemon Syrup

INGREDIENTS

- 4 cups chopped rhubarb
- 1/2 cup lemon juice
- 2 strips of lemon peel
- 1/2 cup water
- 1/2 vanilla bean, split and seeded

DIRECTIONS

Place all ingredients in a medium-size saucepan. Bring to a boil. Lower heat and simmer for 10 minutes. Remove from heat and let cool completely before straining through a fine mesh sieve. Store, covered, in the fridge until serving.

To serve:

- 1 part rhubarb-vanilla lemon syrup
- 2 parts sparkling water, chilled

Stir together the syrup and water. Serve over ice.

I ended up with 1-1/3 cups syrup, so I added 2-2/3 cups sparkling water, which is equal to 4 (1 cup) servings. Makes: 4 servings

Spring Brunch





Recipe, photography and styling by **Cheri Neufeld**

Using unsalted butter allows you to control the salty flavor of these truffles. The pinch of salt helps to cut through the sweetness of the white chocolate. If you decide to use salted butter make sure to omit the pinch of salt called for in the recipe or they will be far too salty.

If you want to amp up the yellow color, stir in some yellow food coloring along with the extract and salt.

Get the kids involved! They can roll the balls and coat in icing sugar.

Lemon sings of spring and sunshine, reminding me of the new life around the corner. These lemony truffles are a cinch to make and have such a wonderful velvety texture. Packaging them into pretty boxes turns them into the perfect hostess gift.

White Chocolate Lemon Truffles

INGREDIENTS

1 cup white chocolate
5 tablespoons unsalted butter
3 tablespoons heavy cream
pinch salt
1 teaspoon lemon extract
icing sugar, for dusting

DIRECTIONS

Melt chocolate, butter and cream over a double boiler or in a microwave. Stir until smooth.

Stir in salt and extract. Allow to cool slightly before covering with plastic wrap. Refrigerate for 2 hours or until firm enough to handle.

With a melon baller or small spoon scoop out mixture and form into 1-inch balls. Toss with icing sugar to coat.

Store covered in the fridge for up to one week. Freeze for longer storage.
Yield: 24

Spring Brunch

Writing by **Barbara Kelley** · Styling by **Karen Byer-Storch** and **Cindy Dyer** · Photography by **Cindy Dyer**

Spring Tablescapes

“Spring is nature’s way of saying, ‘Let’s party!’”

—Robin Williams

Spring is the time to lead family and friends outdoors. Set a table, inside or out, that screams “Spring!” Go digging for bursts of color in dishes, fabrics and fresh flowers. Set a table that says spring has arrived and so have you!

Let the garden inspire your tablescape. Use floral tablecloths and napkins. Tulips and daffodils are available in grocery stores if you don’t have them in your yard. Arrange them in any kind of container—mason jars, baskets, decorative watering can, or anything you might have around the house. Baskets are great, but place a plastic container inside to hold water and keep your blooms fresh.

Look outside and see what might be blooming —hyacinths, azaleas, forsythias, cherry blossoms, dogwood branches, lilacs and spring greens. Use large vessels for branches. Mini-vases or terracotta pots can hold a few azalea blooms at each plate. Float azalea blooms in a bowl of water. Use fresh fruits as a centerpiece. Vibrant colors such as green apples and strawberries, accented with stalks of rhubarb will infuse color into your tablescape.

Mix and match colorful plates for bursts of color and an eclectic look. You don’t always have to buy a matching set. A dollar here and a dollar there will get you an interesting mix of dishes. If you like a certain color, buy different styles of plates in hues of that color as you find them on the sale table or at yard sales. Tie napkins with ribbons in spring colors. White is great, too. Crisp white against a backdrop of color makes a great look.

Here are some ideas for spring tables. We hope you’ll be inspired to step into spring with your own creations. **CHM**

Get the look! Spring Bouquet

1. Handmade tablecloth
2. Oneida by Sakura China (Kohl’s)
3. Somerset glass jars in wire holder (www.homedecorators.com)
4. Textured stainless flatware (Home Goods)
5. Cabbage leaf bowls (Pottery Barn)
6. White hemstitched napkins (Pottery Barn)
7. Watering can place card holders (Pottery Barn)





1

2

4

3

Get the look!

1. Toile linen tablecloth and napkins (Williams-Sonoma)
2. Hemstitched white linen runner (Pottery Barn)
3. Silver plastic chargers (Michaels)
4. Roscher & Co. White flower earthenware dinner plates

Touch of Toile

For the Birds



1

4

3

5

2

6

Get the look!

1. Handmade tablecloth
2. Napkins (Pottery Barn)
3. Metal napkin rings (Pier 1 Imports)
4. Wire chargers (Pier 1 Imports)
5. Roscher "Nature's Nest" stoneware salad plates
6. Retroneu® Tempo stoneware dinner plates

This method will not prevent tears but it will help you chop more evenly-sized cuts of onion. The more even the pieces of onion, the better. This prevents smaller pieces from burning when cooking. Before you start, make sure you are working with a sharp knife.

The Proper Way to Cut an Onion

Written by **Emily Doerman** · How-to Photography by **Cindy Dyer**



© Rolf Weschke/istockphoto.com



Place the onion on a cutting board. Hold the onion with curled fingers. Cut the onion lengthwise from the stem through the root.



Lay each half of the onion flat on the cutting board. Cut off the root ends. Refer to this end as the "trimmed end."



Remove the onion skin.



Laying the onion half flat on the cutting board, use the tip of the knife to cut out any remaining root.



For medium and large onions, make a sideways cut through the middle of the onion holding the knife parallel to the cutting board. Be careful to keep your finger tips on top of the onion, and closer to the dull side of the knife than the sharp side.



Make slits from the stem side to the trimmed end. For small dices, make 1/6-inch slits. For chopped or diced onion, make cuts perpendicular to the previous cuts. Try to make cuts as uniform in size as possible for even cooking.



For fajita-style cuts, make 1/3-inch slits. Cut off the stem and separate the onion slices.

The Knife—If your knife is not sharp enough to easily cut through the skin of the onion, make a slit in the onion using the pointed tip of the knife first. The onion will be easier to work with.

How to Pick an Onion—Look for an onion that is heavy for its size. The outer skin should be papery and dry.

Feeling Teary Eyed? Try one of these methods to prevent tears:

- Light a candle nearby.
- After cutting the onion in half and peeling the skin, rinse in the sink and pat dry with a paper towel.
- Wear goggles: it may sound silly, but it is the most effective method.

THE ARTIST

Interview with **Daniel Scott, Jr.** by **Cindy Dyer**

Fort Worth-based artist Daniel Scott, Jr. contacted me after seeing a photograph on my blog that I had shot of Spiderwort flowers at Lady Bird Johnson Wildflower Center in Austin, Texas. He asked for permission to use the photo to create a "recycled mosaic." I was instantly curious.

Daniel Scott, Jr.

Recycled Mosaics

It's all about the labels. His art is created entirely from candy wrappers, drink labels, gum wrappers, sugar packets and tea packaging. He "paints" with tiny strips and slices of labels, achieving amazing gradation, color and depth with this very unusual medium. His work has both a graphic and pop art look and at first glance, you're not sure what medium he is using. Stained glass? Tile? Mixed media? A closer look reveals brand names, which are strategically placed to highlight the medium.

Graphic designer by day and recycled mosaic artist by night, Daniel creates his art in his home garage-turned-studio. His tools are simple: panel board, scissors, glue and lots of labels. The tools may be simple, but the results are incredibly complex.

RIGHT: A *Vibrant Morning Wake*
12" x 18", 2011



THE ARTIST

When did you first start drawing and creating, and when did you first consider yourself an artist?

It didn't sink in until 7th grade with my first art class at school. It came so easily. That was the starting point.

What is your formal educational background in design?

In 1997, I received a bachelor's degree in art from Azusa Pacific University, with a teaching concentration. The majority of my electives were spent in the ceramics lab as I was the lab tech for a few semesters.

Is anyone else in your family artistic?

My mother and my oldest daughter, Emma, are both artistic.

Tell me about your day job as a graphic designer.

I work at TTI, Inc., in Fort Worth, Texas. The company is a global electronic component distributor. The projects I work on range from simple brochures and day-to-day chores to full-blown campaigns, such as conceptualizing ideas, creating the look and feel of the objective, then deploying the finished product to the sales field. Between print and online work, it's about a 25/75 split.

Has trying to develop your artwork into a means of earning a living changed either your work or your process?

I'd say both. There's a good amount of prep work involved so I look at the cost and time spent.

What other creative endeavors do you enjoy?

Guitar, mobile photography and various DIY projects

Did you start out just drawing and then moved to mixed media?

My first lessons were in drawing and painting. In the process of earning my degree I was exposed to other mediums, with sculpture work in ceramics as a frontrunner. I fell into mixed media by accident.

Describe your typical start-to-finish workflow when working on a new mosaic.

It starts with a picture, usually taken with my phone because it's a convenient tool. I try to imagine what labels will be needed and envision what I can add to enhance the photo. I adjust and position the subject on a small scale in Photoshop.

From there it goes to Adobe Illustrator, where I add gridlines, and then print out the working piece. Then I sketch the subject onto a gridlined board that has been gessoed. (*Gesso is a white paint mixture consisting of a binder mixed with chalk, gypsum, pigment, or any combination of these. It is used in artwork as a preparation on a base for paint and other materials that are applied over it.*) Using a grid system helps keep the squares and subject perspectives from leaning too much.

After label selection, I start with the background and work inwards for minimal overlapping. From there I work on my color transitions, section by section, with the intent of matching the highlights and shadows of the picture.

Toward the end of the process, I look for ways to scale back to reveal some of the brand names and any recognizable text. Taking a further step, I add the brightest labels I can find to make the mosaic pop. Once I'm done with a piece, I add a UV coating as a final seal.

A more technical question: what materials do you like to work with?

The only brush I use is for gessoing and the final seal. On surfaces, I tend to use masonite or panel board due to the excessive gluing. Other mediums I prefer are ceramics for sculpting. I enjoy 3D work when I get a chance.

You mentioned that while you create larger pieces, you're scaling back and doing smaller pieces lately. How many hours does your average mosaic take to complete?

A typical 18" x24" mosaic takes about 40 hours to complete. I intend to have a game plan going in, but the project usually dictates the process, seeing

continued on page 72



Blue-eyed Grass Duet 12" x 18", 2011

THE ARTIST



THE ARTIST



November Change 4.5" x 5.5" 2012

**Daniel
Scott, Jr.**

Recycled

Mosaics

THE ARTIST

what works and what doesn't look as good. There's a lot of back and forth compromising.

How did you come up with the concept of "recycle mosaics?"

It started in 1994. I don't remember the course name I was taking, but I finished my assignments early. My professor at the time didn't like to see his students doing nothing. I had enough time to finish one more piece. I had a to choose between a batik painting or a mosaic.

I chose the latter, but instead of using cut glass or broken tile, I decided to try a different method. I used the color of Starburst wrappers, dipped in a dye bath and ironed flat. That kept me interested. I liked the texture from the batik method and the duotone coloring of the Starburst label. I airbrushed Edvard Munch's "The Scream" painting as a test subject, gluing down the cut

squares over the top. I liked the end result and decided to look to what else I could add for color.

I started using Snapple labels since there are 30-40 different labels from which to choose. Again, finding inspiration from my art history class and a recent trip to the museum, I pieced together two Picasso-inspired paintings from his "Weeping Woman" series. By the next year, I had created a few more and displayed the work at a coffee shop across the street from school. To my surprise, I sold a couple. It was then that I realized I had stumbled onto something unique. The rest is history.

Do you have a preference for a particular labels?

I don't have a preference—I take all kinds of labels and wrappers. I get donations from friends and family. Anything is welcome and I find something new all the time.



Suspended 25" x 36", 2011

THE ARTIST

What are your tools of the trade? Do you have a preferred medium?

Gesso for the board, if it isn't white already; scissors, Mod Podge® and a clear gel medium for the final sealing.

Do you prefer for any particular colors?

It depends on the subject. In most instances, the brighter, the better.

Do you have differences on approaching and executing a work when it is more representational (landscape, portrait) than when work is more abstracted?

There is a difference in preparation and execution. The subject dictates the size and positioning.

How do you like to work? In big blocks of time? Finishing a work in one session? Or over many visits to the studio?

I tend to work whenever I can. Since I work 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. and have a family, I carefully plan out a schedule. My studio is my garage since I make a complete mess of the place in the process.

What happens to the work that doesn't get completed? Do you rework it, abandon it?

For the most part, I abandon the project. I'm currently working on breaking that habit, though.

Tell me about some of your commissions.

I usually make whatever the client asks me, to an extent. I had a blast working up a mosaic of one client's family dog, for example. These commission pieces are usually at a minimum of 16" x 20" and have gone up to 24" x 36". It depends on the budget and if there is a deadline.

What is the inspiration behind your artwork?

For all the time and effort that goes into marketing a brand, I figured why not use the leftovers for color? I utilize the color and texture from labels I find or that are donated into a mosaic. I am also inspired by the conversations I have with people when they realize what material I use.



John Lennon, The White Album. 1995. 24" x 36"
This was on display across the street from my college and my first exhibit with the mosaics.

How have you handled the business side of being an artist?

It's easy to control since it's built around commissions mixed in with some I create. I don't get too deep into metrics or business models.

Are there any specific artists that you admire?

I admire my colleagues and professors from school. I see their work via social media now. It makes a difference when you spend a few years and get to know who they are and their passion for art.

What famous artists have influenced you?

Andy Warhol, Jasper Johns, Roy Lichtenstein, Vincent Van Gogh. I like single-subject compositions, bright contrasting colors and subtle layers of organic texture. I always thought Van Gogh was overrated until I saw his work in person at the J. Paul Getty Museum. I was floored and knew then why his work was powerful and important. No picture or print could ever reproduce what I saw with my own eyes.

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THE ARTIST



Four o'clock 4.5" x 4.5", 2012



Sweet Red Eyes 16" x 20", 2010



DeKoi Roy 18" x 24", 2010

THE ARTIST

Which art movements influence your work?

