

THE HAMPTONS DESIGN GUIDE 2023

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

FROM THE EDITORS OF
HC & G



PURPLE CONEFLOWER

WHICH NATIVE PLANTS THRIVE ON THE EAST END?

“Different sites call for different plants, but some of my favorites are grasses such as little bluestem; ferns, from ostrich to hay-scented to wood fern; and perennials including purple coneflower, black-eyed Susan, milkweed, false indigo, and goldenrod.” —Elizabeth Lear

“Reliable shrubs and trees include bayberry, American holly, and inkberry and dogwood, shad, cedars, white oaks, and red maples.” —Brian Mahoney

“In a woodland environment, low-bush blueberries are a nice ground cover alongside ferns, sassafras, and oaks.” —Elizabeth Lear

OUR PANEL OF EXPERTS

Elizabeth Lear
Elizabeth A. Lear Landscape Associates

Brian Mahoney
Brian J Mahoney Landscape Architecture

Mario Nievera
Nievera Williams Landscape Architecture

“Switchgrass; tons of varieties of sedge; butterfly weed; inkberry, which is very common but so essential to the environment; and high- and low-bush blueberries.” —Mario Nievera

WHICH OTHER PLANTS DO WELL IN OUR AREA?

“Herbaceous grasses and perennials such as blue salvia, catmint, and Russian sage. Shrubs like beach rose, hydrangeas—the ones tall enough to evade the deer—vitex, and osmanthus. And as for trees, I’m partial to *Stewartia*, false cypress, and hornbeam.”

—Brian Mahoney

“Camellias are wonderful to grow, and there are both spring- and fall-blooming varieties.” —Elizabeth Lear

“*Verbena bonariensis*, perennial geraniums, *Phlox* ‘David’, dwarf buddleia, perennial salvias, and ground-cover roses.”

—Mario Nievera



CAMELLIAS



VERBENA BONARIENSIS

“Our climate and soil are relatively forgiving, making it easy to garden. Most plants do well in our area—just look at the nursery business here and how well it's doing!”

—Elizabeth Lear

HOW SHOULD SCULPTURE BE INCORPORATED INTO A GARDEN SCHEME?

“Some preexisting gardens might have a formal layout that dictates the placement of sculpture, whereas other sites might be more naturalistic, allowing for a more surprising installation of artwork. It’s somewhat like the way an interior designer places objects inside rooms of the house.”

—Elizabeth Lear

“It depends on the piece. If it’s viewed from all angles, you want to make sure you have ample space for it. If it’s one-sided, it should have a backdrop that complements it.”

—Mario Nievera

“My go-to is to place sculpture at the terminus of an axial view.” —Brian Mahoney



“Museums in the Hamptons have done some interesting things. At the Parrish Art Museum, sculptures embody a more formal presence within a very naturalistic meadow. And at LongHouse Reserve, where the gardens are more like rooms, sculptures are sited to occupy these spaces very specifically.” —Elizabeth Lear

TERRA GIOVANI (JULY 15, 2022)

HOW TO MAKE WAVES WITH WATER FEATURES

"A water feature is so nice near a pool or as a centerpiece in the garden. The sound of running water is so relaxing." —Elizabeth Lear

"Consider installing sun shelves in swimming pools and 'plug-in-and-play' bubbling fountain vessels." —Brian Mahoney



TOP FIVE WHAT CLIENTS WANT NOW

1. "Zero-edge pools." —Mario Nievera



2. "'Perfect' lawns—I don't know if this will ever change!"

—Brian Mahoney

3. "Stone paving that doesn't get hot."

—Mario Nievera



4. "Outdoor televisions and pizza ovens."

—Brian Mahoney

5. "Fire features." —Mario Nievera



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



"Depending on the time of year, lettuces and asparagus in the spring, and then from midsummer to fall, cucumbers, tomatoes, and squashes."

—Elizabeth Lear

"Most herbs do well—from basil to dill to rosemary—as do lots of vegetables."

—Mario Nievera

"Anything in the mint family—which includes basil, thyme, rosemary, and sage—does great. As for vegetables, peppers never disappoint and always look pretty, whereas tomatoes grow well but can get very ratty-looking." —Brian Mahoney

"All herbs do—and they're especially easy to maintain and harvest if you grow them in containers."

