

# The Designer

Winter 2013/2014

## My Summer Fling with Frank

The Garden Town of Visby, Sweden: Starring the Usual  
A Visit to Windcliff: Dan Hinkley's World Garden  
Re-framing Foundation Planting



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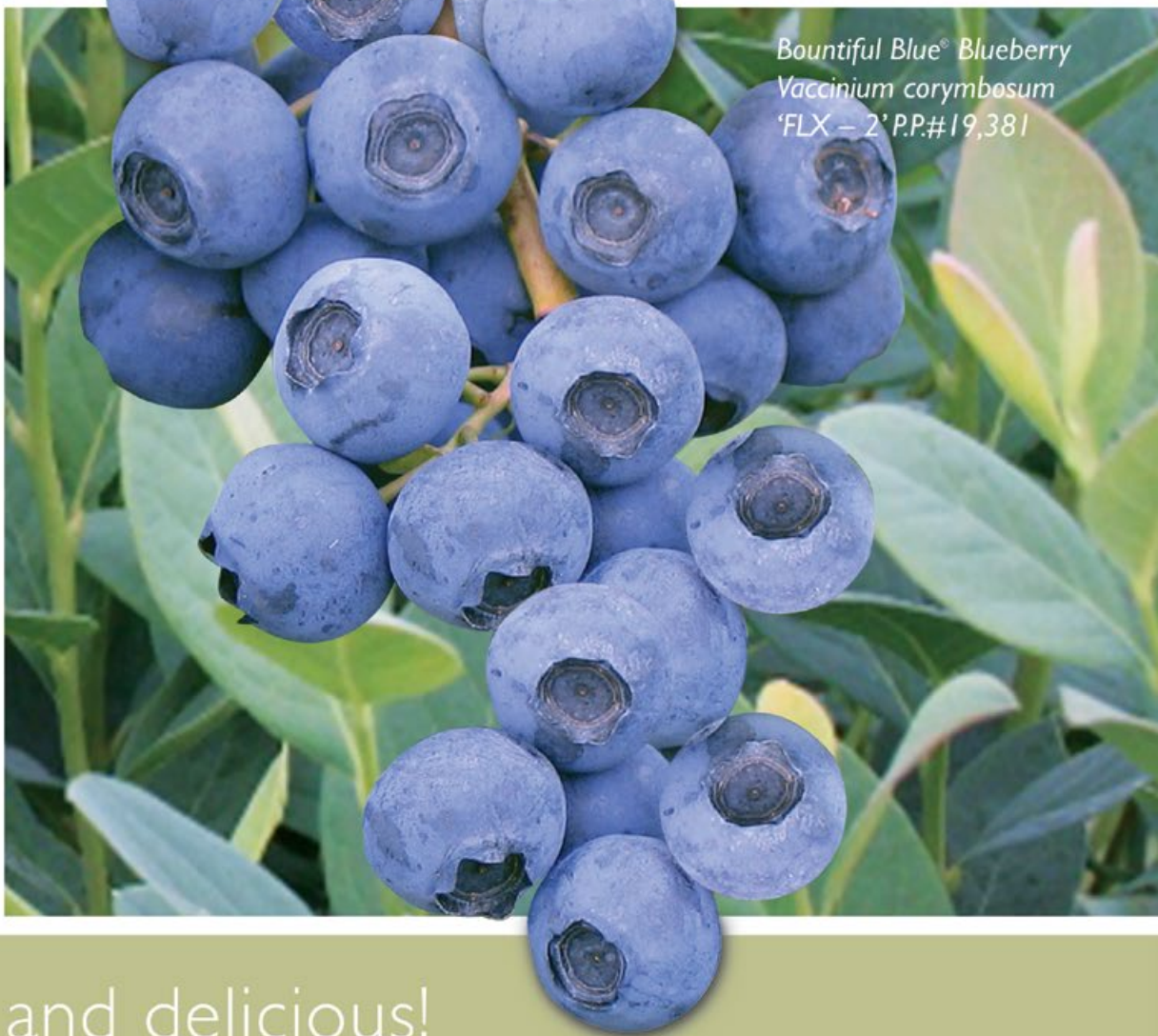
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Winter 2013/2014

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# Letter from the Editor

With this issue, I'm stepping down as editor of *The Designer*. Since 2009, I've met many of you online and at conferences, and I'm very pleased that so many of you devoted the time and effort that has made our magazine successful. After all, it is your magazine, and it's a reflection of your endeavors as professional landscape designers. Thinking back on some of our notable contributions: Tom Mannion, APLD, (Summer 2010) on creating a "natural" swimming pool; Laura Kuhn's series on protecting our rights to practice; Eric Gilbey's continuing series on CAD; Cathy Carr, APLD, wrote on spring color in the landscape (Spring 2011) and on her summer artist's residence at the I-Park Foundation (Summer 2012); Sustainability Chair Toni Bailey organized a series for us on ecological issues; and Laurel von Gerichten, APLD, wrote about a project on the storm-ravaged New Jersey coast (Spring 2013). And that's just to mention a few of our writers. I am proud to note that during my tenure, I did secure the approval of the Board to pay members for their contributions – not enough, but it's certainly a start.

Taking my place as editor is Susan Morrison, a writer, speaker and owner of Creative Exteriors Landscape Design in Concord, California. Susan is the co-author of *Garden Up! Smart Vertical Gardening for Small and Large Spaces*, and earlier this year, she released an app, *Foolproof Plants for Small Gardens*. Her designs have been featured in the *San Francisco Chronicle*, *Cottages and Bungalows* and *Fine Gardening*. She blogs at [www.blueplanetgardenblog.com](http://www.blueplanetgardenblog.com), and she is a founding member of the Lawn Reform Coalition and the Garden Designer's Roundtable. Susan served on the California Chapter Board as treasurer and public outreach officer, and she has a certification in garden design from UC Berkeley Extension. You may reach her at [editor@apl.org](mailto:editor@apl.org).

Again, thanks for everything, and please stay in touch!



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# The Designer

Winter 2013/2014

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# Letter from the 2013 President

There is something about a seasonal change in the weather that I love. Perhaps it's the adjustment in the clocks, falling back to give me more evening hours to enjoy, or a shift in the air or just change in general. Cooler days lead to a blaze of color as leaves turn, tumble down and crunch beneath our feet. Taking the time to look back upon the year behind us is important. Assessing one's progress is as valuable an exercise as surveying a site before beginning the design process. Looking back is a necessary part of moving forward. After all, how can one know where to head next if you don't know where you've already been?

At a recent meeting, I received an unexpected compliment. I was surprised and quite grateful as it gave me the confidence I need to continue pursuing an activity at which I believe I am mediocre at best. The most interesting part of this was the way I felt being on the receiving end of something I readily give out to others. I am used to hearing niceties about my work in landscape design or my cooking, and while appreciated, the impact varies based on the source of the comment. The less familiar the person making the remark, the more value we place on the words. Hearing a compliment about something unexpected caused me to pause, pay attention and really think about what was said. It's easy to complain, but finding something to praise when nothing needs to be said is a gift that's meant to be shared.

I've been practicing as a landscape designer for 25 years, and any way you describe it, it is a long time. Our profession sees a lot of turnover; many people find it to be not as glamorous, easy or profitable as they thought it would be. I think it took me at least 10 years to become comfortable with the fact that I wouldn't have all the answers and yes, I could make mistakes and recover from them. What is important to me now is that

I share my experience and what I've learned within a community of like-minded people who can teach each other. I will start by finding something to compliment and genuinely mean it. I am focusing more energy on watching and listening, because that is how you actually learn. By showing up, paying attention and becoming engaged with the situation, I can make a difference to the people around me.

As creative individuals we are wired a little differently. A seminar and online classes taught me how creative people like us not only think differently, but also need to structure our days and schedules in a unique fashion to get the most productivity out of them. It's fascinating and, when done properly, it works—I have tried it myself. This is a very simplistic view of the idea, but the essence is based upon paying very close attention to one's energy levels during the day and planning to use them to your advantage. Watch, listen and learn.

Serving APLD as President of the Board of Directors this year has been a great honor and privilege. I did not seek out the position, but I was willing to take it on when asked. If I am going to do a job, it's important to me to make a difference—to do more than just take up space. I come from a long line of doers, those who step forward to do their part when asked. My father and father-in-law served in several wars, risking their lives so others would have their freedom, and they came home safely. My uncle risked his freedom so Poland would have democracy, and he came home victorious. My grandparents risked everything to shuttle others to safe ground to escape the Russian invasion during WWII, losing their lives in the process. I have nephews in the Air Force now serving to protect our liberty. So for me, saying no is not an option.

Looking back to see where we come from is important, as it shapes who we are and helps us determine where we go next. Whether we look back at classic landscape design, politics or our own childhood, all of those histories combine to become the bedrock that is our foundation. Our core values are established within our story. What we do with them will establish our legacy. I choose to step up and make a difference. I listen, watch, learn and take that knowledge with me to share and shape a future that is better than our present.

Our world is bigger than designing landscapes. We have the opportunity to make a great impact or a small gesture, but either way we can make a difference. So the next time you are asked to join in, say yes. When invited to attend a meeting or event, say yes. When asked to serve on a committee or chapter board, say yes. Take what you know, listen, watch, learn and share the wealth of your experience. Pay someone a compliment, find something good and make it better and become part of the solution. You will be happier if you join the party.

*RISK more than others think is safe.  
CARE more than others think is wise.  
DREAM more than others think is practical.  
EXPECT more than others think is possible.  
— Cadet Maxim*



*Marti Neely*

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# Letter from the 2014 President



I find myself stepping into APLD's leadership role as the association president at a time when design thinking and design in general has become a popular subject. Digital tools have made cross-cultural and interdisciplinary communication and collaboration simple and easy. Clients now make mood boards and Ideabooks on Pinterest and Houzz to communicate their ideas to us, yet they still seek us out because we offer a set of skills, knowledge and experience that they need to realize their dreams.

Great design, especially landscape design, contributes to the well-being of the planet and the health and safety of the human beings who inhabit it. APLD has the opportunity to lead in this development only if we agree on one unified action. We must all step up voluntarily and contribute to the whole of the organization and therefore our design discipline. We must freely contribute our skills, connections

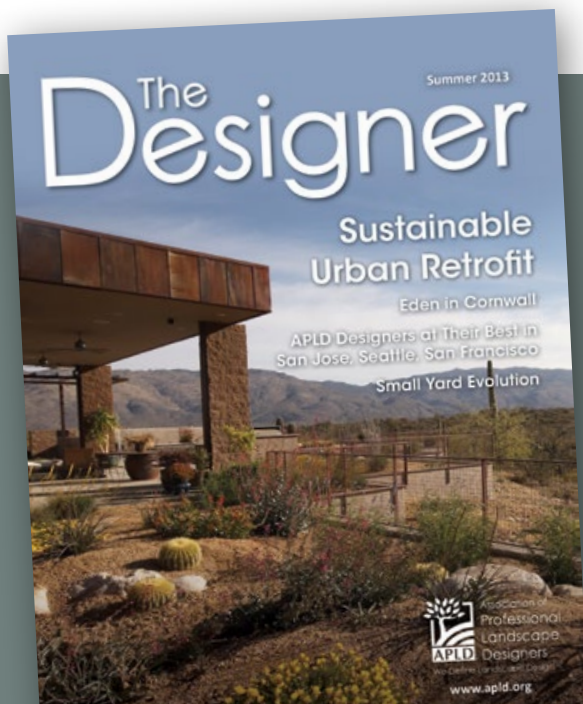
and knowledge to the greater community for it to grow and in turn for our own practices to thrive. Only through those actions will we be taken seriously as part of any larger discussion. We need to, as a profession, define who we are and what we do in finite terms. Without a solid and well defined base for our profession to stand on, without really wanting to state what we want and how we contribute to the world at large, without stepping up and openly allowing our own knowledge to be formally tested, we will make our presence shrink rather than grow. We have strength in numbers as an association of professionals, but we now have to tell the world exactly who we are and what we do in this new, much more highly-regulated world without letting the scope of our profession be further eroded by regulation.