The pop art movement—I look at it as a technique. It doesn't necessarily have to be fixed on pop culture, but how it's applied to everyday life with good strong contrasting color.

Is there any conflict with selling work?

No, selling my work is part of being an artist. Sometimes I wish I had kept a few that I've sold but that's to be expected.

Have you been able to market your mosaics to the actual makers of those labels you're using?

I contacted Snapple back in 1995 and they offered to use my work, but without compensation. I don't think they were serious, although the correspondence was fun and something to look back on.



Above: *Reproduction of The Scream* This was the first recycled mosaic I created as a college project.

Right: *Firewheels on a Hot Summer Day* 12" x 18", 2011

You sell giclee prints online. How is that going?

I have a few buyers who still prefer originals over a print. So, I'm still trying to find the balance.

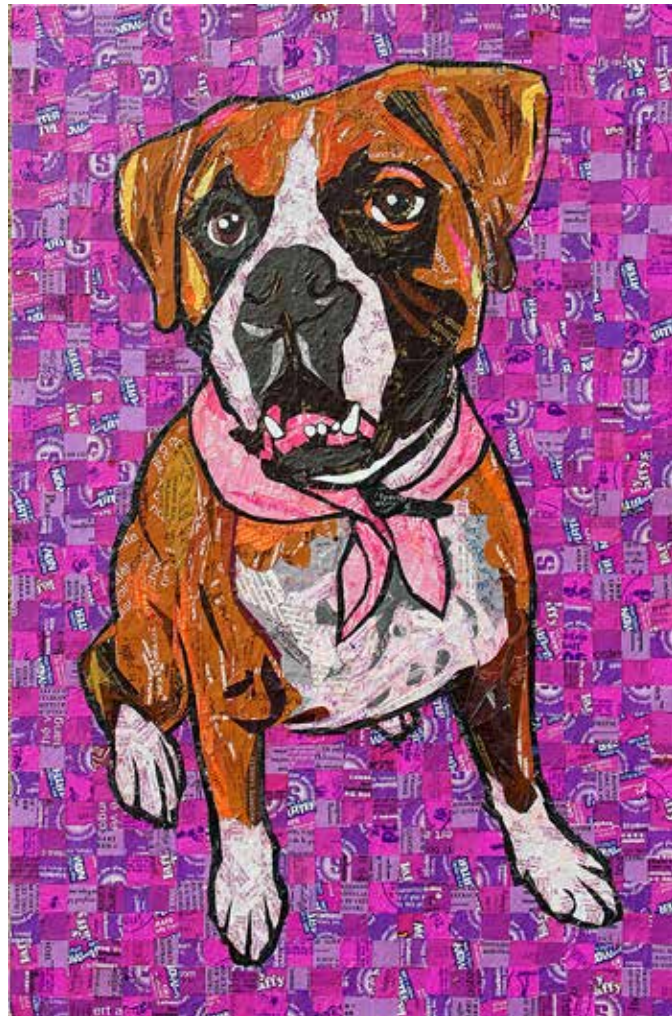
How do you market your artwork?

Social media and word of mouth. Social network sites can be time sinks, but extremely effective for business opportunities and exposure.

Tell me about exhibits of your work and how the work was received.

I started back up again with the recycled mosaics in 2010 for a group exhibit in Fort Worth. At that exhibit, people kept complimenting me on my paintings. In turn, I had to explain that they aren't paintings but made from recycled candy and drinks labels. It made a lot of people stop and talk more about the art once they knew what they were looking at. I generated a few sales and made

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The Boxer 12" x 18", 2012





My First Haircut 18" x 24", 2010



Cosmos #2 4.5" x 4.5", 2012



Suntaker #2 4.5" x 4.5", 2011



Spanish Steps 18" x 24", 2011

THE ARTIST



Cactus Bloom 4.5" x 4.5", 2012

Giclée prints are available on
recycledmosaics.net

twitter/pinterest @recycledmosaics
<http://gplus.to/danielscott>
about.me/daniel.scott.jr
about.me/recycledmosaics

THE ARTIST

more local contacts. It was well worth the effort because the piece I submitted sold to a man who was the curator for another exhibit.

How do your graphic design skills factor in?

I pay attention more to detail and prep work. I also learned that switching gears or mediums helps me stay fresh at work.

How do you balance the demands and desires of being an artist and supporting a family?

That will never end. My wife, Cari, and girls (Emma, 11, and Leah Grace, 5) are very important to me. I have to make good choices on how I spend my time and they're supportive of me. They know I get anxious when I come across an idea. They also know it's important for me to create as they see the end result.

Any dream as an artist yet to be fulfilled?

To make that one piece that opens the floodgates and goes viral. There's going to be a specific piece tied to me for the rest of my life, or at least for 15 minutes.

Does having an audience via your blog and Facebook affect your work?

I love the interaction but it can be a hindrance at times. I have to take a step back at times to refocus. In the end, it's all about what I want to produce. I carve my own path.

In what ways do you think the Internet affects your art in today's world or in the future?

There are always pros and cons to any vehicle in displaying artwork. There's so much to do and lots of time spent on metadata, networking, website maintenance, and so on. It's almost not worth the effort at times. However, the Internet makes it easier to get exposure to global audience. It's an online 24/7 portfolio with the ability to contact potential clients anywhere in the world.

Any upcoming projects?

I'm going to make a few small pieces to warm up for a commission due in May. After that, who knows? I might work up some architectural compositions of local landmarks and branch out a bit. **CHM**



Ollie 16" x 20", 2010, commissioned by Patty Gordon



Pink Magnolia 4.5" x 4.5", 2012



How to Work with Your Landscaper

Writing and photography by **John Black**

GARDENING

As the award-winning principal of Verdance Fine Garden Design, John Black gives each homeowner the big picture that reveals a property's full potential and inspires a delightful landscape. His imaginative yet practical designs come to life through detailed plans, with architectural elements and plant combinations that are not only interesting and beautiful but also appropriate to each owner and the environment.

John is a member of the Association of Professional Landscape Designers (APLD), the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA), and the California Landscape Contractors Association (CLCA). His work has been featured on HGTV's "Landscape Smart" and "Landscape Challenge" series. Visit his blog, *A Verdant Life*, at www.averdantlife.com.

Now that spring is here, my phone is beginning to ring more often as people realize they simply can't live any longer with their existing, unattractive yard. And while I really appreciate the consideration, unfortunately, about half the time my callers are unhappy to hear that getting what they want in the timeframe they want it will take somewhat more than a phone call.

It occurs to me that a bit of education could save these homeowners money, time and frustration, so I'd like to share a few ways any homeowner can work more efficiently with their landscape professional.

Know Which Professional You Need

Landscape designers, architects, contractors and gardeners all have different strengths, and are appropriate for different jobs.

The landscape architect, for instance, is licensed to provide grading and drainage plans that the landscape designer cannot.

The landscape contractor is licensed to install structures (such as retaining walls) that the gardener cannot.

The landscape designer may know best which plants are right for your site or how to achieve the best lighting effects, while the gardener may be your best choice for ongoing maintenance or adding seasonal color.

Take the time to learn how they differ, and decide which is right for you before you invite them out to your site. Otherwise, you'll waste time doubling back to find the appropriate pro.

Know What You're Asking For

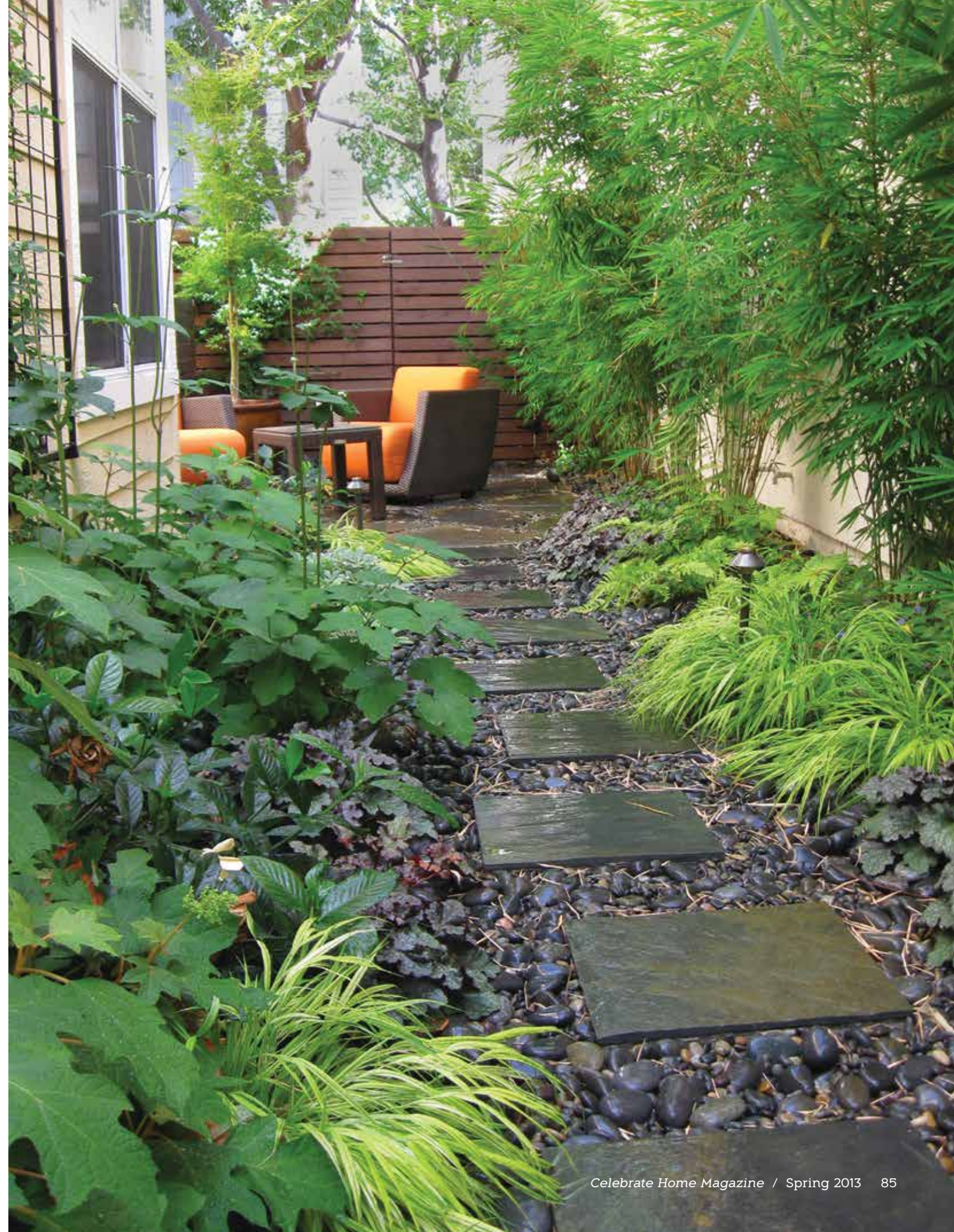
Do a bit of homework: What's the size of the area to be landscaped? What are some of the ways you envision enjoying your new yard? Have you seen any other yards or gardens (public or private) you liked? Take pictures, tear pages out of magazines, or photocopy books. Do whatever it takes to clarify, for yourself as well as your designer, what you've got and what you want. And for the best results, do it before you and your pro agree on a direction. Sharp turns are painful for everybody.

Know What You Can Spend

You didn't shop for a car without a budget. You didn't look for a house without a budget. So don't start planning your landscape without a budget.

"But we want to see how much things cost before we commit to a budget!" That's a landscape designer's dream: if you'll pay me to produce idea after idea after idea until we reach that magical place where ideas and budget intersect, I won't need another client this year. But wouldn't you rather spend that money on the actual construction, not the pretty drawings?

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Talk it over with your partner (and your financial adviser and your loan officer, if necessary) and decide on a figure. Then let your pro help you figure out how to get the biggest return on whatever you invest.

Know When to Stay Out of the Way

Once the design process has begun, most homeowners feel pretty excited that things are finally moving forward. We get it! We love what we do, too. But looking over the designer's or contractor's shoulder (either figuratively or literally) while we work, designing your yard at the same time we're designing your yard, shopping for plants or hardscape materials

before the design concept has been approved, or hooking us up with your friend's cousin who's studying for his contractor's license, just is not helpful. Unless, of course, we've agreed beforehand that it is—which we probably haven't.

Know Your Limitations

If you're at all handy, you probably can do some of the landscaping yourself. And if your contractor agrees that some of the work will be done by you, great!

But before you start, consider whether you're really going to save money by doing it yourself rather than giving the job to someone who makes their living doing it all day, every day.



The homeowner desired a lush garden in a palette of green and white. This garden rises to the occasion with a symphony of varying shades, textures and seasonal variations.

Are you really that good at sizing and fitting irrigation pipe? Do you know how to put a plant in the ground to prevent it from going into shock? What's the worst that can happen if you don't wire your landscape lighting properly?

I'm not saying you can't do any of these things—just that if you, say, kill that plant, you're on the hook to replace it. If your irrigation is uneven, you have no one to fault but yourself. Just because you can... doesn't mean you should.

Know Your Pro

Don't—just do not—hire an unlicensed professional to do the job of a licensed one. Don't hire a landscape designer (unlicensed) to design a hillside deck. Don't hire a gardener (unlicensed) to set your stone. For that matter, don't hire a landscape contractor (C-27 license) to install your gas line (C-36 license). I'm not even a fan of hiring your gardener to install your irrigation.

Check the contractor's license status. Check their insurance. If you know they've got a crew, but the state licensing board says they have no employees, they're not playing fair, and that hurts everyone. Sure, unlicensed, uninsured contractors are a lot less expensive than licensed and insured ones—right up until something goes wrong.