—Elizabeth Lear



ADDING COLOR TO THE GARDEN: HOW MUCH IS TOO MUCH?

"We rely on greens, whites, purples, and blues. You can always add color in other ways, such as vibrantly hued pots for plants. Color can be ephemeral and fun but can also be deemed garish. Think yellow in the spring: It is always welcome, but then you can't wait for it to fade."

—Brian Mahoney

"People do have color preferences and often make requests. It's less common for clients to ask for hot colors like yellows, oranges, and reds. Blue, white, and purple are more popular." —Elizabeth Lear

"A beautiful garden doesn't have to have any color at all—it can be very monochromatic, with just greens and browns from native grasses. And, of course, when you design a garden that's colorful, there's never enough color! There is never too much and never too little." —Elizabeth Lear

"It really depends on a garden's theme and the clients' preferences. Lately, the average client wants fewer flowers or one predominant color, such as white." —Mario Nievera

SHADE GARDENS: TOP TIPS

“Keep them simple by limiting the palette to ferns and foliage plants.”

—Elizabeth Lear

“Make sure the soil is not too wet and that you have good drainage.” —Mario Nievera

“I like to plant wood asters, even though the deer eat them. When you pinch them, they become even bushier and flower more.” —Brian Mahoney



HYDRANGEAS 101

“When pruning, don’t cut back the entire bush, or you won’t have any flowers. Also, the bushes should not receive too much direct sunlight or be subjected to low temperatures during budding time.” —Mario Nievera

“Different types call for different kinds of care, but with some of the repeat-bloomers, you can’t go wrong.” —Brian Mahoney

“The big-leaf mop-heads require careful deadheading in the fall so that you don’t cut the bud for growth the following spring, whereas *Paniculatas* bloom on new wood and can be cut down to the ground. Overall, hydrangeas are relatively low maintenance.”

—Elizabeth Lear

WHERE DO YOU LOOK FOR GARDEN INSPIRATION?

"I look at the natural environment, which is always a source for ideas. You can't repeat what nature has done, but you can imitate it appropriately."

—Elizabeth Lear

"I love traveling to other countries to see how plants and hardscape materials are used in other cities and communities."

—Mario Nievera

"The architecture of a house is critical. Is it contemporary or period? And from what period? We consider so many elements." —Elizabeth Lear

"The U.K. I am an addict."

—Brian Mahoney

"In addition to visiting gardens around the world, garden books can offer lots of inspiration." —Elizabeth Lear

WHICH PLANTS DO YOU TEND TO FAVOR FOR INDOORS?

"Clivia, cycads, bay leaf, and Christmas cactus. Bugs can often be a problem, but for sunburn prevention, sun-scald products are a godsend."

—Brian Mahoney

"Ficus varieties are best, as well as palms including 'Raphis', 'Alexander', and 'Kentia'." —Mario Nievera



WHICH FLOWERS LOOK BEST IN ARRANGEMENTS?

"Flowers cut straight from the garden, such as roses, hydrangeas, viburnum, and rhododendrons. August can be a challenge, though, since so little is in bloom. That's when store-bought sunflowers come in!" —Mario Nievera

"Dahlias are incredible, and so easy to arrange. And it's nice to see natural materials mixed in with more formal floral material."

—Elizabeth Lear



"Hydrangeas, roses, ferns, and anything with a spike."

—Brian Mahoney

"Roses, lilies, a variety of grasses, plants with berries, and even vines. Or just a charming tiny bouquet of sweet peas."

—Elizabeth Lear

WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR FIGHTING INSECTS AND PESTS?

"Install ceiling fans in covered outdoor areas and keep plantings as natural and nontoxic as possible—for both humans and pets."

—Mario Nievera

"Screened porches are often a hard sell when clients are doing master plans for their home. But the folks I can convince to do them end up adoring them. Just do it—no spraying involved!"

—Brian Mahoney

"I really don't use any kind of chemicals—I ignore most pests and insects."

—Elizabeth Lear