Landscape designers, whether we admit it or not, are at a tipping point for our profession. We are at the forefront of changes in the way design is practiced, and APLD will change with the world at large. Landscape design has always been about collaboration. At its most basic, it's a collaborative exchange between designer and client. Many of us are sole practitioners who only seek collaboration when necessary, yet collaboration can make us better designers. There are new ways of thinking about design and new technology being developed at a rapid pace. Young designers who are digital natives embrace working and social technologies to solve problems in new and exciting ways; older designers have more varied practical design experience and can draw on that experience, adding to a larger conversation. Once again there is an opportunity to collaborate using new and emerging ideas and experienced connections to create something bigger than we can alone.

As APLD members, we need to contribute, to volunteer and to reach out to everyone who practices landscape design as one unified association whose voice is heard clearly by others. We also need to reach out to adjacent and specialized professions in our own practices and as APLD. We need to put aside worn-out arguments and create new opportunities instead. We need to look outside ourselves, instead of being insular, for ways to contribute to the larger discussion. We need to defend our right to practice the type of great landscape design that keeps adding to the health and well-being of our clients and our planet instead of detracting from it. We need to do this to grow and thrive as APLD in the 21st century.

Susan Cohan, APLD  
2014 APLD President  
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A handwritten signature of Susan Cohan in black ink.



## *The Designer* Call for Submissions

**The next deadline for article submission is February 1, 2014 for the Spring issue.**

Feature articles can range anywhere between 500 to 1,500 words and can be about a unique project, an interesting problem or a design inspiration and philosophy—really, it can be anything you think your fellow designers would want to read about. Have you written an article for another magazine? Feel free to tweak that article a little and submit a slightly different version for *The Designer*.

Before submitting an article, please take a look at this [writer's checklist](#) for instructions and deadlines. Please also read over these [writing guidelines](#).

Help us make your magazine even better by being a contributing writer yourself!





# My Summer Fling with Frank

*by Anna W. Brooks, Professional Member, APLD*

Frank Lloyd Wright's unmistakable style first caught my eye as a child. Grownups conversed as I poured over my great-grandparents' collection of 1950s and 60s magazines. For hours, I traced rooms and structures, adding my own flair. As newlyweds, my grandparents designed and constructed their own interpretation of a Frank Lloyd Wright Usonian house. I'd lie on the cool polished concrete floor, daydreaming of someday making it my own.

My crush on Frank lingered throughout high school. During my free hour in the drafting room, I considered a career in architecture as I worked and toiled over my own vision of mid-century style. Though I would never be completely over Frank, my path changed when I discovered the Michigan State University research gardens. Vivacious bedded annuals, stately specimen trees and steamy greenhouse walls lured me to meditate there during college, wooing me away to study horticulture.

Though I found peace and passion amid the landscape, Frank still called periodically. My husband and I had previous clients who lived in another gorgeous Wright-designed home overlooking Lake Michigan. I toured Falling Water while visiting a friend in Pennsylvania. I have a picture of myself, a soon-to-be-new mom with rounded belly, standing outside the Guggenheim Museum in New York—the irony of form not lost, another FLW check-marked off.

As the designer at the 23 year-old firm I own with my husband, Arcadia Gardens, LLC, imagine my excitement when I was hired by homeowners Doug and Cindy LaFerle to redesign the gardens of the last Frank Lloyd Wright-designed home erected in Michigan, commissioned by Charles Schultz in 1957.

My challenge was to extend Wright's high expectations to the living art as landscape outside, while respecting the LaFerles' desire to live, function and be comfortable in their vacation home: an exhilarating endeavor, but daunting, too.





Wright had pretty intolerant words for architects and designers that weren't among his own faithful students, and I'd chosen another. He was hard to please and rigid in his ideas about the Natural House: placement of the structure on the land, the materials, foundations, the contractors, heating, cooling, down to the furniture that crossed the threshold, installing much of it built-in to his exacting specifications. Clearly, Frank was a man secure in his opinions. I wondered whether my designs—whether I—could meet his demands.

The LaFerles' FLW Usonian Automatic in St. Joseph, Michigan, almost certainly breathed a sigh of relief with fresh attention. Its recycled brick and steel rod structure enjoyed a total rejuvenation, thanks to the LaFerles, their building contractor, Keith Mclean (Construction Services Associates, LLC) of Benton Harbor, Michigan, and concrete contractor, Kent Companies, Inc. of Grand Rapids, Michigan. A foundation that threatened to slide down the clay hillside like a reluctant bride necessitated the extensive restoration. Also, the original mahogany interior finishes and doors had to be restored to full working condition. (Additional details regarding the extensive interior renovation are viewable at [www.theschultzhouse.com](http://www.theschultzhouse.com)).

My first efforts were about revealing the overall landscape. We removed the overgrown, overplanted remnants of perennials and vines that hid the structure. We cleared brush and limbs from the steep, English ivy-covered clay banks to restore the glorious view of the St. Joseph River and golf course beyond. I then chose plantings that would compliment and honor the site's simplicity with the exacting attention to detail Wright would apply.

Like student and stern school master, a dialogue formed between us. I took away; he gave me hints. I added, laboring over my drawing table. He scoffed at my juvenile attempts. Finally he'd leave, an imperceptible shrug enough to sustain me.



I sought to feature and honor the clean, symmetrical decorative motifs of the home. I either contrasted or captured the circle pattern that marched along the expansive mahogany fascias, using tall spikes of Siberian iris, or a spherical pool of Mexican pond stones to suggest a water feature that was on the original site plan. Four cubic yards of sunset blend stone mulch lent texture and contrast to angles of brick and of the structure—complimenting and contrasting, featuring and blending. I wanted to achieve a subtle balance, always with Wright's approval in mind.

Cindy had one wish: an Asian-inspired garden and water feature outside the master bedroom. In front of the existing PJM rhododendron and oddly-pruned dwarf spruce, I arranged a cluster of large white bedrock pieces found scattered about on site. Amid a drift of Japanese forest grass (*Hakonechloa macra* 'Aureola'), a trio of transplanted hosta (unknown variety) and sedum groundcover (*Sedum floriferum* 'Bailey's Gold'), I pooled black Mexican pond pebbles around the base of a custom water bowl.

Doug's requests were direct: no more weeding, fewer plants, please simplify. I reduced bed size wherever possible, adding a simple decorative stone mulch to accent new easy-care perennials, like lenten rose (*Helleborus x hybridus* 'Royal Heritage Strain'), Japanese painted fern (*Athyrium nipponicum* 'Pictum') and more Japanese forest grass. I rearranged several large boulders we unearthed beneath ancient juniper or mats of English ivy and sorted them into outcroppings that filled the empty spaces naturally, surely just as Frank would direct. Next to the imposing brick wall along the street, I chose a mass planting of Siberian iris (*Iris sibirica* 'Caesar's Brother'), to echo a drift of cattails that grows along the river bank below. The strong vertical spikes cool down the expansive concrete forecourt and offset the horizontal masonry.



There were heartbreaks: as tour deadlines loomed, so did an ever-increasing state of general deconstruction within. Anxious to show our clients positive progress, we installed the planter beds too soon, only to endure trampled iris, stone mulch dusted with thick layers of grindings, and a pulled drip line courtesy of the mason's unexpected appearance. We worked around the carpenters, removing and blending the drifts of sawdust as best we could. I arrived one day to discover that a mature native dogwood that once shaded the courtyard had vanished, victim to the removal of an old rusted fuel tank. The fate of coral bells (*Heuchera* 'Plum Pudding'), planted at the driveway entrance to perfectly compliment the burgundy of the new roof? Deer fodder.

I believed that the signature cantilevered terrace, visible only from a small level area at the very edge of the bluff, deserved a small patio from which to enjoy the river and admire the prominent feature. Accessible only through the master bedroom, Doug felt it was frivolous to earmark much of his budget for that idea. A description of a custom stone bench with a gorgeous aged slab bench, white Fon du lac flagstone pavers and Michigan fieldstone walls resulted in a compromise.

Frank and I had our tender moments, too: a smooth, clean swath of spring green lawn emerged as promised. With less than 24 hours to organize and stage before the first tour, we rewarded Cindy with much-needed peace and tranquility in the form of her personal Zen garden.



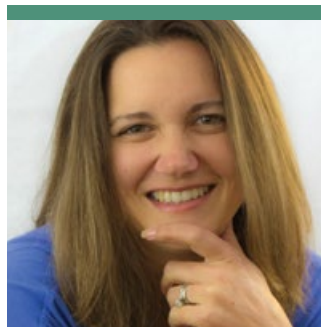
On the last day of the installation, I was invited to tour the inside again. It took my breath away. One of the most impressive features of any Wright structure is the expansive windows that serve as living picture frames. The home's floor-to-ceiling bank of windows, where the scene morphs dramatically with Michigan's changing seasons, frames the magnificent deck and the stunning view of the glistening St. Joseph River and pastoral golf course beyond. Artful views we exposed bestow the inhabitants with green, restful moments and shapes that contrast with Wright's plentiful linear designs.

As I walked the property a final time to take photos, I pondered for a moment on the stone bench that overlooks the ravine and the steep bank down to the river. I took a few cautious steps down the newly-exposed ivy hillside to lean against one of the prolific tall oaks for support.



A quick intake of breath: the dramatically cantilevered terrace that once sagged now glows magnificent in the early morning sun. The LaFerles will enjoy coffee there and listen to the wildlife that accepts what we've done with indifference. I'm satisfied; the homeowners are satisfied. I have to think Frank Lloyd Wright and the house itself both approve, or perhaps they, too, are unimpressed by all the commotion.

I sigh, as it should be.



Anna W. Brooks, Professional Member, APLD

*Anna W. Brooks is the Designer/ Co-Owner of Arcadia Gardens, LLC in Stevensville, MI, a custom design/build landscape company creating beautiful, lasting gardens in Southwestern Michigan for over 23 years. Her designs emphasize hardy plants, long bloom time, low-maintenance and functionality. Find her online at [www.arcadiagardensllc.com](http://www.arcadiagardensllc.com).*



# Encouraging Creativity in Design Students

by Gail Hansen, PhD, Professional Member, APLD

Design instructors are always looking for new ways to encourage students to think creatively. Projects in garden design magazines can prod the imagination of beginning students, but they don't always foster the ability to seek inspiration from more unconventional sources. New ideas usually come from using common materials in unconventional ways, and one of the best places to see examples is at museums and galleries.

In the residential landscape design course at the University of Florida, we visit two museums on campus, the Harn Art Museum and the Natural History Museum, to study the forms of unique, visually strong objects that might be used in landscape design. The assignment is to search for design elements such as textures and shapes and think of a way to use them in the landscape. Although beginning students find the assignment challenging, they enjoy the exercise and find that they begin to look at the world a little differently. Experienced designers may find a visit to a museum a good way to recharge their creative thinking skills and focus on new ways to think about design elements. Look for colors, textures, materials and patterns on your next visit to a museum.

## COLOR

Students always look carefully at color in displays of paintings and photographs. Color combinations in paintings are intentional and often based on color theory, which makes them valuable as color schemes. Focus on one that has a dominant color and study the color combinations. Textiles such as tapestry, screens, clothing, and fiber art are also good sources for color schemes. Students often gravitate to brighter, more intense color combinations with primary and secondary colors. Ceremonial costumes, particularly those from other cultures, are also very useful. Costumes often have flamboyant and striking color combinations that would look attractive in flower gardens. In the natural history museum, a great source for color inspiration is the butterfly exhibit, with hundreds of mounted butterflies in a multitude of color combinations. Bird feathers and sea shells are also a good source of color.

## TEXTURE

Landscape designs with monochromatic or simple color schemes often rely more on texture for interest, and many objects in museums do the same. Students often discover new ideas for textures by studying baskets from different cultures. The Harn art museum has a collection of intricately woven baskets from Japan with wonderful textures and patterns. Other ideas for texture come from ceramics and clay pottery. Large clay pots from Africa have wonderful textures with knobs, carvings, holes and bumps on the surface. Woven textiles that incorporate different fibers are also good examples of texture.

## FORM

Any three dimensional object in the museum can inspire form. Students usually find sculptures to be the most interesting. Large contemporary metal sculptures are often colorful and take a more abstract form that can generate ideas for a contemporary garden. Ancient metal and wood sculptures from different countries have more complex forms and can inspire detailed design themes that might be suitable in Asian gardens. Carvings from stone and wood, particularly those from indigenous tribes of Africa or South America, often have more primitive shapes that might be appropriate in a rustic garden. Utilitarian objects from other cultures such as vases, bowls, baskets and tools often have unique shapes based on their function that can be used in a garden setting. Following the trip to the museum, students created small garden art inspired by their visit (Figure 1) and wrote a short paper describing the objects that influenced their choice of materials, colors, textures, and forms. Baskets, ceramics, and paintings were their favorite objects.



