MARKET YOUR WORK WITH VIDEOS

HE SAID; SHE SAID

DEFINING DETAILS
Balancing Act

It’s easy to get lost in the details and lose sight of the big picture. It’s equally as easy to get lost in the big picture and lose track of the details, at which point your work becomes boring. You need both.

This issue’s articles tackle all kinds of details, from Christina Salwitz’s piece on focal point plants to a new software that helps you choose plants, introduced to us by Geneviève Villamizar. Vanessa Nagel, APLD, and I round up books, plants, and fixtures to read, grow, and spec. An excerpt from Nan Sterman’s new book *Hot Color, Dry Garden* titled “Color at the Coast” is a top-to-bottom case study in details. Bobbie Schwartz, FAPLD, takes us on a tour through Buffalo, New York, where intricately crafted gardens have contributed to the city’s reinvention. Eva Leonard shows us how the old Reading Railroad in Pennsylvania is turning into an urban park.

Natasha Petroff interviews the married designers of Harrison Green about how they juggle details of work and family to make their practice thrive, while Susan Harris teaches you how to create great videos to market your work.

Speaking of videos, live videos on Facebook and Instagram are some of the best ways to get views and interaction on your business social media pages and properties. Often people hesitate to try something like live videos because they’re overly concerned about the details. I encourage you have courage and give it a whirl. Viewers of live videos are quite forgiving because they’re so thrilled with the behind-the-scenes access afforded by live videos. Take prospective clients on tours of your latest installs. (Get a release from the owner first, though. Details!)

Speaking of details, we left off part of Susan Morrison’s new book title in the last issue. The full title is *The Less Is More Garden: Big Ideas for Designing Your Small Yard*, and it’s available now from Timber Press.
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Cover photo by Christina Salwitz. See Christina Salwitz’s Plant Applications, page 22 for more about the cover photo and this spread.
SPRING 2018

6  PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

14  DESIGN ROUNDDUP
    Read, Spec
    BY KATIE ELZER-PETERS AND VANESSA GARDNER NAGEL, APLD, NCIDQ

22  PLANT APP(LICATION)S
    The Finer Points of Defining Details
    BY CHRISTINA SALWITZ

30  BUSINESS TOOLS
    Plant Selections Made Easy with The Plantium
    BY GENEVIÈVE JÖELLE VILLAMIZAR

34  PRO TIPS
    Market Your Design Work with Videos
    BY SUSAN HARRIS

38  IN THE FIELD
    He Says; She Says
    BY NATHASHA PETROFF

46  CASE STUDY
    On Track
    BY EVA LEONARD

54  BOOK EXCERPT
    Hot Color, Dry Garden: Inspiring Designs and Vibrant Plants for the Waterwise Gardener
    BY NAN STERMAN

64  TRAVEL INSPIRATION
    Buffalo, New York: The Power of Gardens
    BY BOBBIE SCHWARTZ, FAPLD
Details, Details ...

In my first job as a landscape designer at a design/build firm, I was confronted with the reality that in addition to the expected duties of meeting clients, being creative, and producing graphic output of proposed gardens, I would also be responsible for selling the work for our company. This should not have come as a complete surprise to me since this was included in my employment agreement, which I signed, but I had conveniently chosen to ignore that particular paragraph. It was a detail I decided to downplay in my excitement as a 20-something about to embark on my career. I knew nothing about being a salesperson. Nothing. It turned out to be quite the important detail. Eventually I became rather good at the sales aspect of the job and came to embrace the role, but it sure would have been helpful to have had a better grasp of those details ahead of time.

There are plenty of clichés about details, both promoting and negating how much attention they should be given. In one breath we are told that “the devil is in the detail”, and “it’s the little details that matter;” and in the next breath we are told not to get “bogged down in the details” or “we’ll work out the details later.” So which is it? Do details matter or not?

Of course details matter! Without them we may have a perfectly serviceable framework that could function just fine on its own, thank you very much, but the details bring interest, nuance, depth, and sparkle. So let’s focus on those golden bits and give them their due.

Cheers,

[Signature]

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All submissions from APLD members are considered, but *The Designer* is particularly interested in articles that fit the issue’s editorial theme or are appropriate for one of the magazine’s regular columns spotlighting technology or business strategies.