Chances are, even in this economy, your landscaping is going to cost more and take longer than you expect. But there's nothing that says you can't get your money's worth. Before you pick up the phone, remember: a little preparation goes a long way toward getting results that you'll love! **CHM**

RIGHT: To manage a sloping front yard while keeping an informal cottage style, this garden uses Connecticut blue-stone steps flanked by granite boulders. Drifts of bearded Iris create continuity and structure throughout the landscape.

BELOW: In a traditional Japanese garden, symbol and metaphor are essential elements of design. Although the plants themselves require only moderate irrigation, this backyard suggests abundant water with flowing grasses on the banks of a dry creek that actually captures winter rains.



Vibrant colors and wild forms celebrate unbridled life in this artist's garden. Warm neutral hues of stone, gravel and concrete create the perfect foil for bursts of green, silver and chartreuse foliage, while a simple blood-red pot provides a focal point to organize the chaos.



To make the most of a shallow lot, a raised planter doubles as a dining banquette, replete with a built-in grill. The commanding arbor draws the eye upward, while dark screening shrubs seem to recede, creating the illusion of a larger space.



Lawn Gone!

Low-Maintenance,
Sustainable,
Attractive
Alternatives
for Your Yard **by Pam Penick**

A green, neatly-cut lawn has long been part of the American dream of homeownership. Since the development of our earliest suburbs, the lawn has occupied a privileged place as the default groundcover for builders and homeowners alike.

The fact is, however, that traditional lawn grasses aren't well suited to large regions of our country—the arid Southwest and Mountain West, in particular, as well as the drought-prone Plains states—and lawns in the South and Midwest often require copious summer watering to be kept green. Lawn fertilizers and pesticides have proved toxic to birds, beneficial insects, and, when they wash into watersheds, toxic to fish and rivers. Lawns lack cover, food, and nesting material for wildlife.

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After: A meadowy mix of fescues replaces the old lawn, providing the look of lawn while requiring much less water and a once-a-year mowing. Design and photographs by Rebecca Sweet, Harmony in the Garden.

Before: A traditional lawn guzzles a lot of water but still looks patchy.



GARDENING

A typical lawn requires several hours of maintenance each week during the growing season, and the power tools used for this time-consuming maintenance come with a high cost in terms of air and noise pollution.

On top of all that, most people hardly use their front lawns, and it can seem an awful waste to maintain something that you never use. Other types of plants like small ornamental grasses, creeping groundcovers, and low-growing perennials and shrubs can do a beautiful job of covering the soil, and many of them require less water and maintenance. Plus, simply by choosing to grow several different species of plants in your yard, you'll help reduce the "lawn desert"—the monoculture of turf that afflicts so many neighborhoods.

Once you decide to go lawnless, however, you may run into surprising resistance from your neighbors, especially if lawns are the norm in your neighborhood. For someone accustomed to a wide-open view of lawns all the way down the

street, watching a neighbor rip hers out can be threatening to a sense of neighborhood values. Going lawnless may be perceived as unneighborly, and your new landscaping, while beautiful in your eyes, may appear overgrown and weedy to others used to neatly shorn lawns. Neighbors may ask you when you're planning to mow or express concern about declining property values. They may even call the city to complain about "overgrown weeds" if they are unable or unwilling to recognize that you've created a garden or alternative landscaping. Even if you don't live in an HOA-controlled neighborhood and have no official landscaping rules, you may feel intimidated about deviating from the dominant aesthetic of your community. No one wants to be the black sheep of the neighborhood.

If you live in a conservatively landscaped neighborhood, where everyone maintains a tidy, green lawn out front, try these suggestions for fitting in with the neighbors, even as you subvert the lawn ethos.

Make Gradual Changes

Although you may be itching to rip out all your lawn at once, it can be a shock to your neighbors to see such a dramatic change. They may grow even more uneasy if it takes you several months (or longer) to finish your new landscaping. Instead, dream big (go ahead and draw up a plan for the whole yard), but start small by working on just one portion of your yard at a time—ideally, a section that you can complete in a few weekends. Working gradually will also benefit you by making each project more manageable and affordable, and you can better gauge how much maintenance it requires before you tackle the next section, giving you time to revise your overall plan, if necessary, as you go along.

Blend In

Convert only the less-visible portions of your lawn and retain a broad swath of traditional grass along the street to help your garden fit in with the neighborhood. Regularly mow and edge the lawn to keep it neat. You'll show your neighbors that you respect the aesthetic of the neighborhood, and you'll still reap the benefits of less lawn. Go whole hog in the backyard instead.

Choose Grass Lookalikes

In a lawn-loving neighborhood, blend in even more by choosing a grassy substitute. A low-growing sedge lawn or sweep of mondo grass looks similar but requires little of the maintenance of a conventional lawn. You'll be a master of disguise!

Include Structure and Garden Decor

A garden that's blowsy with ornamental grasses and spent flowers can look unkempt to some people. Your neighbors may not even recognize that yours is a garden in seasonal transition, seeing it instead as weedy and overgrown. Adding structure to your landscaping through the use of well-defined paths, a bench, and low hedging will help people "see" the garden. Even if you rarely use the paths or sit on the bench, these features will help sell your landscaping as a garden to the neighbors, give it a welcoming, cared-for appearance, and distinguish it from the neglected property down the block.

GARDENING

Lawn Gone! Low-Maintenance, Sustainable, Attractive Alternatives for Your Yard

Pam Pennick's colorful guide covers the basics of replacing a traditional lawn with a wide variety of easy-care, no-mow, drought-tolerant, money-saving options that will appeal to today's busy, eco-conscious homeowner.

Homeowners spend billions of hours—and dollars—watering, mowing, and maintaining their lawns. You don't have to be one of them. Free yourself with *Lawn Gone!*, a colorful, accessible guide to the basics of replacing a traditional lawn with a wide variety of easy-care, no-mow, low-water, money-saving options.

Published by Ten Speed Press
Available on www.amazon.com.

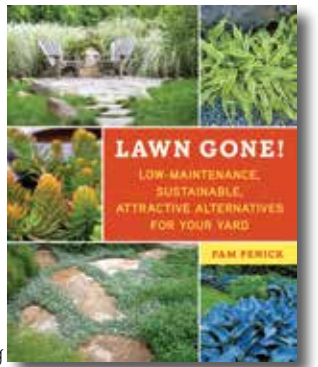
This article was excerpted from Pennick's book with permission from Ten Speed Press

Add Polish

Don't overlook the power of well-installed edging and a fresh layer of mulch to frame your garden beds and give them a neat, finished appearance. In addition, edging and mulch keep lawn grass in your neighbor's yard from creeping into yours, and mulch also holds weeds at bay and helps soil stay cooler in summer, warmer in winter.

Groom

At least once a month, walk around your property to see what needs tidying up. Prune dead branches from your trees, trim plants back from the sidewalk, cut back spent flowering plants sooner than you might prefer, and generally neaten up the garden to avoid potential complaints about your yard being overgrown. Besides, regular inspections will help you learn more about your plants, spot problems early, and allow you to enjoy your garden's scents, flowers, and/or evergreen beauty. You'll also get to know your neighbors by being visible in your front yard, and you can explain, if anyone asks, what you're trying to accomplish by going lawnless. Who knows, you may even convert a few of them. **CHM**



Keeping a swath of lawn along the street—even a slightly shaggy ecological lawn that needs mowing only a few times a year—and planting taller lawn replacements closer to the house keeps the neighbors happy by blending more easily with other lawns along the street. © Pam Pennick



GARDENING

"Gardening is cheaper than therapy and you get tomatoes." —Author Unknown

How a Garden Can Teach You to Be More Creative

Written by **Nicole Cody** • Photography by **Cindy Dyer**

Gardening is a seasonal thing. There are tasks to do in every season; however, summer tasks can't be easily undertaken in winter and winter tasks aren't so suited to the spring.

What does this have to do with creativity you may ask?

Why, my dear friend, everything! Creativity has its seasons too. Once you begin to understand that you don't need to fight against nature, you can begin to work with flow and rhythm. All creative projects follow a similar path to the seasons. Recognizing what season you're in is the first step!

Winter—A Time for Rest

Winter is a dark, quiet place with the occasional storm or blizzard. But it's from the darkness that our ideas come. Winter is not a doing time. It's a thinking time, a planning time, a snuggling-up-under-the-covers-with-a-book time. You can't force anything to grow in winter, but it doesn't stop you dreaming about spring, or the harvest you'll make come summer.

If you are in a cold, hard place creatively then treat yourself kindly. Don't panic. The seasons always change. And as they do, you'll change with them. In the meantime, go clean out your kitchen cupboards or have a cup of tea and flick through a garden catalog to inspire you.

If inspiration does strike, it's fine to buy a few packets of seed, attend a class on composting, or sketch out some designs. But don't even try to plant anything. The garden is not ready yet and anything you plant won't survive and thrive in such inhospitable conditions.

Spring is Work Time

It's the season for setting up solid foundations. You set out your beds, dig some good compost through them, and plant all your tender seedlings. If you only have a loose plan so far, spring is the time where we firm up the details. It's also when we get the supplies we need if we didn't take care of that in winter. Good ideas are like those tender seedlings—they need special care.

Every day or so you'll need to come back to your garden and do some work—fertilizing, weeding, watering, and trailing tendrils of climbers up the trellis you have created for them. You'll be able to enjoy some early harvest, but mostly spring is about setting a solid foundation for what's to come. Get into good gardening habits and keep learning and practicing!

There's work to be done! Get your garden beds ready to plant out for spring.

Summer's Bounty

A summer garden provides a bountiful harvest. Everything grows quickly and easily, although vigorous plants may need extra staking. You'll still be doing the usual jobs—feeding, weeding, tending, watering.

Some of your produce may need to be rejected or written off—a bug might get into your tomato, or a bird might eat all of your figs. That's the nature of gardens—they are never 100 percent perfection. Gardens are always a work in progress.

The crop you had high hopes for might fail to thrive, but the butter beans you poked into the soil

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as an afterthought might take off in spectacular fashion, providing you with never-ending buckets of delight. Share your harvest and enjoy!

Fall—Collect and Store

In fall we collect seed and put it away for next spring. There are different jobs to do now. We're still tending our vegetable patch, and there is still harvest, but we are spending more time mending, tidying and getting the most out of our crops. We jar and put away produce to keep us going through winter. It's also where we review what worked and what didn't and what we'll do differently next time.

Autumn is a season where we may call in some help. You might let the chickens into the garden to eat up all the slugs and grasshoppers.

You'll start pulling out the failing plants, and a neighbor may come with a rotary hoe to churn the old plants back into the soil, nourishing your beds for next spring. You might thumb through some books to find out why your beets rotted in the ground, and how you can prevent that next time, or whether you should even be planting beets at all. You'll feed and mulch and look after that soil so it's ready for another productive year.

Creativity, like gardening, has its seasons. Of course, you could be like some modern manufacturers and grow all your tomatoes in a hot house at maximum yield year round. That's very productive, I'll give you that. But I bet you won't be able to taste the summer sun in those fruit, or the tang of a late frost. Seasons give their own magic to gardens and to art. **CHM**

GARDENING

Seeds

Written by Cynthia Staples

In elementary school, my younger brother and I participated in an activity where we were given seeds to plant in cups. Over time, the seeds sprouted and tiny house plants grew. At home, when my brother discovered that the neighbor's maple tree helicopters littering our yard were, in fact, winged seeds, he decided to replicate the school activity. He planted one seed in a handful of soil in one of the small white Styrofoam™ cups that our dad liked to use for coffee.

My parents were supportive of his effort, though not at all positive that he was doing anything except making a cup full of mud. But, green shoots soon sprouted up through the soil. When the sapling outgrew the cup, my brother planted it in one of Mom's large clay pots.

My brother was only about seven years old with the attention span of gnat. We all expected him to forget about the tree, to let it wither and die once the joys of watering it faded away. But he didn't lose interest. He watered it. He moved it around the yard to catch the traveling rays of the sun. He dragged it under the house during rain storms. When a branch was accidentally broken, he applied a field dressing of black electrical tape which saved the budding limb.

Dad was fine with the tree until my brother wanted to transplant it from the pot to a fertile area near the vegetable garden. Dad tried to explain to us that the roots of maple trees spread ferociously. We heard the words but we didn't really understand.

My brother wanted to replant his tree, and I supported him. Mom sided with us. "Let him plant the thing. See what happens."

Over the years we watched the garden shrink as the tree grew magnificently, with a trunk so wide I couldn't wrap my arms around

it, and a canopy so broad that it shaded half the back yard.

One day I saw my father looking up at the tree, lips pursed. Then he looked at my brother's head thrown back, face beaming as he looked up at his tree. My father tipped his cap at the tree and sighed.

"Come on," he said to my brother. "Get inside and wash your hands." As my brother dashed by him, my father patted him on his head.

Thirty years later, the tree is gone and so are my parents. My brother still lives in the house, planting in the earth that our father tilled.

Recently, he called me. He'd gone to the store to buy gifts for his girlfriend's two young daughters.

"What did you buy?" I asked.

"Little gardening gloves," he said.

I could hear the smile in his voice. **CHM**

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Perennial Vegetable Spring

Writing and photography by **Eric Toensmier** and **Jonathan Bates**

In *Paradise Lot*, co-authors Eric Toensmier and Jonathan Bates describe it best in the subtitle of their new book, “Two Plant Geeks, One-Tenth of an Acre, and the Making of an Edible Garden Oasis in the City.”

It’s a funny and charming story of two single guys, both plant nerds, on a wild plan—to realize the urban permaculture garden of their dreams and meet women to share it with them. They succeed on both counts.

Over several years, the two friends created a “permaculture paradise”—a permanent agriculture meeting human needs while improving ecosystem health. They produced more than 200 low-maintenance, edible plants in an innovative food forest on a small city lot in Holyoke, Massachusetts. Here, Toensmier shares his advice and instruction on perennial vegetables from *Paradise Lot*.

After the long desolation of a Massachusetts winter, things start to move quickly once the snow thaws. Spring is the season of perennial vegetables, the time when their advantages over annual crops become clear. In the time it takes for annual crops to be ready to eat, many perennials have had three months of harvest. At that point, having bolted and lost their flavor until the coming fall or spring, the perennials pass the baton to the annuals.