<Figure 1.> Student project inspired by circular baskets and colors from the museum



## MATERIALS

Objects in a museum are made from a surprising variety of materials, but students always seem to be particularly interested in natural materials such as stone, wood and clay objects. Some students say it reminds them of the natural setting in a garden and ways they might be used. Metal is also a favorite, particularly those objects that exhibit a variety of surface textures. Contemporary pieces are often shiny and smooth or purposely textured with engraved patterns. Older pieces usually show the patinas and rust that give the metal a special quality. Glass, both contemporary and ancient, is a good example of a unique material that lends itself to outdoor use because of its durability, transparency, and color.

## PATTERNS

Students often have to look a little harder to find examples of pattern because it is not always obvious, and they are less familiar with using pattern. Typically, woven baskets and textiles have a repeating pattern. Repeated geometric shapes are often used in tribal pottery and can be easily translated to a paver pattern or fence and screen patterns. Jewelry, particularly ornate pieces from ancient cultures, display an amazing use of pattern that can be used in large and small designs. Abstract paintings often use bold patterns that translate well in the landscape. The students were also attracted to the interior architecture of the museums. Wood panels and windows had a repeating pattern that they could easily identify. Students were also drawn to the gift stores of both museums as a source of inspiration. Jewelry, note cards, scarves, and children's art supplies all were good sources for color schemes, texture, and pattern ideas. The collector's store in the museum had colorful posters, toys, and cards that inspired color schemes and use of materials.

## OTHER SOURCES OF INSPIRATION

Remember that museums are just one place to find inspiration. Look around your community and your school for stores and galleries that sell unique and one-of-a-kind items. Home décor, furniture, and accessories can provide inspiration, as well as collectibles in antique stores and junk shops. Hardware stores, jewelry shops, hobby stores, and florists are also great places to find inspiration. Explore and see what you can find.



Gail Hansen, PhD, Professional Member, APLD

*Dr. Gail Hansen is an assistant professor in the Environmental Horticulture Department at the University of Florida where she teaches residential landscape design. She is the Statewide Extension Specialist in Landscape Design and has an MLA and PhD in landscape architecture.*

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# Chelsea Flower Show – With Clients

by Lucy van Liew, Professional Member, APLD

The 100th anniversary of the Chelsea Flower Show, definitely not a year to miss, was certainly distinctive for me, since I was taking clients along for the first time.

It made me think hard about the reasons we visit shows, how to interpret what we see, and how to select what my clients should see: gardens and exhibits on which to focus, so as not to be overwhelmed by the abundance on offer.

I also had a precious press pass, allowing me access to the show on Monday – press day – the day when the great and good visit, before the show officially opened to the public. This enabled me to have an unobstructed view of the gardens and to begin to plan a strategy for my clients.

After my initial visit, I was not alone in thinking that this was not a particularly great year for the show gardens in terms of innovation and design. Despite some hoopla around garden gnomes being “allowed” into CFS and an auction of paintings by designers, there was a subdued feeling to much of the show, probably due to continuing financial pressures. However, for first-time visitors like my clients, there was still a prodigious amount to see.

Expecting to show my clients around the next day, I looked at all the gardens and exhibits with fresh eyes, trying to see them as they might. My analogy for the Chelsea Flower Show is the Paris (or London or New York) fashion shows. Here, one can see the latest ideas and trends executed to the highest standards, but they had to be adapted and translated to relate to real gardens that are challenged by the pests and the climate of Connecticut. In addition, late May in England, whatever the vagaries of weather, is one of the most beautiful times of year so, just as a sack will look fabulous on a lovely 17- year-old, most gardens – even the very weirdly conceptual – will be beautiful in May but may not “age” well or suit the more rigorous demands of the real world.

There is never a set theme for Chelsea’s display gardens, and they are divided into different categories and sizes. The Fresh Gardens category encouraged designers to be experimental in materials and step outside what a show garden should look like.



*After the Fire – James Basson – winner Best Fresh Garden Funded by Cancer Research UK*

New concerns were prevalent, including sustainability, the destruction of the natural world, animal habitats, the invasion of foreign species and disease, and there were some interesting interpretations on this theme. One of the most memorable was “After the Fire” designed by James Basson, which seemed particularly apt in view of the recent wildfires in Australia. As with many of the gardens, it blurred the line between created and managed landscapes (or gardens) and the natural world. It emphasized the stages in the regeneration of the landscape and made a stark contrast to the lushness of many of the surrounding gardens.

<http://www.rhs.org.uk/Shows-Events/RHS-Chelsea-Flower-Show/2013/Gardens/Garden-directory/After-the-Fire>

Another garden in the Fresh category that I was particularly eager to visit was the Massachusetts Garden. Inspired by the work of Emily Dickenson and funded by the Massachusetts Office of Travel and Tourism, I was thrilled to think that a New England designer would be showcased at Chelsea. Sadly, I was disappointed. The conceptual garden was designed by Catherine MacDonald, a UK-based designer, and Susannah Hunter, a London-based handbag designer whose beautiful leather panels formed the backdrop to the garden.



*The Massachusetts gardens with designers Susannah Hunter and Catherine McDonald*

Nevertheless, the garden was enchanting, and I asked the Director of Tourism why a local US designer was not used. It appears that the funding cycle for the garden demanded that a UK- based designer with experience at Chelsea was needed to ensure success. As a member of APLD and the UK Society of Garden Designers, I think this was a missed opportunity to showcase US garden design, one that would reflect the New England landscape. However, the planting was lovely: loosely naturalistic, finely-planted grasses and spring perennials accompanied by flowering dogwoods that gave the garden structure were surrounded by extraordinary applied leather flowers on the walls.

I was also disappointed to see that that the furniture came from a highly respected English maker of outdoor furniture. Surely there are dozens of craftsmen from Massachusetts who would have been delighted to display their work.

<http://www.rhs.org.uk/Shows-Events/RHS-Chelsea-Flower-Show/2013/Gardens/Garden-directory/The-Massachusetts-Garden>





*Garden Clubs of America*

The other US representation at Chelsea was The Garden Clubs of America, also celebrating their 100th anniversary. Their exhibit in the great pavilion highlighted their first major conservation campaign—the Giant Redwoods of the West Coast. Designer Veronica Flemming studied landscape architecture at the University of Illinois following her graduation from Sheffield University, and I left with a much better understanding of the work and contribution of the Garden Clubs, including the fellowship programs between the UK and the US.

A review of the gardens and exhibits on press day allowed me to identify key ideas and themes that could be used in my client's garden. Interesting hedging, including the use of beech and hornbeam, and also the art of pleaching trees, were useful discussion points. We discussed the merits of the current style of naturalistic, informal perennial plantings and the realities of managing such a style with limited resources. The Brewin Dolphin garden designed by Robert Myers was a perfect example of the contrast of marrying soft naturalistic planting with crisp and contemporary lines, and in many ways it epitomized the often common tensions in couples, with one wanting acres of lawn and tidy planting while the other yearns for naturalistic, colorful mixed borders and shrubs.

I think my favorite garden (or non-garden, as it was designed to be looked at from without – perhaps an updated version of the 18th century parterre?) was Christopher Bradley Hole's contemporary and contemplative composition inspired by English meadows, Japanese garden-making and abstract art. The result was an invocation of the fields and woods that, for those of us growing up in the English countryside, form many of our childhood memories.



*Christopher Bradley Hole-Daily Telegraph Garden*

The Great Pavilion, with all the horticultural exhibits, allowed my clients to really see a huge variety of our favorite plants, including alliums, hosta, heuchera, clematis, roses, and many others. We came away with mental indigestion, but we had photographs to help us remember and identify what we want to track down and plant in the future.



*Bowdens Gold medal winning Hosta stand*

Finally, at the Dubarry's of Ireland exhibit, Nancy bought a pair of Galway boots. She had seen me wearing mine day in and day out throughout winter and into summer. Battered, but still smart enough to be worn in town when the weather demands, they are comfortable, waterproof and elegant. Despite the price tag, if I calculate the cost per wear and comfort in the garden, they have been a great bargain.

<http://us-shop.dubarry.us/collections/women/footwear/country-boots/galway>

On reflection, I thought that the most useful elements of the visit for my clients was looking at prevalent garden fashions, together with more enduring styles, to help them discover their own preferences and to see the imaginative detailing in plants and hardscapes.

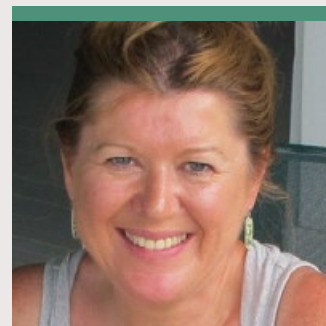
I am still debating whether I will go back to Chelsea next year or visit the early July, RHS Hampton Court Palace show, which is bigger and less traditional. Alternatively, there is the Chaumont Garden Festival in France, which is much more cutting-edge and mind-blowing. The only problem with all these shows is that they can leave you overwhelmed and feeling rather inadequate as a designer; but coming home to the realities and imperfections of one's own garden and designs, it's a good reminder of the real world.

One of the lasting inspirations of visiting the show is that it has stimulated the organization of the first APLD CT design conference in March 2014. The title is **Designing Paradise: defining how we enclose our gardens with fences, hedges and walls**.

For more information contact [lucy@lucyvanliewgardens.com](mailto:lucy@lucyvanliewgardens.com) or see the link on the website.

For a complete overview of the gardens and show go to <http://www.rhs.org.uk/Shows-Events/RHS-Chelsea-Flower-Show/2013/Gardens>

*Lucy Van Liew is a garden designer based in Connecticut, having moved from the UK 13 years ago. She has recently joined the board of the Connecticut chapter of the APLD. She is particularly interested in sustainable plantings within traditional and contemporary designs. She travels regularly to the UK and Europe and tries to combine the best in innovative ideas in her design.*



*Lucy Van Liew, Professional Member, APLD*



# The Importance of Education in the Art and Technology of Watershapes

by David J. Peterson, P.E., SWD, Genesis 3 Design Group

Few professionals have sailed through their careers without being blown off course a bit by a design or specification problem. Experienced designers prepare for these storms by limiting their exposure – reducing their scope of services and specifying that the details are “by others.” Other designers, particularly those with larger fees, will include certain details and specifications that increase their liability – a problem frequently tested by the circling sharks.

For the lucky professionals, attorneys may not have ever been needed. Relatively small expenses by the client and lots of good communication may lessen the bite. Larger expenses are harder to deal with and no amount of communication will mask the scent of blood – the sharks will begin to circle. Unfortunately, several attacks that I witnessed would have been preventable if the designers had simply educated themselves in the art and technology of watershapes.

## Errors and Omissions

We all make mistakes. Happily, most of them are revealed during subsequent design phases or early enough in the construction that they pose few problems. Other design failures can lead to significant time delays and expense – issues so large that the resulting damage to the professional and firm can easily kill the business.

Take waterproofing as an example. There are plenty of waterproofing products specified by design professionals for retaining walls and raised planter beds. Designers may not even give their waterproofing specification a second thought because they’ve never heard a single complaint about the

product’s performance. So then, while designing a pool for a friend, they repeat the spec, which may be all of a dozen characters and an arrow on their drawing – only to find out after the interior finish delaminated that the product was not compatible with pools and that the fix would be a \$50,000 re-plaster.

Errors like this can be drastically reduced through education. The Genesis 3 Design Group has partnered with APLD and has been instructing designers in technologies used for robust pool, spa, and water feature design, engineering, and construction. The Genesis 3 University’s business classes even include specific programs on limiting liability.

Many readers have probably just made a mental note that they will never specify waterproofing for a pool, spa, or water feature because I just scared them with this true story above. Unfortunately, omitting the information is also a problem – so much so, that Professional Liability Insurance is often called “Errors and Omissions Insurance.”

Let’s go back to waterproofing: Imagine if the construction documents for a retaining wall included all of the details for the footing, rebar, block, grout, French drain, and even the stucco color and texture, but had no mention of waterproofing. Now imagine that the wall is completed and then the unabated efflorescence destroys the finish. The designer will try to argue that every retaining wall requires waterproofing, but the builder will say that it was built per plan. Regardless, the repair is disruptive to the owner and the omission will cost the designer time and expense – even if the builder is found responsible.