**Seeking pitches for the Winter 2018 issue. We’re always looking for writers for regular features including Wander.Lust., Travel Inspiration, Plant App(lication)s, Design 101, and Design Masterclass articles.**

Not sure if your story is a good fit? 2018 Editor in Chief Katie Elzer-Peters is happy to discuss your idea with you. Reach her at editor@apld.org.
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>>Click here for our submission guidelines
See He Says; She Says on page 38 for more on designers of this 2017 APLD Gold award Small Garden winner.
Susan Harris is editor of the educational nonprofit Good Gardening Videos: Watch and Learn from the Best of YouTube and co-founder of the blog GardenRant. She writes and advocates for gardening from her home in Old Greenbelt, Maryland.

Eva Leonard is a New York City-based freelancer who writes about architecture, travel, interior design, and landscaping. In addition to The Designer, her outlets include Landscape Architecture Magazine, Modern Luxury Interiors South Florida, Time Out New York, and Singapore Airlines’ silverkris.com travel guide. Her website and blog, www.retroquesting.com, is devoted to adaptive reuse, design, and travel. She loves Manhattan’s community gardens and finding willow trees in the city.

Vanessa Gardner Nagel is the owner of Seasons Garden Design LLC in Vancouver, Washington, and the author of Understanding Garden Design and The Designer’s Guide to Garden Furnishings. She is a director on APLD’s international board, and has won numerous awards for her designs, including an APLD Merit Award and an Award of Excellence from Sunset magazine’s Landscape Design Competition.

Natasha Petroff is a horticulturist and the owner of The Salish Seed, a Seattle-area design consultancy. Natasha has studied landscape design and restoration at Edmonds Community College and South Seattle College. Through design and writing, she hopes to spread her fascination with plants, ecosystems, and imaginative outdoor spaces. Some interesting projects have included a fern grotto alongside a native wetland, a Montessori preschool rain-garden, and a native ravine restoration on residential acreage.

>>Click bold names for link to website
Christina Salwitz is “The Personal Garden Coach,” a photographer, speaker, and designer. Her designs for small spaces and container gardens have been featured in numerous magazines and books both domestically and internationally. Christina’s award-winning book Fine Foliage co-authored with Karen Chapman was followed by the top-selling Gardening with Foliage First, which was published in February 2017. She is also a popular speaker on design topics at events and licenses her popular horticultural photography to garden centers, blogs, magazines, and authors.

Bobbie Schwartz, FAPLD a certified landscape designer in Shaker Heights, Ohio, is the owner of Bobbie’s Green Thumb. She is an obsessed gardener, has won several design awards, and is a longtime member of the Perennial Plant Association, Garden Writers, and the Association of Professional Landscape Designers. She lectures nationally, is a regular contributor to publications on perennials and landscape design, and is the author of Garden Renovation: Transform Your Yard into the Garden of Your Dreams.

Nan Sterman is a garden designer, garden communicator, author, writer, speaker, and host of the public TV show A Growing Passion which is online at www.agrowingpassion.com. She also leads international garden tours, too. Learn more about Nan at www.PlantSoup.com.

Geneviève Joëlle Villamizar has been cultivating community through design and writing for two decades. Thrilled to see concepts of more sustainable “rewilding” entering the fields of design and landscape architecture, her masters studies seek to bring rewilding to local school district campuses and municipal lands of her Rocky Mountain community. Geneviève believes to reverse the tide and nurture Earth, we must “grow” children immersed in true nature.
Lighting can illuminate design details or be the design details. Here are four fantastic designer-recommended choices to consider.

APLD’S 2016 Designer of the Year, Carrie Preston, says the HEATSAIL DOME heat lamps are “A great, useful addition to our styling repertoire, especially in these parts of the world where it rarely gets truly warm.” A stylish way to extend the summer (or create a summer, for that matter).

A state-of-the-art Belgian product, the Heatsail Dome has a timeless design and is almost maintenance-free. The Dome is also available as a hanging lamp.
Elizabeth Przygoda-Montgomery, APLD member, tastemaker, and owner of Boxhill is our go-to for out-of-the-box interesting, durable, and stylish fixtures. She’s currently in love with two fun and funky lighting choices.

**INDOGLOW LED BALLS**
These are whimsical outdoor lights that float! They can be placed as accent lighting indoors or out and can also be used to create an unexpected landscape folly in pools and ponds.

**BLUE AGAVE GARDEN TORCH**
This is a fun and sculptural outdoor light that can be filled with citronella oil to keep bugs away.
The globes can cycle through 16 different colors. They are remote control, programmable, allowing you to select the perfect hue, and to set the perfect mood.

Crafted from a patina finished, galvanized steel, this stunning torch will not rust. Not even near saltwater.

And we can never mention APLD’s 2017 Product of the Year too often; it’s the FX Luminaire’s Down Light, which creates a soft moonlight effect where used.
Plants that handily perform specific functions are design details not to be overlooked. APLD members have some current favorites you might be missing. Here are their recommendations.