As the snow melts, the bedraggled remains of the previous year’s perennial vegetables poke out of the soil. Though there is some frost damage on the leaf tips, baby perennial greens will already be coming up here and there throughout the garden and will be ready to harvest by the last week in March.

One such green is **sorrel**, an often-overlooked vegetable. Partial shade, drought, and even two feet of snow seem to slow it down only temporarily. Sorrel is a great example of a multi-functional permaculture species because its deep roots concentrate nutrients from the sub-soil. Calcium, phosphorus, and potassium accumulate in the leaves and are made available to neighboring plants over time

as the leaves break down into the soil again. Sometimes Jonathan and I speed up this process up by cutting back our sorrels and mulching with them, causing a flush of tender new growth.

Sorrel’s sour leaves are good eating in spring but can quickly be lost to bolting and bitterness, although the non-flowering variety called Profusion keeps on cranking out fresh leaves all season long. Profusion sorrel is also notable for the density of its growth. We planted a row of it as a barrier between two different types of groundcover. Sorrel also grows nicely in the greenhouse all winter. Sometimes we transplant it in, but we had one in our hoop house for many years with great success.

Like sorrel, **water celery** pokes its head up early with tender shoots as the snow melts. This only goes for the water celery we have planted in the ground; for some reason the ones in pots in the pond take much longer. From mid-March until the end of April, water celery greens are among our favorite types of greens for salads. Sometimes its parsley-celery flavor gets to be too strong by the end of May, but we’re happy to have it in March and again in late fall. Jonathan and I get

down on our hands and knees and graze on it like sheep. Our potted water celery plants can be weedy, but our patch in dry partial shade is well controlled, as it is out of its favored conditions there, slowing it down to the point that it often dies back in midsummer.

Early spring is also the time for **Caucasian spinach** shoots. Like a skinny asparagus with tender leaves, this is a high-class vegetable. We had trouble finding the perfect location and conditions for it, but one plant in somewhat moist partial shade has persisted for several years.

By the end of April, Caucasian spinach shoot season has passed, but the leaves can be eaten raw well into June. Few perennial vegetables can compete with that lengthy season. March is not too late to harvest last year’s perennial root crops. Some, like **sunchokes**, are at their best this time of year. Also known as **Jerusalem artichokes**, sunchokes store their energy as



Ramps

starch in their tubers over the winter, but as spring comes they convert the starch to sugar in anticipation of the growing season. A decent vegetable in the fall, sunchokes become sweet as apples in the spring.

In early spring we dig other root crops, like **skirret**, **Chinese artichoke**, and **groundnuts**. It took me a while to become a fan of groundnut tubers, which seemed a second-rate substitute for potatoes. Although we grew plenty of them because they are native, high in protein, and fix nitrogen, it wasn’t until I read Samuel Thayer’s *The Forager’s Harvest* that I learned how to deal with groundnuts in the kitchen. Thayer suggests treating them like the bean relative they are. Following his advice, I mashed up some boiled groundnuts with chili spices and cheese as though they were refried beans. Suddenly this high-protein native crop found its place in my diet.

April’s Onions and Asparagus

When April arrives, plants are leafing out everywhere in the garden. The delicacy of spring for us is **ramps**. This native wild leek grows in the shade of moist, deciduous woods throughout eastern North America. I’ve read about Appalachian ramp festivals where the whole town reeks of garlic for days. This celebration of spring abundance drew friends with dishes like nettle quiche and Japanese knotweed crisp; our friend Frank Hsieh once brought a whole roasted



Asparagus

spring lamb from his farm. I had been keeping an eye on a patch of ramps across the street from a Subway sandwich shop the next town over for several years, and my sustainable harvests (never more than five percent of plants, as ramps grow slowly) had provided the ramps for many of our festivals.

One year I drove by to visit the ramps and saw, to my horror, that a large condominium development was going in. I rounded up a crew from the ramp festival and we rescued hundreds of plants. Today they and their progeny are growing in our own garden and many other gardens as well.

Perennial scallions come into their own in April, too. If you grow scallions from seed, you can plan the harvest in order to have them any time of year. That’s nice but more

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Fuki

work than Jonathan and I had in mind. Every spring our Welsh and walking onions send up their new scallions. We dig or divide their clumps for harvest and transplanting. This glut of scallions is welcome after a long winter, and we put it to use in fried rice and scrambled eggs.

Fall brings a second flush of scallions. At the base of our bamboo, in the shade of a feathery-leafed mimosa, grows a plant with enormous round leaves up to three feet across. This is **fuki**, a popular wild edible in Japan and a bold statement in the landscape. Not content to grow ordinary fuki with its 18-inch leaves, we obtained the giant form from an alpine plant nursery, of all places. Giant fuki is sterile and thus has no chance of dispersing into the environment except for its aggressive rhizomes. Our fuki is hemmed in by a bamboo rhizome barrier on two sides and a frequently-trodden path on the other. We actually wish it would

grow faster so that we could harvest more, because fuki is a favorite spring vegetable on both sides of our duplex. You eat the leaf stalk, as you do rhubarb, but fuki is more analogous to celery. We boil the stalks, peel them by hand, and marinate them in umeboshi or raspberry vinegar with some shredded ginger and tamari.

Some people balk at the labor involved in preparing a crop like fuki. I don't mind spending 15 extra minutes processing a vegetable that, as a perennial, takes no work to grow beyond its first year. It's a question of which stage in the growing process you want to labor for your food.

April brings an embarrassment of perennial vegetable riches that just keep coming. **Asparagus, good King Henry,** and **giant Solomon's seal** provide tasty shoots. Even the tightly-curved shoots of hostas can be cooked up this time of year; they're not my favorite,



Quelite

but you'd be hard-pressed to find a hardier vegetable for full shade. **Violet leaves** are usually fairly bland, but Dave Jacke introduced me to a cultivar called Rebecca that has remarkable vanilla-mint-flavored leaves and cream-and-purple flowers. Another April favorite is the wasabi-like **Eastern native toothwort**, a groundcover with piquant horseradish-flavored roots and leaves. I think a commercial producer could market the roots to the finest sushi restaurants.

May is Peak Time

The king of cold-hardy perennial vegetables is **asparagus**, and around here May is the peak of harvest. We grow a variety called Purple Passion, and its fat spears keep coming for more than a month. Fresh-steamed asparagus is as good an argument for turning your lawn into a garden as any I can imagine. An unlikely favorite of ours is **sweet cicely**, which we fell in

love with at Wonder Bread after discovering that when the large seeds are green and unripe they taste like licorice. We all eat a lot of these seeds in the spring, and they also became a favorite among all the children who visited the garden. Jonathan and I had tried to start sweet cicely from seed when we lived at Wonder Bread Organic Farm but had never got it to germinate. We finally bought some plants at Wonder Bread, transplanted them to Holyoke, and when they set seeds for the first time threw fresh seed all over the garden hoping that a few might germinate. It seemed as though every single one did, creating a weed problem for us. We began to deadhead what we didn't eat to keep it under control.

During those first couple of years in Holyoke, Jonathan and I were both still single, and we spent an inordinate amount of time in winter (and in the summer, after dark) reading up on useful plants. Many a time one of us would cry, "Dude!" and run over to learn the details of some strange crop on the "Plants for a Future" database or from a moldy old tome.

One was a perennial arugula called **sylvetta** I had profiled in *Perennial Vegetables*. I filed it away in my head as hardy only to Zone 7 and dismissed it as a candidate for our garden. But Jonathan insisted he wanted to try it, and I went along, thinking to myself that it didn't stand a chance. It grew vigorously as an annual, and to my surprise

the plants re-sprouted the next spring. The woody parts of this shrub are not hardy, but the roots survived, and the leaves are the part you eat anyway. (So much for my award-winning expertise.)

Sylvetta went on to self-sow with abandon until we corralled it under our grapes, where it can do its thing without smothering anything more delicate. The strong arugula flavor of sylvetta is outstanding in omelets, but perhaps it is at its best chewed fresh in the garden with a few ripe alpine strawberries.

The perennial vegetable with the longest season in our garden is **garlic chives**. Most people in the United States view this humble plant as a minor crop at best, or even exclusively as an ornamental. But in China the blanched shoots and flower stalks are a commonplace crop. Jonathan and I love the garlicky greens in the spring and fall, even though we have many other perennial vegetables to choose from at that time. But in late summer this crop comes into its own with 12-inch stalks topped by an edible flower bud.

The full stalk and bud can be chopped and thrown into whatever you might be cooking for lunch or dinner. I often see bunches of these flower stalks for sale at Asian markets, but I rarely meet a gardener who uses their garlic chives in cooking. Once they open, the flowers are also quite attractive to honeybees. As with sweet cicely, we could not get it to grow from



Sea kale

seed packets, but fresh-sown seed turned into a weedy disaster. We have now isolated our garlic chives in some areas that it can dominate (and be dead-headed) and ruthlessly weed it out of our other beds.

Kale

As we were establishing the garden, we relied on self-sowing annual and biennial plants, and they became important in our diets. These species aren't exactly self sowing; we usually scatter the ripe seeds and fruits around the garden wherever there's an empty space or disturbed soil.

Our favorite self-sowing species is **Western Front kale**. This variety looks like Red Russian and shares Red Russian's sea-green color, oakleaf form, and mild, creamy taste. We ordered seeds of Western

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Front when we lived at Wonder Bread Organic Farm, hoping for a perennial kale (we had already successfully winterkilled Tree Collards kale and Dorbenton's perennial kale). Actually, the seed company we bought them from claimed that about half of the seeds would turn out to be perennial, as it was still being bred for this.

We planted out about a hundred at Wonder Bread, but the perennial seedlings, if there were any, did not survive the winter. (This is not the only crop where perennial genes are linked with frost-tenderness.) However, in growing it we discovered that we loved this kale, and when it flowered and set seed its second year, we let it dry on the plant and scattered it throughout the garden. That fall hundreds of tiny, tender kales came up around the garden and started a tradition that we practice to this day.

This kind of repeated seed saving and sowing is a form of passive plant breeding. Each year it is possible to save seed only from the plants that survived minimal enough care to reproduce, and so over time we have been developing a semi-feral strain of kale that can find and exploit available niches in our mulched perennial garden system. We have given away lots of seed over the years, and every now and then I see some of our kale's descendants thriving beneath an Asian pear or at the edge of a path in a friend's garden.

Fall Fruits

Yellow Pear cherry tomatoes

look like miniature yellow light bulbs and are mild and sweet. Throwing some fruits around in fall effectively plants the following year's crop. We phased this out after a few years in Holyoke not because Yellow Pear wouldn't grow but because the plants got so large that they were crowding out our perennials.

The other disadvantage is that when they grow from seed in spring (as opposed to using established transplants), the fruits don't ripen until late in the season and then have only a short window before frost. The same holds true for tomatillos and annual ground-cherries.

Sometimes I get a little cocky and start to think I know everything there is to know about useful plants for my region. So imagine my surprise when one day I stumbled across a reference to the edibility of the species I had always read was poisonous. **Black nightshade** is a native tomato relative with white flowers, broad green leaves, and tiny black fruits that look like micro-eggplants. I found a reference to the edibility of the fruit, and as it turns out Jonathan and I found some growing on the street-facing side of a neighbor's hedge. Suddenly I began to see it in empty lots all around me, coming up between the cracks in sidewalks. Here is an edible fruit that had been under my feet for years. The fruits are small but tasty, sort of like a licorice-flavored

tomato. Apparently the unripe fruits are toxic, which perhaps accounts for its bad reputation. We brought home some fruit and sprinkled it around the garden, and the next spring a few plants came up. Once again I threw the little fruits all over, and we were soon inundated with far more black nightshade fruit than we could possibly use.

Surprises

Some things we felt certain would self sow utterly failed. Miner's lettuce, though a terrible weed in our greenhouse, never established itself outside. The same went for cilantro and dill, both of which we would have loved to have more of as culinary herbs and sources of nectar for beneficial insects.

Meanwhile we were surprised to find successful seedlings of eggplant, lablab beans, purple mustard, mache, and even castor beans. It had never occurred to me that tropical species like lablab and castor would have seeds that could survive a Massachusetts winter.

Besides self-sowers, the annuals we grow alongside our perennial staples are those that are at their best fresh from the garden, like peppers and heirloom tomatoes and annual greens, plus species we use in favorite recipes, like garlic, basil for pesto, and tomatillos for roasted green salsa. **CHM**

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Broccolitas Forever

Writing by Jonathan Bates

When I first saw sea kale, I fell in love. Against the dark green foliage of the rest of the garden, the powdery blue-green and purple hues of new leaves called out. The tender spring leaves taste a little like collard greens, but a single plant yields a crop of only a half dozen leaves a year; eating more would put an end to the plant in short order.

One alternative is to eat some leaves in the fall after most of the growing has taken place, but we have come to prefer the early spring broccolis. Along with the first six to eight inches of tender new flower stalk growth, the broccolis, or broccolitas, can be eaten raw, mixed into salads, lightly cooked with butter and salt, or added to a vegetable stir-fry.

Perennial broccolis like sea kale can be grown as permanent, low-maintenance, early-season vegetables. Like asparagus, sea kale broccolis are ready to harvest weeks before most annual vegetables can even be planted, extending the growing season. Our sea kale has lasted for ten years, and we've been able to enjoy its flowering stage every spring. Imagine an explosion of three-foot-tall, snow-white bundles of small flowers filling the garden with a honey scent that attracts bees. Take that, annual broccolis!



Jonathan Bates in his garden

Sea kale is not the only broccolita in our garden. Turkish rocket also forms a pungent, mustardy-tasting broccoli raab that is best cooked, lending it a nutty flavor. The plant has a deep taproot that helps support it through drought and mines the subsoil for important minerals. The mature hairy leaves protect it from most pests. It is a long-lived perennial, increasing its food mass as it ages. Turkish rocket's nutritional value is high; its 22 percent crude protein content at flower-bud stage is comparable to peanuts.