## Design Failures

Technical errors and omissions in the watershaping industry abound. Mismatches of pumps and plumbing lead to wasted energy, mechanical failure, and even death due to serious safety breaches. Inadequate structural design can result in everything from nuisance leaks to wholesale replacement of the structure at a cost much higher than the original vessel. All of these issues can be solved with education and training, and this is true of both technical and design failures.

As an expert witness, I've seen vanishing edge pools built with undersized catch basins. The designer demanded the inadequate size for architectural reasons, but failed to understand the relationship between the storage capacity and the hydraulic performance – a specific study called “water-in-transit.” Unfortunately, this type of problem is often unrecognized until the pool is filled and flooding the yard.

The fix is a major structural reconfiguration of the vessel, sometimes complicated by other structural constraints (e.g., foundations or abutting structures) or property setback limitations. A better fix is to prevent the problem from occurring in the first place. Obtaining even a basic understanding of vanishing edge technology will give the designer additional key parameters to include in their layout and ensure a successful project.

On a more basic level, ask yourself if you have enough information to select the right submerged lighting fixtures, calculate the lumens required, and even place them to maximize effectiveness without seeing the source from prime viewing angles. What are the ideal depths and dimensions for spas? What pool depths will prevent a diver from breaking his or her neck? And would you like to control this or leave it up to the lowest design-build bidder that does what he wants?

Proper design will match the architecture of the water elements to the landscape which should, of course, complement the architectural style of the structures. Our Genesis 3 University includes a two-day class on 20th century architectural styles with a little emphasis on watershapes. If you combine that with our two-day Color Theory and two-day Applied Materials & Finish Details programs, your watershapes will avoid the ugly tradition of red brick with blue tile in lieu of something much more sophisticated and appropriate.

## Design Specialties

Most landscape designers work across all areas, depending on specific project requirements, but they may be known for expertise in space planning, hardscape, softscape, irrigation, horticulture, lighting, pools and spas, water features, or even a specific type of garden design. Their expertise is a result of education and experience.

Pool, spa, and water feature design may be standard elements in some designers' repertoire, while others avoid them completely. For those that use water elements regularly and skillfully, I imagine that they understand the artistic and health benefits of water, reflectivity, acoustics of moving water, feng shui, and other factors. After all, water features (pools included) have been used for thousands of years by cultures throughout the world, and so it is no surprise when a thoughtful designer incorporates historical references in their work. The Moors were even using water channels for temperature control to cool courtyards 1300 years ago.

Designers that avoid water in their projects may be doing so out of concern for maintenance or operating expense. They may feel that when the water in pools, spas, and water features evaporates, a precious resource is being wasted. However, these concerns can be misplaced. Operating expense is mostly a design decision that can be controlled simply by the right choice of details – consider how little energy is used to run a koi pond. Maintenance can also be reduced significantly by implementing the right technologies to handle the environmental parameters of the site, and evaporation is good for the planet so we encourage it!





Designed by Skip Phillips of Questar Pools - David Tyrell, Architect

## Investing in the Art and Technology of Watershapes

Good designers can solve difficult problems by applying the elements and principles of design to challenging projects. It should be noted that no designer ever achieved greatness with luck or experience alone – they all founded their craft on education and training. The formal process of education enlightens and inspires students with many options, a systematic approach to problem solving, and a starting point from which to evolve. Evolution then occurs naturally through experience.

Unfortunately, I often see watershape concepts that are decidedly un-evolved. Perhaps there is disinterest because the designer feels he or she has little control once the project is handed off to a “pool guy,” but the truth is that the pool contractors want to do great projects that show well, and they may very well exceed your expectations. I think the bigger issue is that these designers simply need the inspiration and exposure to the art and technology of water. If you want to infuse your projects with truly great watershapes, then it’s time to jump start your abilities and reduce your liabilities with an investment in education.

### About Genesis 3 Design Group

The Genesis 3 Design Group does three things. It educates, certifies, and connects watershape professionals through coursework, projects, examination, and continuing education through its accredited Genesis 3 University. The connections are not only with like-minded professionals within the Genesis 3 family, but also with our network of sponsors and affiliations with other leading organizations such as the ACI, ASA, ASLA, APLD, and others. Together, we are establishing higher standards in watershape design and construction.



David J. Peterson, P.E., SWD, Genesis 3 Design Group

David J. Peterson, P.E., SWD is the Educational Council Chairman for the Genesis 3 Design Group and a member of the Society of Watershape Designers. He obtained his B.S. Civil Engineering at Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo and is a licensed engineer in several states. Peterson is also President/CEO of Watershape Consulting, Inc., an international planning, design, and engineering firm specializing in pools, spas, and water features. He can be reached at [dave@watershapeconsulting.com](mailto:dave@watershapeconsulting.com).



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*Flowers adorn a doorway*



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# The Garden Town of Visby, Sweden: Starring the Usual!

*by Wickie Rowland, Professional Member, APLD*

The island of Gotland, off the southern coast of Sweden, is an idyllic place with numerous farms and villages, and it's the summer home of the king and queen of Sweden. It is also where Visby is located, a little town studded with church spires and terra cotta roofs, and much of it is within medieval city walls.

The town boasts a small but spectacular botanical garden, but even before you get there, you feel like you're already in a garden, as roses and other flowers burst from every opening, some growing where they were planted, others "volunteering" wherever there is enough soil for them to thrive. You get the feeling that if you stand still for too long, a rose will start growing at your feet. If you walk down the Fiskargränd you'll see white and yellow houses covered with red and pink roses, with *Lavandula* and *Hemerocallis*, *Centaurea* and *Campanula* growing lusciously in front. Everywhere there is an opportunity for plants to grow, they will be growing, even if they are just poppies eking out an existence in a crack at the foundation of a house. And the residents of Visby seem happy to let them grow, and leave them to strut their stuff.

*Even the bicycles match the flowers!*



*A Visby doorway: note that some of the door is below street level!*





The Visby Botanical Garden, although fairly small in size, makes up for it in content. Founded in 1855 by a group of men led by Hans Peter Gustavsson, the aim was to teach young people about nature -- in particular, to teach them about gardening. Since then, it has become a bit more horticultural in nature and was redesigned in the 1930s, moving away from growing things like vegetables.

After you enter through the original gates and pass between the two plane trees (*Platanus x acerifolia*), there are shady gardens with lichen-encrusted urns, and the mossy, ivy-covered ruin of the Church of St. Olaf, from which you cross a bridge over a small stream, flowing under a *Magnolia kobus*. When I was there, someone was playing a flute, just out of sight in the pavilion, and the notes hung over the garden and mixed with bird song.

It is an idyllic place, but the jewel in its crown is the Rose Garden, with its center sundial. There, a pergola made of stone pillars with wooden crossbars is heavy with white climbing roses (*Rosa x helenae* 'Hybrida') and *Clematis viticella* 'Carmencita' which foam over the top and provide the background to what must be close to a hundred different species of roses, such as 'Astrid Lindgren' (the author of "Pippi Longstocking" who lives on Gotland), 'Leonardo da Vinci', and 'Gripsholm', with perennials such as *Geranium* 'Rozanne', *Hemerocallis* 'Stella D'Oro', *Salvia*, and *Dianthus* planted in the front. The scent is heavenly. Each arch of the pergola, with its selection of perennials or seating area creates a separate "painting," and it is like being in a living art gallery, as people sitting on the benches become temporary and unknowing subjects. I passed the gardener who was busy deadheading the roses, who had almost filled up a wheelbarrow with a beautiful collage of different colored rose petals. It was a feast for the soul.

At the time, it struck me how the placement of "ordinary" things can make them exceptional. Surprisingly, the lower Baltic Sea is affected by the Gulf Stream, and as a result, Gotland's hardiness Zone is comparable to the USDA Zone 7. That of Visby, and in particular that of the Botanical Garden, could even be Zone 8, as the surrounding walls on one side and steep hill on the other shield it from the worst weather.

The plant choices in and around Visby are the usual suspects in a Northern Atlantic garden; besides those mentioned already, you see *Alchemilla mollis*, *Papaver*, *Cerastium tomentosum*, and *Philadelphus*, among others. Many of these plants are staples in gardens that I design, since they do well in a variety of situations, with minimal effort on the part of the homeowner. What I liked about Visby, and the Botanical Garden in particular, was that these staples were arranged in such a way that they were no longer staples, but important players in the garden; leading men and ladies instead of the supporting cast. Where we might put an exotic specimen tree, they would opt for a rambler rose growing up an unusual, old stone column and trained to be part of the sculpture. There, the ordinary became the extraordinary.

It's always a good idea to look at things with fresh eyes, and that is why I so enjoy traveling and visiting gardens created by people with whom I have very little in common, culturally speaking. It allows you to think outside the box and sometimes come to the surprising conclusion that what you find out there is found inside the box, as well, and thus is a familiar, obtainable, entirely usable plant that has just been given a different twist. It's interesting to learn that viewing and enjoying foreign gardens does not always require learning a whole different palette of plants; sometimes it just means placing the "old" ones differently on the canvas. How lucky we are to work in a field where nothing needs to get old and stale and inspiration can be found everywhere!

If you ever find yourself in Sweden, a trip to Gotland is well worth the effort. Once you find yourself in Gotland, a visit to Visby is a must!



Rose Garden at the Visby Botanical Garden



A morning's worth of deadheading at the Botanical Garden



Rose covered column



Rose Garden at the Visby Botanical Garden



Wickie Rowland, Professional Member, APLD

When not creating gardens in collaboration with Labrie Associates of No. Hampton, NH, Wickie Rowland tries to visit as many gardens as possible, both at home and abroad. She enjoys finding creative solutions to design "problems."





# Money Really Does Grow on Trees

*by Jennifer Lennox, Corporate Communications, The Davey Tree Expert Company*

Increasing the value of your next landscape design may be as simple as making room for trees. It's no secret that landscaping increases property values, but according to The United States Forest Service, landscaping that incorporates mature trees may increase it by 20 percent.

Sophisticated landscape designs that include trees increase property values and yield the best return on investment for your clients.

The message to convey to clients, and the one that will add value to landscape designs, is that trees mean money. The benefits of trees are endless. Studies show that trees improve health, lower anxiety, and produce more sociable neighborhoods.

On the next page are tips and tricks on why trees matter in landscape designs and how to seamlessly incorporate them in your design.





## Trees Mean Extra Cash in Your Clients' Pockets

Trees are best known for shade and reducing cooling costs. The American Power Association estimates that effective landscaping can reduce a home cooling bill by as much as 50 percent a year. In fact, areas without cooling shade trees can literally become "heat islands" with temperatures reaching 12 degrees higher than surrounding areas.

Keeping a home warm in winter is another benefit many homeowners don't consider. The Arbor Day Foundation says a row of conifers planted on the north and northwest sides of a property creates a wall against cold winter winds and can save heating costs by up to 30 percent a year.

## Trees Improve Property Values

When it comes time to sell a home, clients will be happy to know that 98 percent of realtors surveyed by Arbor National Mortgage believe that "mature trees have a strong impact on the saleability of homes listed for over \$250,000."

*Money* magazine estimated that while kitchen or bathroom remodeling can bring a recovery value up to 125 percent, landscaping can bring up to a 200 percent return at selling time. It's the difference between breaking even on the sale of a home and making some money.

Many trees have a higher value than others due to their hardiness, durability, adaptability, and overall desirability for sturdiness, low-maintenance, or attractiveness. Japanese maples and dwarf conifers are among the most highly-valued trees, according to *Better Homes and Gardens*.

To ensure trees are healthy and will look good for years to come, talk to your local certified arborist at Davey Tree [www.davey.com](http://www.davey.com).

And, to learn more about the value of trees, [visit iTree](#), an app that analyzes the cost-benefit calculations of trees.

*The Davey Tree Expert Company, with U.S. and Canadian operations in more than 45 states and five provinces, provides a variety of tree care, grounds maintenance and consulting services for the residential, commercial, utility and government markets. Founded in 1880, Davey is employee-owned and has more than 7,000 employees who provide Proven Solutions for a Growing World. For more information, visit [www.davey.com](http://www.davey.com).*

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If you're ready to add trees to your landscape designs and increase their value, here are a few "Do's and Don'ts" for adding trees to a landscape from arborists at The Davey Tree Expert Company:

### Do diversify your planting.

Planting several different varieties helps protect against invasive species, insects or diseases that may infest and damage plantings.