**FRAGRANT SUMAC**

Nancy Wallace has been testing a deer-proof shrub she’d like to spread the word about, *Rhus aromatica* ‘Gro-Low’. “I’m a bit excited about it. I am always trying to find plants that look good, stay restrained in form and shape, and that the deer won’t eat, but are still attractive.” She says, “This one is relatively underutilized here in Georgia.” (And that’s likely the same elsewhere.) This is a low-growing deciduous shrub that prefers some shade but can tolerate a fair amount of sun and humidity. It has bright red fall foliage.

**DAPHNIPHYLUM MACROPODUM**

Designer Christopher Freimuth says, “I’m obsessed with *Daphniphyllum*, which is like a rhododendron but better.” There are several large specimens growing along the Japanese Hill-and-Pond Garden at the Brooklyn Botanic Garden. Even on a cold, snowy winter day, their leaves remained bright green with nary a trace of winterburn. New leaves emerge pink and its leaf petioles are bright red, a nice touch in the winter garden.
SLENDER SILHOUETTE SWEETGUM

Marti Neely, APLD, says, "My new favorite tree that I saw at the Des Moines Botanical Garden is Liquidambar styraciflua ‘Slender Silhouette’." It’s a striking columnar sweetgum that looks almost sculptural in the landscape. Marti says, "One of its best attributes is that it is a single species like Gingko and therefore is not as susceptible to crossover diseases as Malus and other broadly varying genera. It’s nice to have something other than columnar oak and maple to use in tight spaces when we want a tall screen or to use as a vertical accent." She had to make a switch from Turkish filberts when local growers stopped growing them due to winter damage. Sweetgums can be problematic in some regions, so check local recommendations before planting.
READ: Book Review

BY VANESSA GARDNER NAGEL, APLD

THE HIDDEN LIFE OF TREES: WHAT THEY FEEL, HOW THEY COMMUNICATE: DISCOVERIES FROM A SECRET WORLD

PUBLISHED BY GREYSTONE BOOKS

By Peter Wohlleben

To say this book is a paradigm shift in tree knowledge is an understatement. Author Peter Wohlleben sums up the inspiration for his book, The Hidden Life of Trees, in his last sentence of the book’s acknowledgements: “...only people who understand trees are capable of protecting them.”

I became inspired to read this book after listening to a TED talk by Suzanne Simard while I was on the road to visit Lotusland with my daughter. Intrigued by learning that trees communicate with one another through the “Wood Wide Web,” I delved into the book with enthusiasm. Wohlleben waxes poetic as he shares scientific information, much of which he has gathered as part of his job as a forester managing a beech forest near the town of Hümmel in Germany. Not only do trees communicate with one another through this microbial web, states Wohlleben, but trees are social beings because they support one another by giving and receiving sustenance so that all of the trees can survive. Some trees are capable of helping other species of trees as well, even when they have techniques that allow them to overtake another species as beeches can do to “mighty” oaks.

>>Click on book or title to view online and buy
Nearly every chapter in this book has information that not only will change your view of forests, but of your approach to trees as individuals. I have always loved red-leaved trees and shrubs for their ability to act as a focal point and foil for green trees. Wohlleben, however, tells us while these trees occur on occasion in a wild forest, they are weaker trees and eventually succumb, living substantially shorter lives than do other trees. This would be in “tree years” though. So, while a tree could, in theory, live 300 years, its shortened lifespan might only be 100 years—still long in “human years.”

Wohlleben writes that forests are “water pumps” that bring rain to the interior of a country and by clear-cutting forests within 400 miles of the ocean this process is interrupted. He explains why street trees struggle to survive and why we cannot expect them to live out what would be considered a natural life span. He speaks of trees as a lover speaks of the beauty of his loved one. This is part of the magic of this book.

Wohlleben's views have changed how I will care for the giant Douglas firs and big-leaf maples on my forested acre. I challenge all landscape designers to read this book. You will come away with a new appreciation for our foliated giants.
The Finer Points of Defining Details

BY CHRISTINA SALWITZ

As a designer who specializes both in container design and designing with plants of extraordinary foliage, scrutinizing details is a skill that I can’t afford to miss. Containers are frequently emphasizing a view or are close to seating where specifics matter. When it comes to any design, not just foliage-based designs, concentrating on the subtleties of light, texture, composition, proportion, and pattern is a delightful technicality that I practice daily. Being good at “Punctuating particulars” is a practice that takes practice.