Both of these broccolitas are from wild lineages. Once established, these plants are fairly pest and disease resistant. (North American pests haven't figured out how to get through sea kale's

thick, waxy leaves, for example.) And they seem well adapted to drought. The downside is that neither plant has really been domesticated yet; they need breeding work to produce bigger broccolis.

I often wonder why more people aren't growing perennial vegetables like sea kale and Turkish rocket. A monoculture of annual broccoli may grow more calories than a monoculture of asparagus or sea kale, but how much soil is eroding from the plowing and cultivation of annual vegetables? How many chemicals and how much fuel and water do they require? Perennial veggies challenge the monoculture mindset and the industrial, turn-a-profit-fast economies of scale food system; they can be grown with less labor and fewer inputs and with zero soil erosion. When grown with a diversity of other perennial vegetables, fruits, and nut-producing trees and shrubs in multistory polycultures, the long-term benefits and yields of a plant like sea kale outweigh any perceived shortcoming in yield.

I challenge willing gardeners to tuck these exciting plants into perennial beds to gain a little more fresh spring eating. Enjoy the broccolitas! **CHM**

Bringing *Butterflies* Home

Writing by
Mary Ellen Ryall

Photography by
Mary Ellen Ryall
Cindy Dyer
Brian K. Loflin

Many home gardens welcome butterflies and now is the time to plant. Learn what native plants will attract the beauty of butterflies to your home. Butterflies are special because they need native host plants in order to produce the next generation of butterflies. Flowers native to the Americas have been living right along with butterflies since the time of the dinosaur. Native flowers also feed butterflies with sweet nectar from deep within blossoms and allow pollen to be transported to other plants. To attract lots of butterflies, stay away from chemicals on lawns as they kill butterflies. Less lawn = less work = more butterflies.

Butterfly Life Cycle

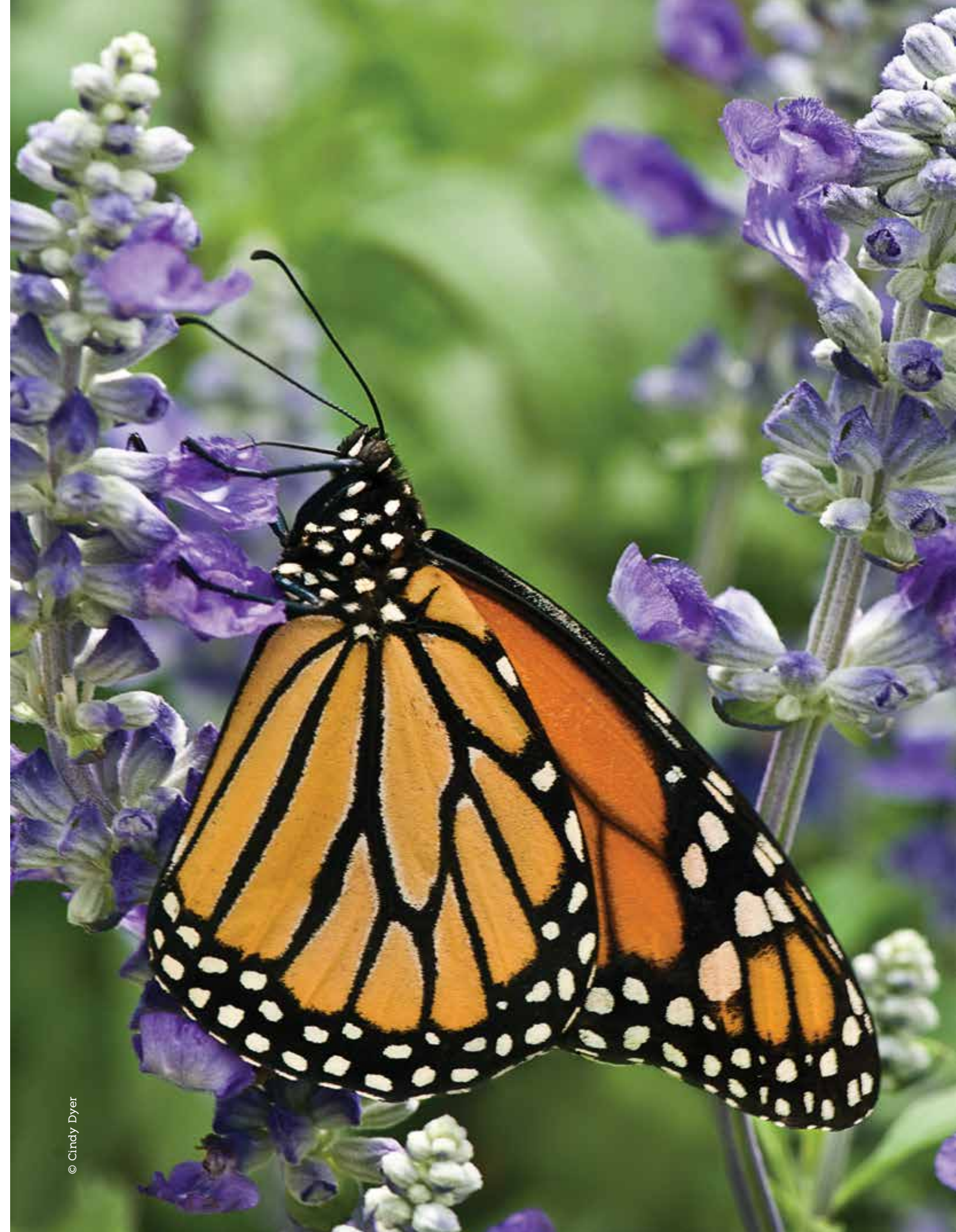
Female butterflies deposit eggs on specific or general host plants depending on the butterfly species. Butterflies with a variety of host plants have a better chance of survival than butterflies with only one specific host plant, such as the Monarch butterfly (pictured opposite) and the milkweed plant. Butterfly caterpillars eat host plant leaves. All in all, pollinators, including butterflies, ensure the future of beautiful flowering plants. Native plants and butterflies are dependent upon each other for survival.

Non-Native Plants

Butterflies cannot use alien plants such as the butterfly bush (*Buddleja*) family and Sweet William (*Dianthus barbatus*), as host plants, because butterflies did not evolve with plants from distant shores. These plants are described as non-native, exotic, ornamental or alien. Yes, they attract butterflies, but they don't allow the next generation of butterflies to be born.

Alien plants often replace necessary native host plants because exotic plants tend to bloom before native plants. Non-native ornamentals migrated to the Americas with settlers and continue to be transported by ship, wind, cars and even by your local nurseries. Where does this leave habitat for butterflies? Today, pollinators are suffering a 40 to 90 percent decline. Butterflies are the second largest group of pollinators after bees.

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© Cindy Dyer

What *Butterfly* Species Do You Want to Attract?

Brushfoot Butterflies

Gray Hairstreak (*Satyrium melinus*) often perches on top of vegetation, usually near its host plant, willow. The gray against green willow makes it easy to spot. There are small native willow bushes to choose from.

Black Swallowtail (*Papilio polyxenes*) developed with representatives of the carrot family (*Apiaceae*). This butterfly is an exception to the native plant rule and needs non-native carrot family relatives, including parsley, dill or fennel as host plants. The plants contain similar chemicals to the carrot family that the butterfly can smell, eat and digest, even though the butterfly did not evolve with these alien plants. You can grow an edible herb garden and save a butterfly.

Canadian Tiger Swallowtail (*Papilio Canadensis*), a smaller butterfly, needs birch, aspen and other trees.

Eastern Tiger Swallowtail (*Papilio glaucus*) needs tulip trees and cherry trees as host plants. There are numerous native small cherry trees and shrubs, such as pin, choke, sand or black cherry.

Great Spangled Fritillary (*Speyeria Cybele*) is colorful and attracted to old-fashioned violets.

Monarch (*Danaus plexippus*) needs a specific host plant, milkweed. There are many species of milkweed, including poke, swamp, purple and butterfly weed, depending on whether conditions are wet or dry, but common milkweed is the most favored by the Monarch because it is most abundant. If you have a water garden you might plant swamp or purple milkweed to attract this monarch, and other butterflies, including Gray Hairstreak, might stop by for nectar.

Other Species

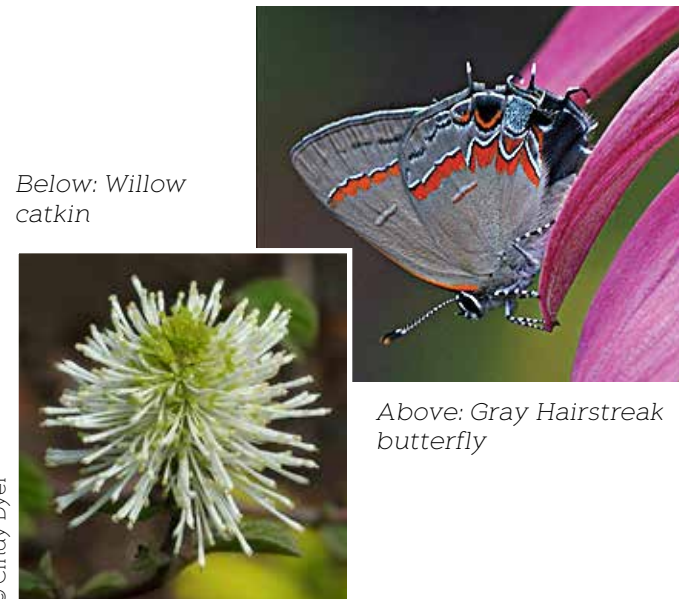
There are numerous species of small Grass Skippers, which come in brown, yellow and orange. One can sometimes see the small butterfly sleeping clasped to tall grasses in early morning.

Indian Skipper (*Hesperia sassacus*) needs native grasses such as little bluestem and tall bluestem to reproduce.

The **Sulphur Butterfly** (*Colias*) family specializes in legumes as host plants, including alfalfa and clover. Native prairie clover has rose-purple petals and projecting gold-orange anthers that Sulphur Butterflies need as a host plant. Several Sulphur species are seasonal residents—mostly pink-edged, clouded and orange Sulphur.

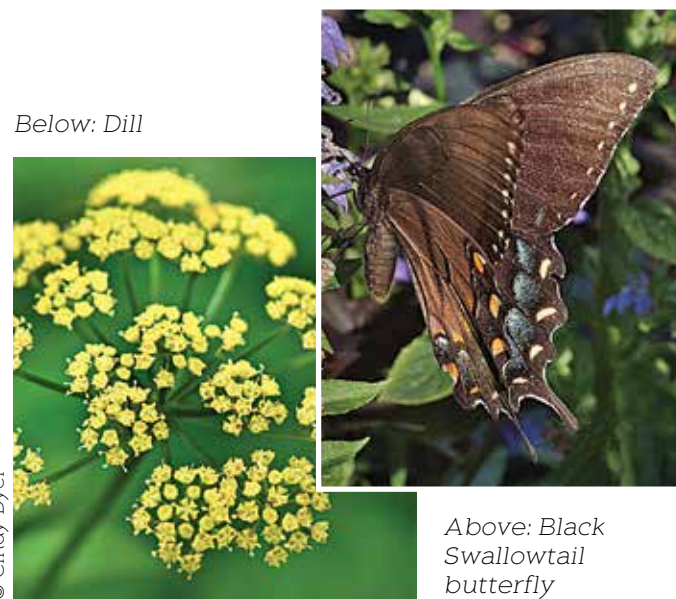
There are many butterfly species, and we've only explored three butterfly families. Instead of thinking of just adult butterfly species, why not make a home for the regeneration of butterflies, enabling the species to survive? Your butterfly garden can become a great opportunity to share butterfly knowledge with family, friends and neighbors.

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Below: Willow catkin

Above: Gray Hairstreak butterfly



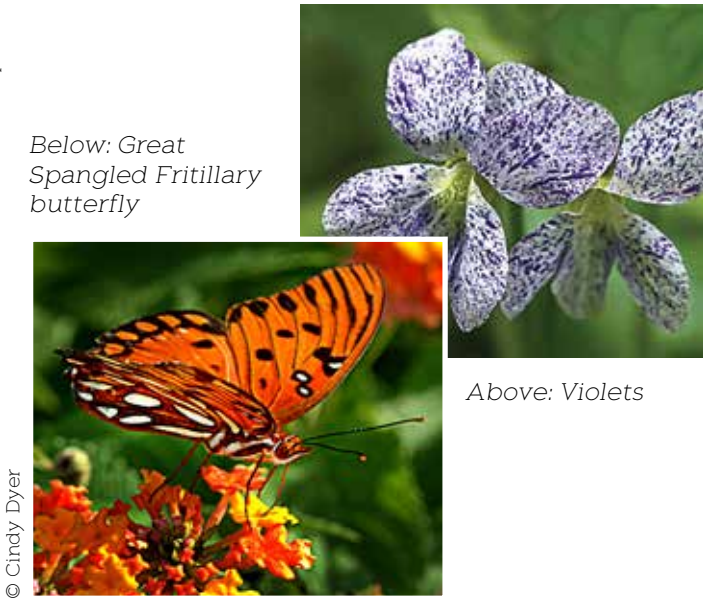
Below: Dill

Above: Black Swallowtail butterfly



Below: Eastern Tiger Swallowtail butterfly

Above: Tulip tree



Below: Great Spangled Fritillary butterfly

Above: Violets

GARDENING

Below: Common milkweed



Above: Monarch butterfly

© Cindy Dyer

What You Can Do to Help Butterflies

Buy native butterfly plants to attract butterflies to your garden. An excellent plant identification, seed and plant source for native gardens is Prairie Moon Nursery at www.prairiemoon.com.

Start a butterfly watch program at www.monarchwatch.org.

The North American Butterfly Association sponsors an Annual Butterfly Count on July 4 at www.naba.org. Join the organization and start your own annual butterfly count.