### Don't volcano mulch.

Keeping mulch away from the trunk is critical to allow a tree's roots to breathe. Only add two to three inches of mulch as needed and layer it away from the trunk like a saucer.

### Do consider varieties that are sturdy and resistant to problems.

Native to areas of North America, the redbud is easy to grow. Valued for its outstanding display of pink or white flowers in spring, these trees have delightful heart-shaped leaves that turn golden yellow in fall.

Choose kousa dogwoods for a terrific spring show with attractive pink or white blooms. It's chosen widely over its North American cousin, flowering dogwood, for its disease resistance.

### Don't smother a landscape.

A mature tree adds value to the property because of function and aesthetics. Plant high-value specimens to form a focal point, frame the house, or stand in a hedgerow. Over time, clients will watch the tree in their yard grow along with the value of their home.



# Namibian Adventure

by Rachel Gioannini, APLD

When my sister-in-law asked me last year if I wanted to go to Africa with her, I said, “Why sure,” although I’d never dreamed of going to Africa and it wasn’t even on my bucket list. And so began a grand adventure!

The trip’s focus was to volunteer at Harnas, a wildlife rescue and sanctuary located in eastern Namibia. April, my sister-in-law, volunteers at a large cat rescue near her home in North Carolina, where she heard of Harnas from other volunteers. When I decided to make the trip, I didn’t know that Namibia is located down near the southern end of Africa, just above South Africa and directly west of Botswana. Since the trip was so far and the flight was expensive, we decided to take a guided tour for eight days before our two weeks of volunteer work.

Our trip started with a long flight from JFK to Johannesburg, then on to Windhoek, Namibia, the nation’s capital city. Windhoek is centrally located in Namibia and English is the official language. I was very impressed by the fact that most everyone who lives there speaks not only English, but also Afrikaans and one or more of the various tribal languages. Namibia won independence in 1990 and tourism is a major component of its economy.

From the plane window, the first thing I noticed about Namibia was its striking similarity to my home in southern New Mexico, down to the tall metal windmill just off the airport runway! The plant shapes were similar as well: low, scrubby, small-leaved and barbed. Not surprisingly, with the arid climate and little water available, agriculture there centers on livestock instead of crops. That became even more evident in the meals we ate: heavy on meat and light on fruits and vegetables.



*So similar to New Mexico!*

The first night of our safari, we were in the Sossusvlei region, southwest of Windhoek and about 40 miles, as the crow flies, from the Atlantic Ocean. We hiked out to see the sunset from atop a dune and our guide pointed out “fairy rings” in the grasses. Fairy rings are round patches where the grass doesn’t grow. There are many theories about this, but the answer hasn’t yet been discovered. The most popular theory is that they are caused by sand termites, to which the native Bushmen ascribe spiritual and magical powers.

The next day we visited the Deadvlei, an area without rainfall since 1997, and prior to that, 1987! The Deadvlei is essentially a dead marshy region, a saltpan surrounded by enormous red sand dunes. The 100 or so acacia trees that grew there when it was a marsh are now petrified, and they look other-worldly. Salvadori Dali would have loved this place! The plants that do grow there get their moisture needs from fog that comes in off the ocean. On top of the dunes, there’s a very cold wind that comes from the Atlantic, while down on the vlei it is very warm. It’s a challenging environment for sure, but there are some tenacious trees and shrubs, as well as the ever-present oryx and springbok.



*on the dunes above the Deadvlei*



*petrified trees; they look like dancers to me*



*Springbok near the Deadvlei.  
See the tiny spots on the dune? People.*

Our trip took us up the coast to the Swakopmund area. One day we drove out to see the *Welwitschia mirabilis*, an endemic plant of coastal regions of Namibia and Angola. These plants would be pretty easy to ignore, as they aren’t particularly lovely, nor do they have extravagant flowers. But carbon dating has put some of them at over 2000 years old. They also survive from ocean fog. The one pictured here shows the cones of the female *Welwitschia*.



*female Welwitschia*



The “moon landscape” was our next stop that day, and we hiked down into the canyon. At the top of the canyon, there were no signs of life. I almost stomped on a lovely little plant, its leaves half the size of a fingernail, and with tiny white flowers with pink or yellow centers. Like many of the plants in the desert I know well, the leaves were very pubescent and light grey in color. I was charmed by its flowers, although I didn’t see any pollinators. I found out later it was Namib Edelweiss (*Helichrysum roseo-niveum*.)



*Helichrysum roseo niveum* Namib Edelweiss

Our travels took us through the Damara region and I was thrilled to see what I thought was *Pedilanthus macrocarpus* -- one of my very favorite plants -- which I erroneously thought was from Africa. We stopped to get a tour of the centuries-old rock carvings and luckily, our guide was very well versed in all the flora and fauna of Namibia. He told me the plant was *Euphorbia damarana*, known locally as Melkbos (Milk Bush). Looking at the image, you can see why I thought it was the slipper plant. They grow very large in Namibia, up to eight feet tall with an equal spread, and they are also dioecious.



*Euphorbia damarana*. Grows in huge clumps in the region around Brandberg Mountain in the Damara region.

Etosha National Park was our next stop, an enormous game reserve covering roughly 8,500 square miles. As we explored Etosha, I noticed the effect of the large animals on the plants. The elephants had knocked over many of the trees, the giraffes had eaten the upper story leaves, and the other ruminants had eaten many of the lower leaves. The park was dotted with watering holes, both natural and man-made, that bring the animals in for observation. (Humans are not allowed outside their vehicles except in small areas where lodging and camping are available). We were able to observe many different animals, including lions, elephants, ostrich, jackals, wildebeest, zebras, giraffes, antelopes, and numerous others.



a herd of elephants at a watering hole



from back to front, an oryx, a kudu and a herd of impala



Zebra leaving the watering hole, the giraffes and an oryx stay behind





*a leopard snoozing in a mature Sweet-Thorn tree*



*the baboons removed all the foliage from the tops of the trees so that they can keep an eye out for predators*



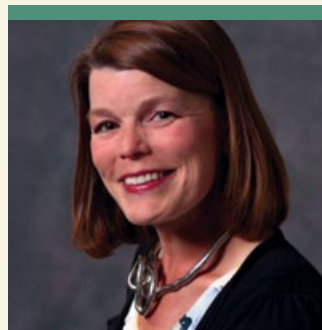
*a beautiful African sunset, filtered through an enormous Camel-Thorn tree*

We spent the last two weeks of our journey at the Harnas Wildlife Sanctuary, which is just much too wonderful to describe in this article. We were working volunteers and had a lot of interaction with many African mammals. We were lucky to be there just as spring got underway, and I loved observing the profusely blooming trees. Three that were in full flower were the Black-Thorn (*Acacia mellifera*), the Sweet-Thorn (*A. karroo*) and the Camel-Thorn (*A. erioloba*). These trees are very similar to their relatives in the Chihuahuan and Sonoran deserts: barbed and dangerous! We learned to give them a good margin so that our clothes would not be snagged by their sharp claws. Surprisingly, there weren't many native succulents in this region on the western edge of the Kalahari Desert.



*me and my cheetahs, Lewiki, Shingala and Jeannie*

It's true that I love plants, but my best memories of Namibia are times with animals. Waking to the roar of lions, playing with caracals, softly singing to a blind Vervet monkey named Audrey and getting to know a 16-year-old brown hyena named Gumbi were unforgettable experiences. My favorite times were spent with three cheetahs, Lewiki, Shingala and Jeannie. They've been in my heart since I returned home. If you're looking for a once-in-a-lifetime adventure, I would very strongly recommend Namibia.



*Rachel Gioannini, APLD*

*Rachel Gioannini, APLD, is the owner of Casa Serena Landscape Designs LLC in Las Cruces, New Mexico, [www.casaserenadesigns.com](http://www.casaserenadesigns.com).*



# A Visit to Windcliff: Dan Hinkley's World Garden

by Janine Anderson, Professional Member, APLD

Although the name might suggest a stormy headland on the coast of Scotland, Daniel Hinkley's Windcliff is anything but. Located on a sunny, south-facing bluff overlooking Puget Sound, with distant views of downtown Seattle and Mount Rainier, Windcliff is Dan Hinkley's home, garden, nursery, and laboratory. Renowned as a plant explorer, author, and speaker, Hinkley became famous as the founder of Heronswood, a destination nursery and garden in Kingston, Washington, that he ran from 1987 until 2000, when it was sold to the W. Atlee Burpee Company. Hinkley continues to seek out garden-worthy plants from temperate regions of the world. Since 2009, plants found, tested, and developed by Hinkley—The Dan Hinkley Plant Collection—have been introduced into the consumer market by APLD Gold Sponsor Monrovia.

In June 2013, I was fortunate to visit Hinkley's garden, which has been evolving since 2001, during a tour sponsored by the Northwest Horticultural Society. Windcliff is located in the small rural community of Indianola, part of the Port Madison Indian Reservation and home of the Suquamish Tribe, of which Seattle's namesake, Chief Seattle, was a member. The Indianola Country Store, a local hangout and cultural center since the 1920s, is about a mile from Windcliff, which is reached via a narrow, winding, heavily shaded two-lane road. At 350 feet wide and 1200 feet deep, Windcliff is long and narrow. Its five and one-half acres begin at the road and end in one of the most pristine fresh water estuaries still intact in our region. The gatehouse and entry gate, a wave-like weave of steel tubing designed by Hinkley and his husband, architect Robert Jones, and built by a local artisan, hint that something special lies within.

The gently curved driveway is flanked by some of the famed plantsman's sentimental favorites, as well as by more exotic specimens, such as *Schefflera taiwaniana* 'Yuan Shan' (reputedly hardy to USDA zone 7), which Hinkley discovered on the highest mountain in Taiwan. Hinkley has long had a fondness for hydrangeas, and his featured favorites include many of his own collections from Asia, including numerous forms of *Hydrangea aspera*. Among the other drama queens in the mixed border are *Gunnera tinctoria* and a huge stand of *Phyllostachys dulcis*, called "sweetshoot bamboo" because of its tasty shoots. Dark green native and introduced conifers throughout the border provide a striking backdrop for trees and shrubs with golden and variegated foliage.

At the house, the plantings become more dense, nuanced, and intimate. "Stepping stones"—large square slabs of poured concrete—lead one around the western perimeter of the house. Treasures abound at every jog in the path. Purple sausage-like fruits of *Holboellia angustifolia* drip from the arbor above the front entry; scores of clay pots terraced near the house hold exotic ferns and other treasures grown from seed collected from the nether regions of the planet; vertical columns of banana (*Musa*) adjoin the large, floppy leaves of ornamental rhubarb. The low, stained concrete wall that retains the gentle slope on the outside edge of the path is studded with large basalt boulders.



Steel entry gate designed by Hinkley and Jones.



Plantings along driveway include *Gunnera* and golden bamboo against a backdrop of native and introduced conifers.



Lush plantings flanking "stepping stones" include fuchsia and *Acanthus*. "Clump" of ceramic bamboo-like forms on the left was created by California artist Marcia Donohue.





Sheltered plantings bordering grid-like paving near house feature *Agapanthus*, *Yucca rostrata*, and *Trichocereus pascanus* cactus from northwest Argentina. Pot contains *Xanthorrhoea australis* ("Grass Tree") from Australia.



*Melianthus* in the foreground helps frame view of Puget Sound.



Ponds and waterfalls are bordered by lush plantings that include palms.

The single-story house is a triptych of three wings connected by breezeways. When you reach the south side of the house, which was designed by Jones and overlooks the garden and Puget Sound beyond, the drama reaches its crescendo. Generous areas of grid-like paving lead from the house and combine with water features, large boulders, and over-the-top plantings, many originating from more arid regions of the world, such as Australia, South Africa, and the Mediterranean. Lush palms; spiky yuccas, aloes, and agaves; numerous monocots, including every size and shape of grass and sixty varieties of *Agapanthus*; blue-gray *Melianthus* and Moroccan broom (*Cytisus battandieri*); narrow columns of barberry and *Pittosporum*; and stiff manzanitas, cactus, and Ovens Wattle (*Acacia pravissima*) all combine to create a brilliant crazy quilt of form, foliage, and color. During my visit, a garter snake sunned lazily atop one of the boulders, suggesting Windcliff has found a balance between nature and human creation.