ALL PHOTOGRAPHS BY CHRISTINA SALWITZ
1 **Reflections (Previous Spread)**

It can be challenging to return to a property where we’ve completed our design work to look at the plants’ growth and changes in our designs. Visiting seasonally to see details that we planned for, or details that sprang to life during a seasonal shift or change of light that maybe we hadn’t anticipated is even more difficult to do when we’re busy. I try diligently to bring my camera and capture those moments to learn where I might find those surprises and to reinforce the fine points I’d specifically added to make sure they mattered. In this example, when I added this tall, dramatically colorful container below the edge of the pool, it was spectacular by itself. However, when I saw its reflections on the pool surface paired with the onset of its fall color, it was like hitting the jackpot. To my delight, I doubled down on my visual investment. The foliage and view came together in stunning significance that married all the details exquisitely.

2 **Epimedium and Molinia (Above)**

After designing for so long, it can be hard not to be jaded and cynical. Finding new things to “see” can become a test. Whether you consider yourself a skilled photographer or not, using a camera, be it iPhone or Canon, can be just the ticket to helping your creativity in seeing design details. There have been many times when I was forced to manipulate myself into gymnastic positions or practically get on my belly for
some photos; then I see them on my computer screen and details show up that I never would have caught with the naked eye. This combination of *Epimedium* x *versicolor* ‘Sulphureum’ paired with *Molinia caerulea* ‘Variegata’ show exactly the minutiae I mean. The pattern of this heart-shaped epimedium foliage, with its lime green veins, perfectly echoes the young green pinstripes in the grass. Both plants will mature to have a quite different look as they age. But what is the must-not-miss detail? Check out how the grass has pierced through the epimedium leaf in the front. Now *that* is not something you get to see every day!

**3 Astelia, Digiplexis, and Heuchera (Right)**

Color harmonies have been designed, dissected, analyzed, and written about for hundreds of years by far more skilled designers than I. But nonetheless, creating complex color echoes is often completely addictive! When we get new plants on the market to play with in new ways our rewards are even more stellar. This compilation details not only a non-traditional set of colors in harmony, it shows why textures in proportion to color matters as well. *Astelia* ‘Westland’ features an olive and mahogany color palette in subtle stripes, while the *Heuchera* ‘Mahogany’ shows foliage flare with ruffles and delicate dancing bloom spikes. In the background, *Digiplexis* ‘Illumina-
Aeonium (Above) In this new era of design, where naturalized meadows and fields of drought-tolerant and pollinator-friendly plants are particularly prized for their sustainability, this photo captured those aspects in unique way. For sheer color elements alone it’s a fabulous achievement, featuring red, violet, and chartreuse; the combination is not for the faint of heart nor those who prefer subtlety. Even distribution of the color spreads the visual weight across a large distance like the harmonic lilt in a song. But the star of this piece of music is the heavy punctuation of the black aeonium with its bold, rounded bracts acting like flowers. Front and center among the ultra-fine, gold-toned carex, the aeonium owns this dynamic scene and shows why paying attention to factors such as visual weight and shape make such an impact as well as balancing the fine details and textures in the background.
Rhododendron (Right)

Seemingly simple yet often overlooked, the effect of light (or in this case, backlight), is an important component to great design. This can be that one small thing that catches your eye in the early morning or evening light of the “golden hour.” Utilizing backlight on plants in the landscape is normally associated with photography tricks or showing glowing wispy grasses in the sun, but it should be thoughtfully and purposefully used by designers to highlight the elements of plants in everyday gardens too. Here the unique Rhododendron ‘Ebony Pearl’ has dark moody foliage that might otherwise be lost without the right exposure. This shrub had been pruned the previous year and now it shoots up with new growth that echoes the color of the dramatic blooms. Making this show even more sensational is the glow of chartreuse or gold foliage in the distance, in effect layering colors together in high contrast and accentuating the look of being lit from behind.

Blue Containers (Right)

Using what you’re given is a mandate in landscape design familiar to many of us. In this case, I had a client with a lot of garden art that wasn’t being displayed to its fullest as well as many containers in need of replacement. As this was a lakefront property, my natural inclination was to capitalize on tones of blue and since the client’s blue ceramic sphere was an easy artistic detail to incorporate, that’s where I went. By creating scattered groupings of containers possessing varied design details, yet all in harmony, pulling together a unified look was not hard. But the ultimate in detail fundamentals shown in this photo is how the color mix came together. The pale gold Spirea ‘Magic Carpet’ and soft apricot daylily along with the chartreuse coleus take your eye around this scene, framing the bold blue hydrangea and containers. White annuals and soft lavender blooms from the catmint round out the color kinship. Those are the kind of details I delight in sharing with clients so they understand why we do what we do!
**Variegated Pineapple and Gomphrena (Left)**