Butterfly Woman Publishing, Inc., is a source to learn about butterfly books, activities, events and upcoming butterfly talks. Visit their online store for butterfly and other nature books, select magazines and butterfly-friendly seeds. Visit www.butterflywomanpublishing.com.

Look for Mary Ellen Ryall's butterfly children's teaching books, *The Monarch Butterfly Coloring Book* and *My Name is Butterfly*, on amazon.com at <http://buff.ly/Yglp7H>.

Below: Pearl Crescent butterfly



Above: Asters

© Cindy Dyer

Below: Hoary Vervain



Above: Common Buckeye butterfly

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Below: Indian Skipper butterfly



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Above: Bluestem grass

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Miniature Terrarium Gardens

Don't have a green thumb? Too busy to plant, weed and feed a garden? Here's an easy way to cultivate your tiny plot of indoor joy.

Written by **Shirley Loflin** · Photography by **Brian K. Loflin**

Terrarium gardens are currently a favorite trend and these easy-to-make miniature gardens are a great way to bring the outdoors inside, or for everyone who does not have a green thumb. They make lovely gifts, and are an easy way to get children started with gardening. And, from a design perspective, terrariums are also one of the best ways to make an interesting statement in any indoor space.

The Terrarium Garden Concept

A terrarium is a collection of compatible plants grown in an enclosed, or partially enclosed, clear container. Creating a terrarium filled with ferns and other small plants is a practical and fun way to have a miniature landscape inside your home. Its easy care is ideal for busy people who do not have a lot of time for plant upkeep.

An enclosed terrarium allows you to grow plants which require high humidity, which otherwise would probably perish in the dry atmosphere of a heated home. Once the plants become established within your miniature garden, the terrarium begins to create its own internal climate. Plants transpire moisture through their leaves, which condenses on the glass, and flows back to the soil. This "rain effect" allows the terrarium to go for weeks without watering.

However, to succeed, it is extremely important that the terrarium is properly set up. As with any gardening project, selecting appropriate plants is also important. Terrarium plants need to be compact and slow growing, as well as being able to survive the same conditions as their companion plants.

To avoid insects and disease, use good quality potting soil which has been sterilized to kill any organisms. Additional planting materials, like the rock you will use for drainage, and stones or driftwood you use for landscaping accents, should be rinsed with clean, *hot* water.

Less Than an Hour!

You can make a terrarium in less than an hour. Making terrariums can be quick, easy and doesn't have to be expensive. To save money, shop discount stores, flea markets or consignment shops, where you can find really cheap, yet great-looking, glass containers, jars or even goldfish bowls.

The plants you'll use are generally small houseplants, which often only cost a couple of bucks each. The whole project, depending on the size of your jars, can be made for well under \$20. Terrarium gardens also make wonderful and impressive gifts, even for people who consider themselves plant-challenged.

Supplies You Will Need

- A glass container with a top
- Gravel or small river stones
- Activated charcoal
- Sterile potting mix
- Decorative elements
- Long tweezers or chopsticks
- Long kitchen skewer with cork on the tip
- Long-handled spoon
- Terrarium plants
- Distilled water

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CRAFT

You can use anything for a terrarium, as long as it is made of glass and has a lid. Avoid plastic, as over time it may turn milky. Look for a jar or container with a wide mouth. While it is possible to use something with a small opening, it is much easier to add plants if your container has a wide mouth. Also, keep in mind that ideally, you don't want your plants touching the sides of your jar; so the wider the bowl, the more plants and soil you'll be able to use.

In addition, if you use a large container, you will have a greater choice of types and size plants you can use as well as the option of fitting in decorative elements, such as shells or figurines.

Your choice of containers is only as broad as your imagination. There are many ready-made terrariums available, or you can use bottles, jars, aquariums, fishbowls, or even brandy snifters. Miniature gardens have even been prepared in two-liter soda bottles. Get creative!

When considering your terrarium plants, look for plants that like low to medium light. Also try to get a mix of sizes, textures and colors. In your selection, ensure that they are small enough to fit in your container, preferably without touching the sides. You'll also want plants that thrive in a humid environment.

Building Your Terrarium Garden

Before you begin construction, get your container and all of your tools, materials, and plants together in one convenient place.

Your planting foundation will consist of three layers:

The bottom layer is for drainage, and consists of pea gravel or pebbles. Your container will not have drainage holes in the bottom, so you'll want to create a place for extra water to go that keeps it away from your plants' roots. Start with a layer of stones. Depending on the size of your container, you will want to spread at least one-half to one inch of drainage material evenly across the entire bottom of your terrarium.

Next is a thin layer of activated charcoal, like you would use in an aquarium filter. The purpose of this material is to help drainage and help keep

the water from souring. Using a large spoon, add one-half to one-inch layer of the activated charcoal evenly on top of the stones.

The top level is your soil. Many garden centers sell a potting mix specifically for terrariums. In reality, all that you normally get for the extra money is sand added to their regular potting mix. You may choose a pre-mixed terrarium soil, or, if you prefer, just add one part coarse builder's sand and one part compost to each two parts of your usual mix. You do not need to add any fertilizer to the potting soil. It already has enough nutrients to last a long time. Too much fertilizer will cause the plants to outgrow their surroundings too quickly. If, over a long period, plants start looking faded, you may use a mild fertilizer at one-quarter strength.

If you mix your own soil, place it in your oven at 180 degrees for 30 minutes to kill any live organisms. Alternatively, one quart of soil in an open zip-style freezer bag may be treated in a microwave oven for two to five minutes on high power.

With a large spoon or small shovel, add the sterile potting mix on top of your charcoal. Add at least a couple of inches of potting mix. You will want to ensure that your plants will fit into your terrarium with the top on, so gauge your plants as you add soil. Dampen this soil layer slightly so the plant roots do not rest on dry soil.

Creating Your Terrarium Landscape

At this time it's important to think about the design of your miniature garden. Will the garden have a back and a front? If so, you probably want to put your tallest plant in back or in the middle.

While the bottom three layers are laid in evenly, the garden will seem more realistic if you contour your soil to create interest. Use your own special stones, small ceramic figures or interesting pieces of wood as landscape accents. Use your imagination, but remember, you must "miniaturize" everything you do.

Remove the plants from their pots. There may be several small plants grouped tightly together, even though it seems to be just one plant. Find one or two appropriately sized plants for



When considering your terrarium plants, look for plants that like low to medium light.



You'll need pea gravel or pebbles, activated charcoal and soil.



Find one or two appropriately sized plants for your container. You will want to separate them by gently pulling them apart. You may tease the roots apart, even cutting some off.



The bottom layer is pea gravel or pebbles for drainage. Spread at least one-half to one inch of drainage material evenly across the bottom of your terrarium.



Next is a thin layer of activated charcoal to help drainage and help keep the water from souring.



The top level is that of your soil. Many garden centers sell a potting mix specifically for terrariums or you can mix your own formulation.

your container. You will want to separate them by gently pulling them apart. You may tease the roots apart, even cutting some off.

Using a long-handled spoon, or your fingers, dig a hole in the potting mix. Place your plant in the hole and gently pat the soil around it. If your terrarium has a narrow neck that you can't fit your

hand into, you can use chopsticks, or long tweezers to place your plants and pat them in.

Ensure that there are no air pockets between the roots of your terrarium plants and the soil. A good tool is a skewer with a cork on its end to tamp down soil, particularly for a container with a small

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CRAFT



Dig a hole in the potting mix. Place your plant in the hole and gently pat the soil around it.



Firm the soil gently around the roots. Allow sufficient space for them to grow and spread, without crowding other plants.



After planting, the soil should be slightly moistened. Use distilled water. Never allow the soil to be soggy.

opening. Firm the soil gently around the roots. Do not crowd the plants or place them directly against the sides of the container. Allow sufficient space for them to grow and spread, without crowding other plants.

After planting, the soil should be slightly moistened. For best results, use distilled water. Never allow the soil to be soggy. Using your fingers or small spoon, dribble a small amount of water into your terrarium avoiding getting the glass sides wet. Do not get it soaking wet, just damp.

It is now a good idea to clean the inside of the glass container. Carefully wipe it with a clean paper towel being cautious not to disturb your plantings. Never use glass cleaner on the inside of a planted terrarium, as it can be harmful to your plants.

Terrarium Maintenance

Caring for your terrarium is easy. First, terrariums should never be grown in full sun! Check every couple of weeks to see if your terrarium needs water. A completely enclosed terrarium requires little or no watering. The addition of water only becomes necessary if no condensation accumulates

on the glass. Over watering quickly increases the danger of fungus or mold. When water is eventually needed, it should only be added a small amount at a time, since there is no place for the surplus water to run off.

Check the terrarium frequently for the appearance of condensation on the glass. If large water drops appear on the glass, the container should be left open for a while, until any excess moisture evaporates. In some cases, it may be necessary to keep the lid slightly opened, to allow for fresh air circulation. However, keep in mind that a balanced terrarium should have a certain amount of moisture on the glass.

Although confined plants tend to grow slowly, any plant that has outgrown its environment should be replaced. Remove leaves that show signs of yellowing or damage and prune plants if they grow too large. Don't fertilize your terrarium because you don't want to encourage growth.

After you are finished, place your new miniature terrarium garden in the optimum spot for some indirect sunlight and where everyone can enjoy for a long time. Happy planting! **CHM**

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Craft project by **Kristen Clem** • Photography by **Cindy Dyer** and **Kristen Clem**



SUPPLIES

- Large white paper
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- Digital camera
- Shadow box
- Pencil
- Scissors
- Single and double-sided tape
- Box of crayons or other art materials of your choice

Growing up in a home that encouraged creativity, I have many fond memories of the rainy summer afternoons that put my tree-climbing adventures on hold, and forced my two brothers to join me around the kitchen table, where my mother would pull out her art supplies. She was a graphic designer before having children, and over the years had acquired a collection of creative materials.

I remember those days with such keenness that all the smells come rushing back to me—the mustiness of the giant sheets of newsprint paper, the strangely intoxicating fumes of my mother's Prismacolor markers, the fresh rubbery scent of gummy erasers. They were the smells of creative freedom. I am sure we made many masterpieces on those rainy afternoons at the kitchen table, but it's funny—I can't remember what one of them looks like. What remains stronger are my memories of art-making.

Here is a simple craft that you can easily do with children of any age that preserves those precious creative afternoons at home.

Step One: Photograph the Artist at Work

Find a comfortable space in your home for your child to create. If possible, find a place near a window that lets in lots of natural light that will give your photographs a soft, effortless, yet professional look.

Once you find your location, spread out the paper and drawing materials and just let your child begin working. As he or she is drawing, try not to make it obvious that you are taking pictures. This will be difficult, but will help you to catch a more natural expression. Experiment and play with your perspective as you photograph. Try shooting from above, over the little one's shoulder, or simply set the camera on the table and photograph those tiny hands at work. Once your child has finished, take some goofy face and smiley shots too. Have fun with it!

Step Two: Choose the Moment

Save the drawing and the photos on your camera to use in the shadow box. Upload the photos onto your computer. Find the photograph that characterizes the experience. It might be a look of pure concentration with the tongue sticking out the side of the mouth, or moment caught laughing. If you have a photo editing program on your computer, play with the composition, and crop the photograph down to the size you want it printed. If the child's artwork was very colorful, you might want to turn your photo into black and white so they do not compete with one another once they are placed in the shadow box.

Take the time to find a section of the drawing that will be used for the background of the shadow box. Ask your child about the drawing, taking special notice of their favorite parts of the artwork.

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Step Three: Assemble the Shadow Box

Find a shadow box at your local craft or home store that is deep enough to hold materials inside. A simple white or solid colored frame can complement the colorful and busy character of children's artwork. Once you have your shadow box, remove the backing and use it as a stencil, laying it over the section of the drawing that you want to be the background. With a pencil, lightly trace the outline of the backing onto the drawing. Cut out that section of the drawing, being mindful to leave at least a one-inch border around the traced area that will be used to wrap around the edges of the backing.

Using single-sided tape, secure the drawing to the cardboard backing. Fold the extra one-inch border around the back as if you are wrapping a gift. Next, place strips of double-sided photo tape in all four corners of the back of your photograph. Secure the photograph to the background of the shadow box positioning it slightly above center to leave room for the addition of materials in the bottom.

Now, add a bunch of crayons, paintbrushes, a paint palette, or art materials of your choice to the shadow box so they can shift and move freely. Secure the backing and enjoy the playfulness of the piece. Hang the shadow box in a place that can be enjoyed by all, especially the young artist! **CHM**

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HOW-TO

A Moving Target

Shooting Your Kids' Sports

Writing and photography by **Brian K. Loflin**

We all like a good action photo and if your kids play sports, you want to remember them at their most challenging moments. Professional photographer Brian Loflin offers tips on how to capture kids in action.

So, you are Soccer (or baseball or lacrosse or....) mom or dad and want to take photos of your children playing sports. You now have a new digital camera but oops, your pictures didn't come out like you anticipated.

Let me help you understand the problem and provide suggestions on how to make better sports images. First, let me say that quality sports photographs are somewhat difficult to come by. There are two factors that govern the outcome. The first is equipment and its setup. The second is how you use your equipment to achieve better results.

Required Equipment

In the world of photography there is a saying, "It's not the equipment, but it's the photographer who makes the picture." This is generally a valid statement. However, with sports and

action photography, having inappropriate equipment means not getting the shots you desire.

Many people have a nice point-and-shoot digital camera. The quality and capabilities of these cameras are now simply amazing. They are great for close-ups, and small group and team shots. But for action sports, they simply don't have the capabilities to produce the photographs that most folks look for.

Most sports are shot on Digital Single Lens Reflex cameras, or D-SLR, the new-age digital version of the venerable 35mm film camera, because of their availability, versatility and portability. For sports you need a camera that can produce good images at high shutter speeds, have high ISO capabilities with low noise, have some manual settings, and will drive interchangeable auto-focus lenses quickly and efficiently.