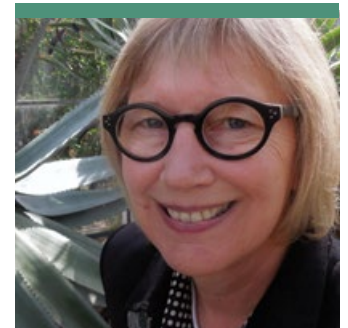
Royal blue exercise balls dangle from native vine maple (*Acer circinatum*).

Distant from the house, near the edge of the bluff, is a mosaic fire circle and sitting wall designed by Portland, Oregon, artist Jeffrey Bale and built from stones collected on the beach below. Sculptural pieces are thoughtfully sited throughout the property. One of the strongest is also the simplest—huge royal blue exercise balls dangling like holiday ornaments from a vine maple (*Acer circinatum*), a northwest native. The eye-catching understory planting includes dark green pillars of *Ilex crenata* 'Sky Pencil' and a sea of golden yew (*Taxus cuspidata* 'Aurea') and sweetflag (*Acorus gramineus* 'Variegatus') interspersed with the bluish, heart-shaped foliage of *Beesia deltophylla*, a plant Hinkley collected and introduced from Sichuan province in 1998.



A 20- by 60-foot greenhouse sits in a sunny clearing along the northern border of the property. It is here that the many seeds Hinkley collects are propagated and grown. It is also here that those in attendance had the opportunity to select exotic plants for purchase. Adjacent to the greenhouse is a food garden, a thriving potager with huge vessels, raised beds, and sunny slopes framed by gabions and other artful elements, including three cutout metal panels by California sculptor Mark Bulwinkle.

Hinkley was our tour guide at Windcliff, and our visit unfolded as I have described. As a designer and gardener, the experience of Dan Hinkley's Windcliff is more inspiring than my description can convey—the intrepid explorer's garden is packed with beauty, wonderment, and food for thought. Windcliff is a private residence, and the garden is seldom open to visitors. An opportunity to visit this evolving masterpiece is an opportunity that should be seized.



Janine Anderson, Professional Member, APLD

*Janine Anderson is an award-winning landscape designer, as well as a speaker, writer, and Certified Professional Horticulturist. As a designer, Janine endeavors to create gardens that are both functional and beautiful and tries to balance her passion for clean, modern design with her commitment to habitat preservation and ecologically responsible practices.*

*Food garden bounty is enjoyed by Hinkley, Jones, and friends.*

# CREATING LANDSCAPES FOR LIVING

From desktop vision, to integrated 2D/3D drawing, to beautifully installed gardens, Vectorworks Landmark software helps Town and Gardens, Ltd. get the job done. With tools optimized for the landscape industry and best-in-class collaboration, the Vectorworks platform is the tool of choice for this New York-based firm.

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Images courtesy of Town & Gardens, Ltd.

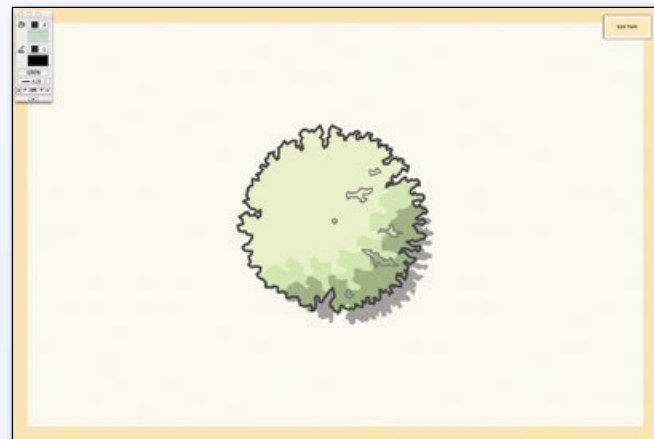


# Personalizing CAD Drawings with Customized Symbols

by Eric Gilbey, RLA, ASLA, Professional Member APLD

Designers who draw site plans by hand routinely tell me that they have not transitioned to computer-aided design (CAD) because they do not want to relinquish the personalized look they can achieve with their landscape plans and elevations. At the same time, those who have jumped to digital design workflows share a similar concern; they wish they could make their CAD-created drawings look more like the ones they would produce by hand. The good news is that whichever side of the fence you sit on, you can use CAD, and personalize it, too.

When you consider that any CAD application uses lines, shapes and text to produce drawings, this may sound a bit like how we assemble drawings by hand. After all, we use straight and curvilinear lines of varying widths, polygonal shapes filled with hatches and labeling constructed with text and more lines. We learn early in our design careers that line weights, textures, clear shapes and labels in our drawings are crucial to help clients and contractors understand our design intent for a proposed site. But making CAD drawings convey our ideas to clients just like we would by hand is not only possible, but it is not as hard as you think, no matter what software application you use.



*Editing a custom plant symbol involves line weights, color layering and opacity settings – much like what we do with pen and markers. Credit: The Office of James Burnett*



*This same edited symbol's line, color and opacity represents well in the context of The Office of James Burnett's style of plan graphics. Credit: The Office of James Burnett*

In Vectorworks® Landmark software, for example, the plant object is a smart symbol, which carries the plant information and has two graphical representations: 2D and 3D. If we edit this object and choose the 2D graphic settings, we can immediately access the lines and shapes that make up the symbol. In this edit mode, a scrutinizing designer may choose to add, change or subtract these lines and shapes, or select the color fill of the symbol and change its fill to another solid color, or a gradient blend of colors, and modify its transparency to allow for understory material to show through.



*Choate Associates uses many of Vectorworks software's default plant symbols and hatches/fills while modifying others to create their rich graphic style. Credit: Choate Associates*

Patrick DuChene of DuChene Design Solutions, LLC, which provides design, modeling, animation and consultation services for landscape build/design firms throughout the United States, suggests that DynaSCAPE software offers a dynamic combination of graphics, functionality and productivity. For example, DuChene has mastered the art of customizing textures and figures in the software. Figures can be exploded, modified and resaved as new and custom figures. Because this is a built-in feature, DuChene seldom needs to customize this aspect of his drawings for the simple reason that DynaSCAPE has already done its homework and provided detailed and accurate representations -- figures such as trees, shrubs, perennials, tables and chairs, grills, etc., that he needs to produce designs, colored drawings and estimates to the tune of \$50,000-\$100,000 of work per 10-hour day.



DuChene has also experimented with customizing plant material textures in DynaSCAPE Color (DynaSCAPE's color rendering software program), by creating photo-realistic 2D Knock Out roses, Blue Mist shrubs, coreopsis, crape myrtles and more—textures that undeniably show how the colors of the plant palette combine to provide a vast array of color in the drawing. DuChene advises, "One must be careful to not overdo such customizations to avoid making the overall presentation too busy and produce an unintended, negative result."

Customizing objects within these applications is not limited to just plants. On the contrary, you can create pavement patterns that mimic the specified material. Creating hatches and tiled patterns enable the designer to accurately account for specific paving patterns, textures and colorations. In the Vectorworks program, the recently added Tile feature provides designers with a specific edit screen where the proposed shapes are duplicated in a 3 x 3 array. This is extremely helpful, as it supports the designer's visualization of the new tile, repeated and movable, to help bring the shapes into a repeated pattern within the proposed shape for the pavement surface.

DuChene shares that within DynaSCAPE Color, he can create custom textures such as real paving stone, lawn, mulch, decorative stone, granite, stainless steel, fabrics, wood and any other textures he feels will add to the real-life impact of a drawing, all from simple images from manufacturers' catalogs, online photos and even actual photos of paving stones he takes with a smart phone. For example, he once visited a residence with a beautiful reclaimed brick herringbone pattern driveway. He took a picture of the driveway and easily created a new texture that allowed him to color that same material in his drawing.



Patrick DuChene of DuChene Design Solutions favors a realistic style in the graphics and colorations of his renderings. Credit: DuChene Design Solutions

Customizing textures has, in some cases, enabled DuChene to bypass the need for 3D modeling, allowing for faster turnaround time for his clients. The ability to show real lawn and mulch, actual paving stones, real pool water, etc., helps the client visualize what the marriage of materials will look like. This is important because he says customers can get caught up with the type and colors of a job's hardscape materials, not the softscape elements such as the plant material. Knowing this, he does whatever he can to closely represent all of the crucial materials he feels will come into question, thereby eliminating much of the potential confusion and indecisiveness. "The less we have to say to present our drawings, the better off we are," says DuChene. "People do not like to be sold, they like to buy. When all of the information is in front of them, it becomes much easier for them to make a decision. And if you are not presenting color-rendered drawings now, and are not beginning to try to provide 3D presentations to your clients, you will be surpassed by your competition very soon."

DuChene adds, "With the virtual world we live in, we must adapt to our environment and provide clients with something that keeps up with the world around us. So for those who are not ready or able to produce 3D presentations, and who want to provide a more realistic, professional and cutting-edge presentation for their clients, customizing textures is a smart thing and will pay dividends in the sales process!"

I'd like to conclude with an encouragement to those who still may be skeptical about the idea of a CAD solution giving them the look they are used to in their previous methods of design creation, especially where renderings are concerned. A CAD solution will help you become more efficient with your initial drawing production, as well as create 2D plans or 3D views, but do not assume the software's default symbols and drawing conventions have to be your status quo. Instead, take advantage of the application's training resources or personnel to learn how you can personalize your drawings, and consider making those settings you have customized a part of your go-to templates, so that every drawing you create contains these styles that reflect your preferences. You will soon find that the look you prefer can always be yours from project to project.



Eric Gilbey, RLA, ASLA, Professional Member APLD

Eric Gilbey is a Vectorworks Landmark Industry Expert Nemetschek Vectorworks, Inc. 443-542-0658, [egilbey@vectorworks.net](mailto:egilbey@vectorworks.net)



# Tips for a Successful Submission for the APLD International Landscape Design Awards Competition

by Bill Healy, APLD (APLD Awards Committee Chair)

Each year, the APLD Awards Committee lists "tips for a strong entry" in the awards program entry form. This article will expand on some of those tips.

First of all, in order to be deemed award-winning, projects need to be exceptional, but there can be a very fine line between outstanding and just very competent. Great projects make a strong impression and are memorable. Their sense of unity is powerful. They seem to have a natural sense of balance in two of the most important aspects of design – interest and repose. Secondly, especially in a digital judging, packaging the design into a good entry is also very vital.

## Exceptional Projects

In the APLD Landscape Design Awards program, **creativity** is purposely weighted very heavily in the judging criteria. The eye yearns for the new and different. When projects offer something different, or even enter the realm of unique, they are likely to be well received. Projects that seem quite good, yet safe, may not fare as well. Safe is a term used by the British judges when a design is good, but conventional, offering little which sets it apart. Problem solving often makes for very creative solutions.

Some have asked why **Sustainability** is not a category. It used to be. A few years back, the awards committee decided that sustainability is so critical that it should show as much as possible in all design. Sustainability is mentioned in many of the criteria descriptions. There may be exceptions such as show gardens or specialty projects. If the environmental intent of an entry is its utmost feature, it can even be entered as such as a specialty project.

**Craftsmanship** is expected. Since space is limited, it might not need to be highlighted, unless unique. A photo of expert work may say more than words, for expert craft with materials displays well. Lack of good construction would be a red flag.

**Does the category choice count?** Most entries naturally fall in the residential category. The APLD program does not offer a first place for each category, because the judges view all entries against the bar of excellence. Thus there may be more than one gold entry in a category in a particular year. Nonetheless, it might be helpful to see if an entry might qualify for another category to help it stand out. In a digital awards program, with a limited amount of photos and short brief, it might be more challenging to express the breadth and features of a large project as opposed to a smaller one. A particular portion of a large project may stand out better in a different category.

## Good Entries

For the APLD design awards, one needs to consider the limitations of a digital entry. The opportunity for an entry to stand out depends greatly upon the strength of the brief and the photos. Judges do not have the luxury to have a sequestered session, with thorough discussion, where more of the individually perceived attributes of an entry might be brought to light for fellow judges. The APLD judges' conference call does provide this period of advocacy. The call follows the judges' review of the other judges' critiques through e-mail, but is not the same as having a lively jury room debate. So if the project is a good one, it also needs to be put together in a good entry. The APLD process is becoming easier, with shorter briefs, fewer photos and online entries, but it still needs to be put together well.

## The Overall Picture

One of the most important goals of an entrant is to try to make the judges feel comfortable with the setting. They need a sense of the project's scope and to feel oriented. Just as unity is one of the most important aspects of design, creating a unified, understandable entry can keep the submission out of the undesired pile of .... very good project, but not a very good entry. The judges need to be taken to the site, then through the process of the project, only through a few photos and words. Good projects require a good organized approach, and so do good entries. If both the photos and the brief are well organized, it will help the judges develop a better overall feeling for the project.

## The Photos

Too often entries lack the establishment shot. This is the photo that illustrates the overall scope of the space. For larger projects, perhaps this becomes more difficult, but it is more important. Sometimes a shot might need to be taken from an upper story, or from a ladder to offer a better perspective. A "before" shot can be used to depict the overview. Unless they are part of a skillfully crafted buildup, do not start the entry's sequence by showing little vignettes of a larger space.

With so few photos allowed, each one must count. Every photo should show what makes the project special. Impressive "before" and "after" photos can make the transformation pop. Make someone say "I have to see that picture again." It often helps to have the before and afters taken from the same vantage point. It can really produce that wow factor for which the judges are looking.

At times entries just visually show poorly. A most glaring error continues to be poor lighting conditions. It pays to wait for good lighting. Set up a schedule to photograph at peak times (early morning, late afternoon) or different seasons. Often submissions have too many closeups of plants. If the plant is a dominant focal point or a remarkable specimen, then using a photo to feature it may be understandable. On the other hand, judges know what a Knockout Rose looks like. If there are too many closeups of individual plants, then the intricate relationships in a planting design do not come across. Finally, staging doesn't hurt – but judges are really looking for the meat of the matter.

Like waiting for proper light, it pays to wait for proper plant maturity. Too often judges will comment that plant immaturity detracts from the project's impression. Patience can pay.



## The Brief

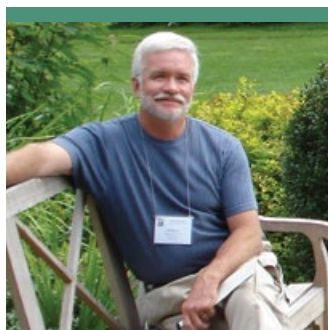
It might be easy to say that briefs need to be clear and concise, but it is critical. The judges want clarity. First the intent should be stated, and then the remaining brief and photos should show how the intent statement was met. There is a set limit to the number of words and pictures allowed, but this is necessary because the time involved for the judges to review all the submissions can be exorbitant. The APLD judges are eminent in their field and volunteer their time. They expect a well organized brief, initially getting an overall sense of the project, then reading about some of the aspects that have the most impact. Short and sweet. Keep the flowery stuff in the garden. Judges do not like to hunt for the important points of an entry. Rather than having to skim through a lot of words to find the meat, one might try bullet points. Take advantage of the descriptions allowed with each photo to flesh out the project's story.

## The Judges' Subjectivity

Sometimes a change of wording or better photos could make a difference in how a project is received. Likewise, sometimes a very good project might not win an award with a particular panel of judges. It can be very frustrating when a project does not receive the merits that the designer believes he or she deserves. Even though APLD strives to make the awards program as objectively criteria-based as possible, there is an undeniable reality that there is an element of subjectivity in landscape judging. It might be worthwhile to enter the project again in a different year with a different set of judges.

## Do Not Have the Judges Be the First to See Your Entry

Finally, before an entry is submitted, it should be offered for editing and critique by others. It cannot be overemphasized that by showing an entry to other designers, especially critically honest ones, some of the weaker aspects of a submission might be revealed and could be improved.



Bill Healy, APLD

Bill Healy, APLD, owns Healy Design, Inc. in Akron, Ohio and is Chairman of the Awards Committee.

# Planning for Winter

by Terry Sims, Professional Member, APLD

In cold climates, winter is often viewed as a season when everything shuts down, landscapes become sparse and uninteresting, and outdoor living comes to a halt. The reality is far from this belief.

Great gardens go beyond three-season beauty. Winter creates diversity and showcases elements of the landscape not seen during warmer seasons. The branches of deciduous trees with vertical interest and colored or exfoliating bark are now fully visible. Conifers and evergreens produce a consistent green, blue and yellow color in the gardens, and some shrubs and perennials bloom during the winter.



Consider the coral bark Japanese maple (*Acer palmatum* 'Sango-kaku'), with its brilliant colored trunk and branches against a background of snow. Or contorted filberts (*Corylus avellana* 'Harry Lauder's Walking Stick') with eye-catching ornamental appeal, as golden catkins hang down under a blanket of snow that hugs its contorted branches. The Washington hawthorn (*Craetaegus phaenopyrum* 'Cordata'), keeps its brilliant red berries until the birds devour them in spring. Blue atlas cedars (*Cedrus atlantica* 'Glauca Pendula') when staked, have an interesting serpentine or horizontal form, and weeping white pines (*Pinus strobus* 'Pendula') with their large cones and long soft needles, add elegance to the landscape.

Many ornamental grasses keep their plumes during winter. 'Adagio' maiden grass blooms from late summer through winter and the grassy-leaved sweet flag (*Acorus gramineus* 'Minimus Aureus') with its multi-directional leaves, has dramatic yellow/green foliage throughout the seasons. 'Ebony Night' black mondo grass (*Ophiopogon planiscapus*) is an interesting cultivar with stiff, purple-black leaves and it is beautiful when contrasted with plants that show off its unusual color.



Ground cover, such as 'Bronze Beauty' carpet bugle (*Ajuga reptans* 'Bronze Beauty') is coveted for its purple and green leaves that hold their color year-round.



Shrubs like the incredible 'Forever Red' fringe flower (*Loropetalum chinense* 'Chang Nian Hong') and witch hazel bloom throughout the winter. The firecracker-shaped flowers of 'Arnold's Promise' witch hazel (*Hamamelis x intermedia* 'Arnold Promise') are yellow, and 'Diane' witch hazel

(*Hamamelis x intermedia* 'Diane') blooms red. Burgundy leaves emerge on the broad leaf evergreen photinia (*Photinia x fraseri*) which turn to green with age. The various species of holly (*Ilex* spp.) with their red berries and green or variegated foliage, give the yuletide season contrasting color and texture.

Winter heath (*Erica carnea*) is a low-growing perennial with very dense branches and a great display of small purple/pink flowers. The bulb snowdrops (*Galanthus nivalis*), pokes through the snow in late winter with delicate white small flowers, and the intense pink shade of 'Mardi Gras' lenten rose (*Helleborus* 'Mardi Gras Red Shades') blooms throughout the winter.

The plants listed above are generally Zone 5 through 8, however the reader is encouraged to do some research to determine if the plant material is suitable, given sun and wind conditions in each zone.



Terry Sims, Professional Member, APLD

Terry Birch Sims is an award winning landscape designer and contractor. Her company, The Garden Artist, Inc. specializes in outdoor living areas and is located in Boise Idaho.



# Re-framing Foundation Planting

by Laurel Von Gerichten, APLD

As a landscape designer who has observed how houses appear from the street, I'd like to illustrate some departures from the favored mode of placing foundation plants against a residence. Let's look at some alternative ways to "frame" a house with plantings.

## Another Way to Look

Owners who plan to landscape their front yards are often guided by nurserymen who recommend "foundation plants" to cover a house's concrete foundations. Traditionally, evergreens like yew or Japanese holly have served this purpose as the default option. Many of these traditional choices need constant pruning, and in front of older homes they often create a snarl of overgrowth or dwindle to spindly silhouettes of their once-green selves.

An eminent American landscape architect once asked what can be done to hide ugly foundation plants if foundation plants are introduced to hide ugly foundations. Yet we continue to see unsuitable plants installed along the foundation, where they will outgrow the allotted space.

Sometimes when we try to hide an object, we unwittingly direct attention to it. An alternative approach to hiding a foundation that faces the street would be to celebrate a front entrance as a space where people meet. As we consider the transition visitors make from the public realm of the street and sidewalk to the more private yard surrounding the home, we may learn what makes such a space attractive and welcoming and also discover alternatives to foundation plantings. We could call this entrance space the "greeting place."

Since the greeting place is usually part of the front property, we may first consider how to tie the house to its setting. A useful analogy is that of a mat and frame surrounding a valued photograph or painting. When a generous mat surrounds a picture in its frame, it adds a dimension of space that often enhances the view. The practice of snuggling plants against a foundation makes a tight frame around the house and omits the surrounding property from the picture.

If the planting "frame" is enlarged, the new frame can reveal new proportions and features. Re-framing a house in its setting, for example, can counterbalance a house's height and mass; foundation plants that edge a house cannot do this as effectively. By expanding the frame beyond foundation plantings, a designer has many more possibilities to express the appeal of a house and front yard. Elements that make up the frame can include low walls, varieties of border plantings, and trees and shrubs of varying heights. Then we can consider what dimensions and proportions to give the greeting place itself, to make it a focal point for the front landscape.

## Greeting Place #1: Softening the Hardscape

Several ideas on approaches to the greeting place (proportion, texture, views) came together in a landscaping project for a client's recently renovated house. A couple of paths to the front door from the street and driveway converge into an area at the foot of the porch steps (Photo 1), the greeting place. Notice that the whitewashed brick wall from the old part of the house has no exposed foundation. I strove to keep new plantings low to highlight this handsome structure.

The first-season planting includes low plants that hug the paths and junipers that will eventually trail over the walls (Photo 2). Broad-spreading 'Conversation Piece' azaleas flank the porch steps, while *Salvia* 'Blue Hill' and 'Rhapsody in Blue', and *Nepeta* 'Walker's Low', pick up the blue tints of the roof and shutters.

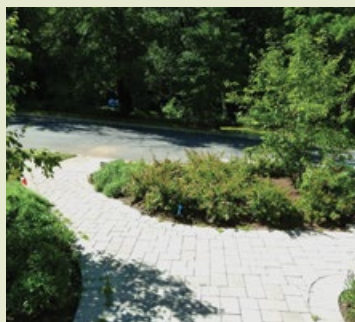


1. House Renovation. Walkways to a front porch greeting place and a whitewashed brick wall ready for soft plantings.



2. Low plantings and sentinel trees of varying heights celebrate the approach to the house.

Opposite the front door, a cultivar of *Abelia x zanderi*, 'Little Richard' creates a long-blossoming mound of massed plants (Photo 3). The small trees (*Amelanchier* x 'Autumn Brilliance') serve several purposes: they frame the entrance from the street view, they create a sheltered courtyard from the front door looking out, and they give the greeting place a unique setting as one climbs up the steps from the driveway (Photo 4). Together, these effects created a welcoming space.



3. Opposite the front door, a long-blossoming mound of massed plants.



4. Small trees create a sheltered, welcoming courtyard from the driveway steps to the front entrance.



## Greeting Place #2: Revealing the Architecture

Often, existing and undersized walkways built close to the house reduce the space for an entry courtyard (Photo 5). The plantings at this client's house did nothing to enhance passage, and the blocky evergreens obscured architectural details such as the window moldings. There was no exposed foundation on the original part of the house, but prevailing custom had apparently dictated yews and Japanese hollies.



5. Before: Exposed walkway along yew hedges as foundation plants.

In the re-landscaped view (Photo 6), the path plantings unify the space with similar height and repetition. Low plantings near the ground plane of the walkways creates a sense of openness in the greeting place. Now, the window molding details, the steps to the front door and the paired urns are visible and important features. Bordering the walk are *Tiareella cordifolia* 'Brandywine' and *Heuchera villosa* 'Autumn Bride', while 'Conversation Piece' azaleas fill the area near the house. Even though the tiarella creeps over the path, it does not engender a feeling of constriction as did the more substantial evergreens. The lush foliage and blossoms create interest at different seasons, replacing static shrubbery that requires constant maintenance.



6. After: Lush plantings soften a barren walkway and replace geometrical foundation plants.

## Greeting Place #3: Large and Small-Scale Frames

The snapshot of a Tudor house (Photo 7) shows the existing evergreens when my client bought the house. The Norway spruce on the left and the yews on the right will soon grow too big. The beautiful weeping hemlock is poorly placed, hovering over the path like a green ghost and hiding the front door. The view from inside is dismal because the hemlock blocks the light.