From a technical viewpoint, you need to pay attention to some key points. Probably the biggest will be shutter speed. For most sports, I use a minimum shutter speed of 1/500th of a second or more. (That's minimum.) As a rule, faster is better. If you can shoot at 1/1,000th or faster,

you'll get crisper images, with little motion blur.

To get that fast shutter speed, you need lots of available light. Some locations don't offer much light, so you'll need to increase your camera ISO setting, making the camera more sensitive to light. While you can shoot at low ISO settings of 100 to 400 in bright sunlight, indoor venues or overcast days require ISO settings of 800, 1,600 or even higher. The increase doesn't come "free." Often "noise" in the form of graininess in the image or unwanted contrast will be encountered, so there is a fine line of compromise. Here, you need to learn your camera and its capabilities.

More than likely, if your D-SLR came as a kit, you have a single lens. For most people, this "kit" lens will prove inadequate for good sports shooting. Kit lenses tend to be short to medium focal length zooms, with insufficient power to get the image size you'll want. The lens may also have a maximum aperture of F5.6 at the long end, not large enough to allow adequate light at reasonable ISO settings to give shutter

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Certainly your interest is your child. Focus carefully, plan for the individual action but include competitive athletes to give a sense of place and urgency. Blur the background with a small F number. Watch your framing so as not to cut off the feet.

The saying goes, "If you see the action you missed it." You have to anticipate, feel the timing, pushing the shutter release before the action so that the internal camera events have time to complete and for the shutter to open and close.



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speeds that will freeze action. So the axiom of sports photography is “more glass,” or longer telephoto lenses with much smaller maximum apertures. Frequently sports photographers use lenses from 300mm to 500mm and with maximum apertures of F2.8 to F4.0. These lenses are very expensive, but there are alternatives worth exploring.

In almost all circumstances, you're going to want to use a lens with an F2.8 aperture. An excellent lens for most shooting is the 70-200mm F2.8 image-stabilized or vibration reduction lens. Occasionally I use others,

but I rely on the workhorse, the 70-200mm zoom. And as the camera-lens combination can be heavy and bulky, I seriously recommend a monopod—not to stabilize the camera, but to help hold the weight up, helping you to frame your shot.

Now that you have the right equipment, how do you set up the exposure? As I mentioned, you want some manual controls. The reason is that you want to be in control of the technology, not the camera.

My choice of shooting mode for sports is shutter priority. I tell the camera that I want a shutter speed of 1/500th second, and the

camera will set the aperture for me based upon the ISO selected. This way I can ensure I don't have blurred images.

However, your job is not done. You must be always aware of the aperture selected by the camera and ensure the F number is small, like F2.8 to F5.6. You want to have your player in focus, but not the world behind. This is the reason for the fast F2.8 lens. With smaller F numbers, the depth of field is very small, allowing you to blur the background. This is a great creative control. If you put your camera in “Auto-everything or Sports

Watch the action as it progresses to get a good feel for the peak position. Pre-focus your camera so that there is little delay as you push the shutter release.



Mode” you would not have this level of control. In fact, some pro sports photographers routinely use fully manual settings for absolute control.

Know Your Sport

So now you are fully equipped and have all the right glass and everything is ready, but how do you achieve the frame-filling, action-stopping and at-the-right-moment shots you drool over? The best technique is to

know your sport. You have to learn some basic fundamentals of the game or you will become very frustrated.

You need to learn how to “feel the timing.” That is an innate understanding of what is going to happen when and the timing of the perfect moment. For instance, in football, learn when to expect a pass, or the run. Or in baseball, learn when to expect the steal. To do this it's important to spend some time at

Above: Center your focus and interest on your star. Let the action come to you. Pre-focus and pre-frame by zooming to get an intense story telling composition.

an event and not rush the photography. Shoot a lot and get the feel of the action. Soon, you will be able to get good good batting shots or pitching shots with the ball.

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Location, Location, Location!

Another powerful consideration is location. Where do you shoot from? Like in real estate being in the right spot at the right moment can help produce winning images.

The closer you are to someone, the better you can see them. Sports images are no different. You have to get as close to what you are shooting as you can. Depending on the sport, you most likely will be limited to designated locations. But, get as close as possible!

When you become familiar with the sport you will learn where to position yourself for

the best action and to capture the moment. Not only does it matter with the subject, but the background. Look at what is going to be behind your subject. While we will try to minimize the impact that a background has, it will still be unavoidable. So you need to position yourself where the background is the most pleasing.

The Decisive Moment

Sports and photography is all about timing. It's about reacting. It's about being in the right place at the right time and it's about how you execute the shot. Understanding the timing of these predictable actions allows you to

capture the peak moment, when the action is most dramatic. Timing is the difference of the ball on the bat or in the catcher's glove. This is the peak of good sports photography.

By knowing these moments you can anticipate the action. This helps in two ways: one, it helps you with focus; and, two, it helps you trigger the shutter at the right time.

The saying goes, "If you see the action you missed it." You have to anticipate, feel the timing, pushing the shutter release before the action so that the internal camera events have time

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Timing is everything in achieving the decisive moment in your action photo. Lots of practice teaches you to feel the action. Anticipate the pitch and the swing. Use a high shutter speed and be prepared!



Pick up the action early and follow the action through your lens. As you do so, shoot several frames as the action unfolds.

Hold your shutter release halfway down to lock focus and exposure while you watch everything through your lens. Preset your camera with a high shutter speed and low F number. If you take your eye away, you will miss everything. Push the shutter release before the peak of the action. Later is too late!





Indoor sports require the use of high ISOs and small F numbers to allow action-stopping shutter speeds. Speeds of 1/250 second are the minimum. Watch the White Balance. Set WB for incandescent lighting or use a custom white balance. Consult your camera manual.



When the action passes you always leave space in front of the subject for them to run into. Think of the rule of thirds. Place your subject only one-third of the way into the frame. Don't let the subject run out of the frame.



The decisive moment may be made up of several individual emotional moments. When possible, shoot a high-speed sequence of several shots. A fast shutter speed and high frame rate are required to capture all the action plus the emotion.

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to complete and for the shutter to open and close. There is a delay between the image hitting your optical nerve and the shutter closing. Through experience and practice, learn what that time is and adjust for it.

How to Compose for Sports

Good composition is the design of the image that produces WOW! power and leaves a memorable impression with the viewer.

From a compositional perspective I can offer a few tips. First, new shooters tend to shoot too wide. That is, they don't crop in close enough to their subject. The result is their subject appears as a tiny, nondescript object in the frame. Without a good telephoto lens, it's impossible to get close enough from the seating area around gyms and rinks.

Second, pick your subject. Ask yourself which player or players you are covering. Sports may often be pretty chaotic, with a lot of bodies clustered around the ball. While you may think you're getting a great shot of your son or daughter, everybody else will see a tangle of arms and legs with little impact. So how do you get your child separated from the chaos? The answer is light, framing and action.

I typically try to compose to where a player moves into a pool of light, or a brighter area in the frame. It's often useful to practice framing in these areas, even when the play is elsewhere. Look at the background. Does your framing make sense? Are there strong horizontal and vertical elements in the composition

that work to frame the action? Is the background lighter or darker than your foreground? Will the player's face be lit or in shadow when he enters the frame?

Reducing background distractions is an important goal in many photographs, sports action or not. In studio or landscape settings, you have time to control the elements of the picture. Action photography is a "grab it now" type of shooting and you live with the background that is there. If you open up the lens to its maximum, you will find your subjects standing out against a blurred background and having more impact.

Vertical vs. Horizontal

The vertical versus horizontal decision needs to be made based on your desired goal in capturing the scene. When highlighting an individual, you should shoot vertical. A majority of photo opportunities in basketball and baseball come from individual efforts.

However, there are times where you want to show the conflict in the scene—for instance two players competing for a ball, or a runner pursued by the defense. To capture these multiple people, you typically want to shoot horizontal. You should make a conscious decision before you fire the frame as to your goals in capturing the shot.

Rule of Thirds

There is a common photograph rule called "The Rule of Thirds," which says that if you divide the frame into thirds vertically and horizontally, and place

the subject where the lines intersect, the resulting photo is more interesting.

For sports photography, following the Rule of Thirds in principle is a good idea. That means leading your subject into the frame. If you are shooting a football player running left to right, leave more room on the right side than the left to imply that he is going somewhere. Shooting the player leaving the frame is poor composition.

Freezing Action Shots

Most great sports photographs show a crisp baseball just off the pitcher's fingertips or the ball just off the bat. To do that, we must freeze the action. These types of shots require patience, persistence, and a lot of practice.

Freezing the action requires fast shutter speeds. Most high end D-SLRs have a top shutter speed of 1/8,000th of a second. Except for a speeding bullet, this is about fast enough to catch anything that you or I are likely to shoot. So for our 70-200mm lens, you will need at least 1/1200 to 1/2400 to freeze action with this lens. Even at these speeds, you may have to follow side to side movement, called panning, to have the movement crisp when you expose the frame.

Adding high shutter speeds, high ISO, monopods, panning, and capturing action at its peak lets you freeze fantastic shots.

The Illusion of Movement

Many new sports shooters worry about freezing action, trying to



Good sports photography is not always just about the action. Capture images behind the scenes of athletes in preparation, adjusting their equipment, congratulating each other and other interesting memories.

HOW-TO

get the crispest shots possible. Even veteran photographers will try for crisp shots, but they are not afraid to allow some blurring.

Sometimes, I slow the shutter speed down intentionally to amplify the movement. We have all seen shots of runners where the background is a blur and their arms and legs are a blur, but their body and head are fairly well focused. Combining panning, slower shutter speeds, and predictable movements, by you can capture some very dramatic pictures showing all kinds of movement.

Get Behind the Scenes

Each sport is different in the techniques used to capture the moment and each has a limited number of unique shots. You can only shoot so many basketball games before you start feeling like you have been there, done that. Action shots on the field are great. But include the behind-the-scenes action as well. Don't be shy. Get in the dugout or near the team to capture them watching the game, rooting for their team or changing into their gear.

Emotion

Shots that lack emotion are ho-hum and they lack energy. They lack story-telling ability. If there is no emotion, there is little desire to view it. Most tight action shots of players will be emotional. Regardless of level, these players, when they are exerting themselves, exhibit emotion. From the strain of a pole vaulter working to get over the cross bar to the batter with a full count, there is



Sports photography should be about fun as well as competition. Be prepared and look for the moment of expression. Watch your subject and others around them too.

plenty of emotion to be found in sports. You will, from experience, be able to edit out the shots that lack emotion and do not tell the story. But it requires lots of shooting

Look for emotion from other sources. Don't put your camera away before you go home. Be

prepared to shoot the players after their events. Or, during their events, don't always focus on the ball, but on the emotion after the big play!

Bottom line: Learn your camera and its limitations, and take a tip from athletes—learn the sport and practice! **CHM**

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FAMILY

A family of eight experiences a simpler life for five months, returning with the priceless lessons they learned.

Writing and family photography
by **Kathleen Abela**

How many times in the last year have you been tempted to give away half of your stuff and live a simpler life? Perhaps you'd like to pack your bags and set off on an extended European adventure. I know I have, so when my husband came home from work two years ago and asked if we should move to Rome for a semester with his university's study abroad program, my answer was an immediate yes!

I'm not normally an impulsive person. In fact, I prefer to think about things for as long as possible before making a commitment. When my husband asks me on a Saturday morning, "what would you like to do tonight?" My standard answer is, "ask me tonight." So when the full impact of our decision hit me, I definitely had doubts.

To help myself get beyond these doubts, I started by calmly considering the obstacles. We have six children ages three to 14 whose feeding, clothing, sheltering and educational needs take up all of my time. When would I find time to plan this trip? In addition to being a professor, my husband runs a training business that provides essential income. Could we really afford to do this? The university would subsidize our housing but we would still be responsible for our five-bedroom suburban house. Who could we trust to take care of our house?

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Abelaroma!

Making a Sweet Home in Rome

FAMILY

Fortunately, I married an optimist. In my moments of panic he would just smile and assure me that “this will be the best thing we’ve ever done as a family.” And truly we were blessed, because, one by one, things did fall into place.

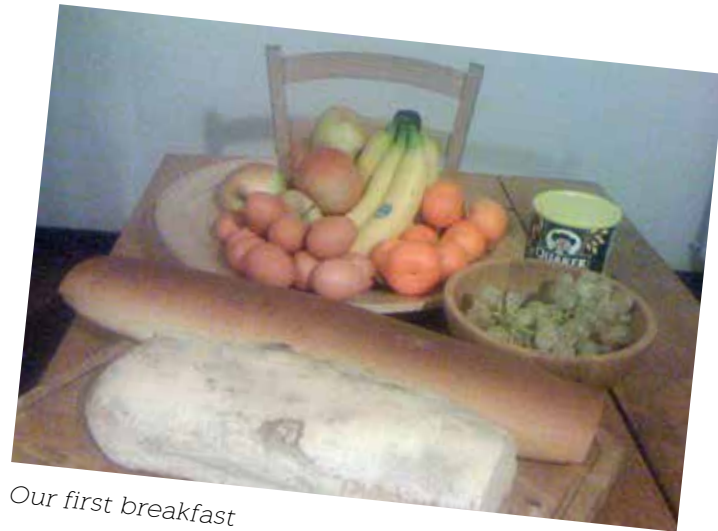
Paving a Path to Rome

The first thing I did when we learned that it was definite we were going to Rome was find an apartment. I knew I was spending perhaps too much time when one day I overheard two of my children arguing.

“Mom doesn’t do any work when we are in school.”

“That’s not true; she spends all day on the Internet looking at apartments in Rome.”

Yes I did, and it was time well spent because I knew instinctively that the success of our venture would rest heavily on having a good location and a comfortable place to call home.



Our first breakfast

Amid Christmas decorations and half-packed bags, our January 3, 2012, departure date quickly approached. I felt confident that I had done everything possible to prepare in the months prior to Christmas. I spent the Thanksgiving holiday alone that year making lists, phone calls, and taking trips to the store. The last two days were spent packing, numbering and cataloging our bags lest anything should go astray.

Our friends threw us a lovely going-away party. But I don’t think it felt real until we were sitting in the airport waiting to board. Our flight was fairly uneventful, at least as much as one could expect for a transatlantic flight with six children. Although we were tired, nine people (we took a family friend to help us) plus 22 pieces of luggage, all arrived in one piece, which was no small feat.

Creating a Home Sweet Home

The real test was what would we find when we saw our new home. Until now, it was only pictures and descriptions. The neighborhood was just as the guidebooks said, “a charming maze of narrow winding streets.” The street was so narrow that the two vans that transported us from the airport completely blocked the street while we quickly unloaded. The entrance to our building was a nondescript green door decorated with the graffiti so common in Rome.

We wrestled our luggage up several flights of musty-smelling stone stairs to be greeted by a spacious apartment complete with high wooden

FAMILY

beam ceilings and two stone fireplaces. I couldn’t help but feel that it was like something out of the Middle Ages. Were we really lucky enough to live here for the next five months?

As I set about the task of making this somewhat cold space into a home, I started to have a new realization—the next time that I saw anything advertised as having “old world charm,” I’d know that it also probably meant “old world inconveniences.”

People had warned me about various difficulties that we might encounter. Fortunately some of them were not a problem. However, there were some issues that required immediate attention—road noise, bad smells, and a lack of hot water.

First, although we had three bathrooms, only one of them had hot water. There was no hot water in the kitchen, either (unfortunately, as the kitchen also served as my laundry room.

Second, the front bedroom, one of three that was to be shared by three of my kids, was in the front of the apartment overlooking our charming

street. We had no way of knowing that this street came alive with a late-night bar scene every Friday and Saturday. Since our bedroom was in the back, I was quite surprised the next morning to hear their tales of people singing and yelling until 4 a.m. This was definitely a far cry from what we were used to.

In addition to the noise, I had to agree with them that their bedroom smelled like an ashtray. Disappointed, but not defeated, we were able to resolve these problems with a combination of persistent phone calls, white noise makers and air fresheners.

Since I had a better first-night’s sleep than my kids, I awoke the next morning much earlier than I should have according to traditional jet lag wisdom. How could I possibly sleep? We had no food, no anything, and I had no idea where or how to buy it. I figured that I should first get some breakfast food and then I could make a long list and take it from there.

If the guidebooks were correct then the shops would be open early. At 7 a.m., my husband, Andrew, and I wandered through the streets and across the piazza where I spied an open café. My first order of business was to buy a cappuccino.

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The Abela family in St. Peter’s Square, from left: Theresa (14), Mary (3), Kathleen and Andrew. Front to right: John Paul (8), Monica (11) and Dominic (13), minus Lucy (5) who is taking the photo.



We enjoyed serving a tray of the wonderful Roman carnivale pastries only available before Lent. The kids’ favorites were filled with Nutella.



One of our first meals at our large dining table

FAMILY

It was fun drinking near the local street cleaners, and listening to, but not comprehending, their animated conversation. That was when I realized that in addition to finding food I must conquer my fear of speaking Italian by forcing myself to talk to someone.

My first attempt was to buy eggs from the market. I couldn't remember the word for eggs but I did know how to say "twelve" and of course pointing is universally understood. We returned home to a hungry crowd proudly carrying eggs, assorted fruit and a loaf of the best bread in Rome. Happily the bread came from a bakery located just 50 steps from our front door and it became the staple of our diet while we were there. This was the first of many small steps that we all had to take. But with each little success we chipped away at the barrier between the locals and us and began to feel more at home.

Hosting Guests

Roughly two weeks after our arrival we had our first dinner guests. A friend back at home had advised us that since time passes quickly, we should not wait until we feel settled in to start



Mary brought home our daily bread, one of her favorite chores.

doing things, but rather, jump right in. That made sense we thought. I knew from previous experience of moving into a new house that the house always felt more like a home after hosting friends. Unfortunately we had no friends.

So on our first Sunday there we invited over the English parish priest, and he in turn invited his Italian assistant. After running around all day doing the necessary preparations, I was pretty sure that we were a bit hasty in extending that invitation. The end result was successful but that's when I really realized the limitations of our kitchen.

As a family, we like to host people and several of us like to cook. Knowing this we chose an apartment that had a dining table large enough to accommodate our family plus guests. What I didn't anticipate was that the kitchen would be stocked for people who did most of their eating out. All I



Andrew and Kathleen learned to make pasta.

FAMILY

had to work with was one large pasta pot, one old non-stick skillet, a wooden spoon, a few spatulas, one mixing bowl and several dull knives.

Simplification was part of what I wanted to experience and so I was determined to make do with what we had. But after struggling a bit, I broke down and added a newer skillet, one sharp knife, one more mixing bowl and two baking pans. By the end of the trip, I am proud to say that with my small arsenal of kitchen tools, an abundance of fresh ingredients, a few bottles of Italian wine, and much good will, we managed to successfully host many events in our Roman home.

Our guests ranged from American college students to locals who were willing to make friends to family and friends from back home. I knew I had gotten the hang of things when we even hosted a Roman *principessa* and her family for an enjoyable and delicious dinner despite our mismatched dishes and worn-out couch cushions. I grew confident in the idea that being warm and welcoming goes way beyond having the perfect place setting.

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The cooking class we took taught us how to make a delicious meal from a few simple ingredients.



We hosted a reading of Shakespeare's Julius Caesar with some students.

"Our guests ranged from American college students to locals who were willing to make friends to family and friends from back home. I knew I had gotten the hang of things when we even hosted a Roman principessa and her family for an enjoyable and delicious dinner despite our mismatched dishes and worn-out couch cushions. I grew confident in the idea that being warm and welcoming goes way beyond having the perfect place setting."

Saying Goodbye

Sadly, as our friend had warned us, time passed quickly. After five months of exploring most of Rome and some of the rest of Italy it was time to start packing up. My heart was breaking as I did my last Saturday morning shopping. Saturday always had such a bustling feeling in our neighborhood as people stocked up for the weekend. Although some stores were open on Sunday there was still a culture of Saturday morning shopping. It was incredible to reflect on just how far we had come since that first shopping trip. I wondered what I was going to miss most about our life in Rome.

From a distance I can see more clearly that although we lacked some American conveniences, there was a wonderful simplicity about our life that I just loved. We had a small fridge that required us to shop almost daily, carrying as many bags as we could handle. We had no dishwasher, my washing machine was tiny, and we had no dryer so laundry and dishes were never-ending chores. If we needed something, it was often a challenge to figure out where was the best place to purchase it. I know that shopping in Rome has a glamorous connotation but for everyday things



Lucy enjoyed her new surroundings.



Mary and Lucy enjoyed preparing their favorite lunch of bread, olive oil and tomatoes.

there is definitely no Target in central Rome. And my own personal experience of buying shoes was anything but glamorous.

However, with no lawn to mow, less of a house to clean, no cars to maintain, and generally less stuff to manage, our time was freed up to enjoy the natural rhythm of life. It's amazing how things like shopping, laundry, cooking, cleaning and fixing feel less burdensome when you are not so pressed for time. This experience has made me realize just how scattered our lives can be and how many things there are to distract us from enjoying simple acts like preparing a meal and enjoying it with others. Some of my best memories are of our large family—squeezed around a kitchen table meant for only six—eating bread, tomatoes and olive oil, and laughing about some new, shared experience.

Bringing Rome Home

Well, there was something a bit unreal about our life there that couldn't really last. Since we were in Rome for only five months, in that limbo between tourist and resident, I figured things like check ups, haircuts, clothes shopping, etc., could wait unless there was an urgent need. If we had been there longer eventually I would have had to deal with this sort of thing.

We also had no sports practices, club meetings, play dates or birthday parties and so there

was no need for complex algorithms just to make sure that everyone was where they needed to be at all times. In addition, we decided to home-school the kids during those months and that also simplified our schedule. Currently, with six kids in three schools in two different states our schedule is anything but simple.

However, I do find it bit easier to say no to things now. That might sound simple but if your inbox is anything like mine it's not that easy to turn down several "great opportunities" each week. And saying no is not a negative thing; rather it is a way of allowing my family the freedom to operate at a pace that is enjoyable. Saying no also frees up our time so we can prioritize the things we really want to do. How many times have you sincerely said to someone, "We've been meaning to have you over but things are just so busy?"

"...with no lawn to mow, less of a house to clean, no cars to maintain, and generally less stuff to manage, our time was freed up to enjoy the natural rhythm of life....This experience has made me realize just how scattered our lives can be and how many things there are to distract us from enjoying simple acts like preparing a meal and enjoying it with others."

And that brings me to the heart of why we were happy to return despite the fact that we were content in Rome. Being relatively friendless did help us to grow closer as a family and that was a good thing. But it also helped us to appreciate the important role that family and friends play in our lives. This really hit home when found a large crowd waiting for us at the airport when we exited the customs gate into the arrival area. Because of this, one of the first things we did when we came home was to see how we could simplify things here. And as much as possible we will continue to simplify so we always have time to open our home for a shared meal with people we love. **CHM**

Making a Sweet Home in Rome

Kathleen Abela shares some tips on how to make setting up their home in Rome practical and memorable.

Choose a central location to live close to shops, church, city, etc. Being able to walk was key to the experience.

Learn as much as possible about the food and wine because it's enjoyable and takes the mystery out of shopping and eating out. Two classes I highly recommend for Rome are www.cookingclassesinrome.com and www.vinoroma.com.

Learn as much Italian as possible. We started at home prior to leaving and continued while we were there. If I knew how much knowing Italian would enhance our experience I would have tried much harder before we left.

Get to know people as soon as you arrive. Starting with contacts that we had, we were able to make some new friends and had many wonderful experiences hosting and being hosted in turn.

Encourage family from back home to visit. It was truly enjoyable to share the experience with others rather than just show pictures and tell stories. For some things you truly have to be there.

Homeschool the kids. For the amount of time we were there, home schooling gave us the freedom to explore Rome at our own pace while still keeping up with subjects back at home. For a longer stay I would consider sending them to school as a way to quickly become fluent.

I would stock up on some basic medicines. Items like cortisone cream and Advil are available but much more expensive and you have to speak with the pharmacist to get them.

I would pack a little as possible but still let each member of the family bring one favorite but superfluous item. Packing in large duffel bags helped keep the weight down and meant that we didn't have to find storage for large suitcases.

Consider writing a blog and sharing your experiences and posting photos. This is also a way to chronicle and preserve your memories electronically. **CHM**

The Journey Home

Written by **Sue Cummings**

What is home? To me it's not the structure or the four walls. It's not a person, place or thing. Those are tangibles and can perish in the blink of an eye. One only need look at the natural disasters and tragedies in the news to know this.

Home to me means that wherever I am, I am home. I've chosen to be my own house within. If I'm with friends or family I love and cherish, I am home. When I'm with my husband I am home. When I do something I enjoy, I am home. Even if I'm alone, I'm home.

It Wasn't Always This Way

I used to be so sure of what home meant until a few years ago. I lived in Virginia for 21 years and thought I'd be there for the rest of my life. I had a wonderful home, friends, a nice neighborhood and church family. I was a familiar and secure. People knew me and I knew them. I had embedded myself into the land like a nail that hardened in cement. This was where my home was and I was going nowhere. Period.

Then in 2007 there came the move south to Alabama. I left my home! I found myself in a place I didn't know and in a neighborhood where I didn't know neighbors. I no longer had a church family and nothing was familiar. Twenty one years of my life as I knew it was gone in the blink of an eye. I felt as if I'd slipped off the face of this earth and was flailing down in the darkness of void. I felt washed in a vast ocean with no land in sight, no sense of direction. What, where was home now?

Benjamin Franklin said, "Building a new world is no small feat" and he was right. Although I had a new home in Alabama, in my mind I had nothing. I pined for my friends, neighbors, church family and all that was familiar to me. My home was where my heart was and my heart was back in Virginia.

Here began the loneliest and hardest journey of my life—a journey within to find home. My sense of home as I knew it was gone. The feelings of despair surprised and hurt so much that I decided not to let my heart settle here. Why should I get attached? What if I had to move again? I didn't want to hurt all over again so I closed my heart off from any new possibilities. I was stuck—emotionally and physically.

It dawned on me one day that all my life I had built my sense of home, identity and security around people, places and things of this world, all which

were outside of me. I was not only clinging to these tangibles, but gripping them so tightly that to let go meant the end of me, my life, and worst of all, control. Even though I knew intellectually that none of these tangibles last forever, the pain of that reality set in.

"Home is Where Your Heart Is?" Really?

I think such a belief was harmful to my ability to adapt because I was living in Alabama and my heart was in Virginia. The distance between my physical home and my heart was a bleeding, gaping hole. I was living in a void and didn't know how to fix it.

Recently, I befriended a woman who was renting a tiny duplex but had to move into a women's shelter to seek safety from her deranged ex-husband who was trying to kill her. Last week she was able to move out of the shelter into a safe motel. I helped her move into this one-room place and when I opened the door for the first time I saw a lonely, sparse motel room. But she saw a home—a safe and secure place to live.

She made the best of her circumstances as many people do—whether it's a cardboard box on the street, a women's shelter, a motel room, a dorm room, a house with a yard, or a room in a nursing home.

My husband often says that life is a series of designed illusions where you create your own happiness, your own sorrows, and your own horrors. I always pause when I hear him say that.

You Gussed It

Home to me is no longer a structure or geographical location. The truth is that where we live at any given time in our lives is our home for however long that season is. But it is only home if we choose to make it so, with an open heart of gratitude and contentment. Saint Paul wrote in Philippians, "I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances."

I know what it is to be in need and I know what it is to have plenty. I have finally learned the secret of being content in any and every situation. I understand and embrace the meaning of sentiments by St. Paul, Benjamin Franklin, and my husband. Home to me now is a state of positive being within because life is fleeting, fragile, ever-changing, people come and go and places and things do not last forever. Home is now in my heart. For where I am there also is my heart—and we are inseparable. I have finally learned to celebrate home within. **CHM**



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