7. Foundation plantings that do not enhance a large Tudor.

New plantings (Photo 8) of *Hydrangea arborescens* 'Annabelle', *Liriope muscari* 'Variegata', *Amsonia tabernaemontana* 'Blue Ice', and *Heuchera micrantha* 'Palace Purple' create a sidewalk border that frames the yard. This border and the lawn anchor the massive house and bring into balance the house's height. The generous curving bluestone path picks up the shape of the eyelid dormer in the roof and downplays the crisscrossing house timbers. The new path swerves around the Japanese maple that had hung over the straight path and divides the lawn into shapes that soften the angularity of the architecture. The large blocks of bluestone reiterate the shape of the subdued white rectangles on the second- and third-story walls and harmonize with the renovated color scheme of the house.



8. A contoured bluestone walkway is a charming approach in the newly open front yard.

Within this larger setting, I defined a greeting place near the front porch by massing and repeating plantings. As the pathway swings around to run parallel with the house, it widens as it passes through these plantings that define a more intimate greeting place in scale with the front porch (Photo 9). The hue of *Stachys byzantina* 'Helene von Stein' broadens the entrance to the greeting place by merging with the color of the bluestone, and in spring, the flowers of *Amsonia tabernaemontana* 'Blue Ice' spill over the walkway and repeat the color of the door.



9. Massed and repeated plantings frame the greeting place.



## Greeting Place #4: A Threshold below a Flight of Steps

In some houses there is a major change in elevation from the ground level to the front door, and taller plants, like large azaleas ('Delaware Valley White') next to the house can soften the transition (Photo 10). In doing so, they also hide the porch, but there are cues that the entrance is ahead. The lamp stands as a beacon, low groundcovers and planters on either side of the walkway point the way in, and the wide-spreading limbs of a mature 'Kwanzan' cherry create a welcoming bower. These cues are helpful, since one must approach the entrance from the side, without directly seeing the destination.



10. A sheltered greeting place welcomes visitors.

At the apron (Photo 11), the space opens up, the entrance is visible, and the bower creates a feeling of shelter in the greeting place. To better balance the height of the steps, the pre-existing apron could be replaced with a wider platform, or extended, perhaps with a double row of brick edging at the curve.



11. A more generous apron would bring better proportion to the greeting place.



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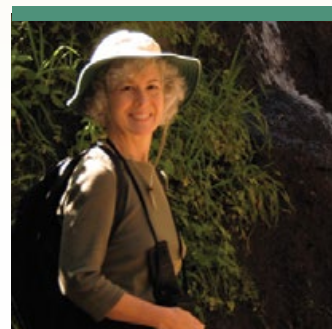


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## In Summary

We can improve the landscape design of the front property by creating a proportional setting for the house and a welcoming greeting place. The focus is on enhancing the view and experience of the space rather than covering up the exposed foundation of the house.

The ideas of matting and framing the views can bring the house into scale within its setting, and the greeting place into scale with the people meeting there. Whether or not we have freedom as designers to redo the hardscape that gives structure to the greeting place, we can apply these principles to make the best of the situation we have.



Laurel von Gerichten, APLD

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# Design, Inspiration, Free Giveaways and Cold Hard Cash

by Jane Gates, Professional Member, APLD

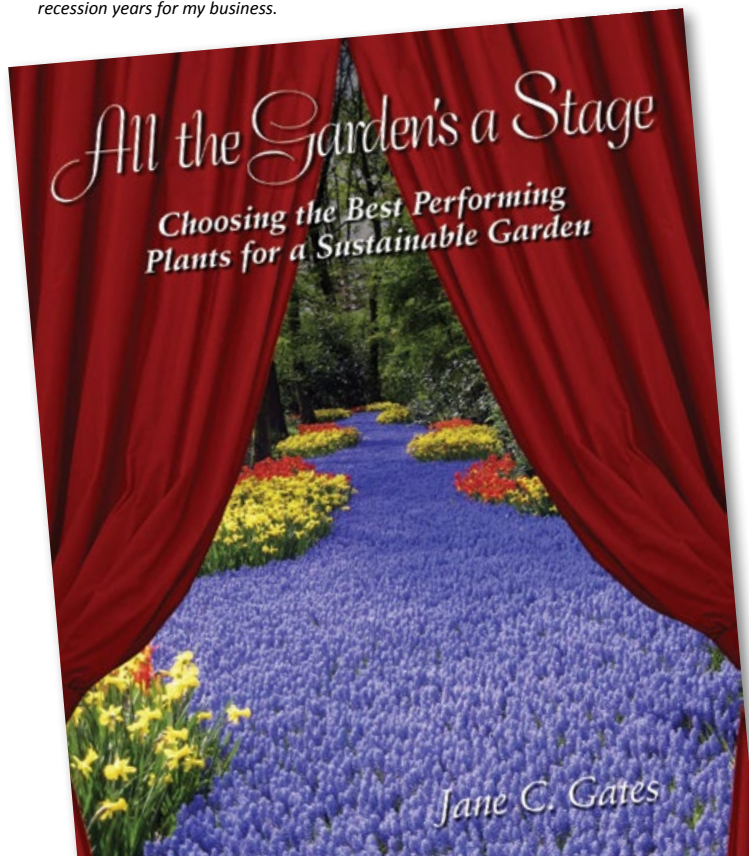
Business is good. And then it's not. Or, well, maybe it is. A lot depends on where you live and work. With the worldwide lingering recession and extreme weather conditions affecting so many people, it's more important than ever to focus on the joy of living and the work we do. We, as landscape designers, are lucky to have the glory of nature as our work medium. Both finances and climate issues do impact our work, but nature has provided us with a remarkably flexible scope of plant life and inorganic materials for working around challenges and adding delight to everyday life. But what about the money?

Most of us came into the business because we love gardening and gardens. But, hey, we gotta make a living, too! There are a few folks that are lucky enough to enjoy designing as a hobby. The rest of us have to pay the bills.

So how can we do the work we love, keep up with all the industry changes, and still make a decent income? It has been a frequent and passionate dilemma on social media debated emotionally: is our work being devalued when so much material is offered for free or cheaply – primarily on the Internet. Can we keep a balance between doing quality work, staying inspired, and finding cold, hard cash to sustain ourselves and our families?

For many of us, blogs, photography, writing, speaking and other forms of disseminating our work forms a major part of promoting our skills and reaching potential clients. There seems to be a remarkable split between those who have found success from “giving away” their work and knowledge on blogs, social media and other Internet platforms, and those who have found their livelihoods devalued by the free giveaways.

*Writing a non-traditional garden book was something I always wanted to do and helped me keep my sanity during some of the worst recession years for my business.*



I've noted that those most impacted by the current wholesale giveaway of ideas and information that has blossomed in our technological world are those who are least able to afford the loss of time or money. Head of households (often males) or singles, people in recession-mired areas and older designers, who have spent a lifetime creating their reputations, are those most threatened by the evolution of media and the shift of what work is and what is not compensated. For people who can rely on an already-thriving income, on someone else for added income, or at least some help with domestic responsibilities, taking the financial hit of paying whatever “dues” or taking whatever risks are necessary to keep up with changes in the industry can potentially pay off. For those who do not have the option of taking those risks, the evolution taking place in the landscape business (and many other careers) can be threatening.

I wish I could say I found the solution to the quandary and make sure everyone who is in a position to give away work free or cheaply to further their careers could do so comfortably without endangering the value of those who need to be paid for what they do. For the most part, landscape designers only have their knowledge and talent to sell—their time and creations. It is similar to other creative endeavors like art, writing or photography (which can all be a part of the garden design business). Selling a product is different because the larger the quantity, the bigger the sales potential. The service industry as a whole has more flexibility than product sales, but it is a lot more difficult to organize and control, especially with the rapid changes in the economy and in technology.



*This is my painting of a watermelon commissioned by Ferry Morse Seeds for their 2013 line of Lilly Miller seed packets. I found the job thanks to help of another garden designer/artist, Steve Asbell, who posted the job search on social media. We really can help each other. (We both were hired.)*

What I want to share is that those of us who are garden designers are, like all small businesses and independent contractors, vulnerable to outside circumstance and change. When times are good we can focus on practicing our art and being paid fairly. When business is quiet, it is an ideal time to study, learn more about plants and design, and expand other forms of expression like writing, teaching, giving seminars, etc., and make the time work for you.

Most of us have bills to pay. We need to earn with our knowledge and talents. But if we can't control the larger economy, the weather, and social or political changes that can influence our businesses, we need to remember one very big thing: things change but life is NOW. We work to make our lives safe, healthy and happy. Money is certainly a major part of that. But it isn't everything. It is vital to remember we also do what we do because we love gardening. We need to keep the fun in what we do. We need to feel good about ourselves.





*This is a job I've been working on for several years. I love designing with all the wonderful materials available to us these days.*



*Installing one of my designs: here we converted an ugly cement slab access for a real well into a decorative wishing well. We can use our creativity in our own gardens and lives, too – and to help each other.*

We can help each other using the same Internet media to support one another. Just because you are doing well at the moment and someone else isn't does NOT mean you are necessarily doing things better than the next guy. If there's nothing else you remember about this message, remember this: everything changes, and that's the good news when things are bad and the bad news when things are good. We will all have good times and hard times. We can look at other people in our green industry as competitors or as comrades. Let's put the word out to help and support each other however we can. In the meantime, let's find ways to enjoy working and living despite the economics involved. We live in a society that keeps us focused on money – and we do absolutely need it. But we can often exist on less than we think – so long as we make each day a good day to be productive and alive.

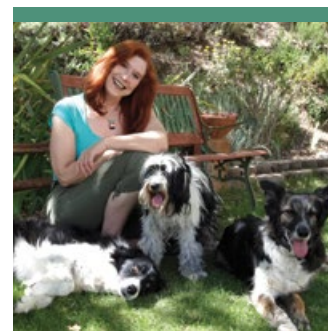


*New plants are being introduced all the time: this Digiplexis is a cross between the Isoplexis and a Digitalis. I took the photo at the 2013 Spring Trials in Southern California – while my designing business was slow. There is always something new and inspiring to see and learn in our business.*

At one time landscapes were limited to using a few local plants that could be combined with hardscapes to create an attractive garden. Less than 300 years ago, a handful of men changed the world of gardening by introducing imported plants and experimenting with cross-breeding. Most of them were wealthy and could afford to take huge risks. Now it seems we are coming full cycle as we refocus on local native plants. But now our armory is vast, thanks to those who pioneered in changing times. Imports have mixed with natives and other plants have naturalized (for better or for worse). Natural materials for hardscaping can come in different forms, shapes and textures from anywhere on the globe, and these are all heavily supplemented with processed metals, fabricated plastics and vinyls, extruded ceramics and glasses and many more interesting products. Or we can look to the past to find useful construction materials like cob or straw. We're even finally finding ingenious ways to convert our waste materials into artistic recycled – or better, "upcycled" -- materials. Our arsenal for creating beauty and practicality is more exciting than ever. There is a lot to learn and share in a wide enough range that every designer can find something to get involved in.

We have inherited many tools in past centuries that make our jobs exciting. The money is important, but making the time we are alive the biggest priority is crucial if we want a successful life. That may mean we have to learn to put pennies away when the times are good and to keep our standard of living such that we can live frugally when business goes dormant. These are lessons all independently employed people need to develop. Personally, I'd suggest trying not to compare yourself with anyone else. You know if you are doing your best. Each person is the center of his or her universe and acts and reacts in accordance with their belief systems and lifetime experiences. Let's share what we have with each other. Yes, we do compete for many of the same jobs, but we all have something slightly different to offer.

Life is now. Enjoying work and helping each other can make life richer. Continuing to learn and grow with new ideas, new products and new ways to communicate what we know increases our inspiration. Have faith. For those of you who are enjoying good times, make the best you can of them and think of how you can invest benefits in the future when things change – because they will! For those of you who are less fortunate, make each day a fine time to be alive. Promote, learn and – yes, "take time to smell the roses." When you get busy again, you will thank yourself for not wasting the slow, albeit financially scary times. I only say this because I have spent a lifetime on the freelance/consultant roller-coaster and feel it's important to remind myself and my fellow riders that there is a place for design, inspiration, free giveaways and cold hard cash. And there is the gift of life, every day, for however long we are gifted with it. Make each day productive and rich every way you can!



Jane Gates, Professional Member, APLD

*Jane Gates is the owner of Gates and Croft Horticultural Design in Santa Clarita, CA.*







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The Association of Professional Landscape Designers is an international organization that was formed in 1989. The mission of APLD is to advance the profession of landscape design and to promote the recognition of landscape designers as qualified and dedicated professionals.



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