Bold with a side of bold, please! Have you ever wondered how some people can leave the house wearing stripes and polka-dots together and look stunning? Well here’s an example of how they do it. They’re balancing color, scale and pattern. The architectural and strappy foliage of the pineapple is nothing new, but when you get incredible color and striking detail like this variegated form in a container combination, stand back. You will undoubtedly be inundated with comments and questions. Now add in the old-fashioned gomphrena, with the updated choice called ‘Fireworks’ and boom! Teeny tiny yellow detail on the flowers further emphasizes the color palette and seems to add polka-dots to the stripes. The sculptural look of the pineapple, with its dazzling colors and patterns contrasted with the airy, fine detail of the gomphrena, make an “outfit” that works.

**Hosta, Fern, and Winterhazel (Above)** I love playing with proportion in design and in photography. To me, this is one of the most overlooked aspects of garden design by most home gardeners. They know it’s right when they see it and yet it can be so hard to achieve. This detail can be hard to describe until its seen and even harder to understand until plants have had a chance to grow in and fulfill their potential. I know when I plant a new bed, I “see” it in my head, mature and fully contrasted for proportion, texture, scale, and color. Having photos of what I mean can be a saving grace for clients who need to see it first before they can understand the elements all together. In the shade garden, proportion is a crucial detail because we may not always have other bright hues and sunlight to play off one another to define a space. For this example, the oversized leaves of *Hosta* ‘Blue Angel’ play a dynamic role with leaves reaching up to 18 inches in an elegant sky blue color. Set against that blue is the gold-tinged new growth of winterhazel, which look as if its leaves were creased and folded like a fan and then unfolded perfectly, punctuated by coral-toned stems and unfurling new growth. The pale new growth of the ‘Robust Male’ fern adds a lacy and ironically feminine touch to this combination.
Plant Selections Made Easy With The Plantium

BY GENEVIÈVE JÖELLE VILLAMIZAR

Time is profit or loss. Period. As a designer in the '90s, an ungainly (but stylish) bag accompanied me to every project site. It held my notebook, camera, measuring wheel, tape measure, and sketch pad. Today, I bring just a slender iPhone. However, back at my drawing board I'm still a dinosaur, wrestling multiple reference books, catalogs, and availability lists.

We all have our go-to plant palette, the workhorses we hold close because these plants pretty much rock every condition, or even just certain ones. But then comes the dynamism of a project—a crux presenting challenge, where complacency gets a swift kick in its seat and we’re compelled to dig deeper into relationships—between plants, or seasons, or site conditions. These are the opportunities that ignite each of our
projects. Into the catalogs and my re-verted books I go. My desk overflows in the madness of design, though I feast on this part of the process. Hours can turn into days. This sentimental indulgence costs me time and focus. Time becomes profit lost.

Heather Henry of ConnectOne Design is a landscape designer whom I pretty much idolize, and to whom I turn for professional inspiration. She introduced me to a program that she and her partners, Sara Tie and Gyles Thornely, have developed, called The Plantium. It has become invaluable to me in helping recover more time, and thus profit.

**Detailed Plant Database**
The Plantium is a limitless botanical database with beautiful, downloadable plant images that allow you to
search for the plants you need, quickly. Color, form, sun, season—it contains seventy design and plant criteria to guide you towards the perfect plant.

**Comparison Tools**
Each species has a detailed profile. You can compare plants side by side to find substitutions—with one click. If you don’t find the plants you need, submit them to The Plantium and they will add them to the database. This is terrific for the rare plants or new introductions you’d like to incorporate but which aren’t commonly known yet.

**Local Availability Searches**
Another very powerful tool is The Plantium’s real-time ability to link to local availability from regional nurseries and wholesalers. Designers can specify the plants that clients and landscapers will actually be able to source—critical to projects under the gun.

**Time Saved = Money Earned**
The Plantium’s efficiency helps designers manage the spring crush. Its organizational and analytical capabilities not only streamline plant searches, but also simplify documentation, collaboration, and communication among project professionals and clients. Using automatically generated graphs, you can evaluate water use, color palette, seasonal interest, and more. You can export plant list spreadsheets, graphs, and images for drafting integration and client presentations.
As a sole practitioner with limited storage capacity in my personal laptop, I value The Plantium because it’s also cloud-based—there’s no downloading or storing.

As landscape architects accomplished in the large arenas of municipalities, interregional projects, resorts, and luxury homes, Heather and her ConnectOne cohorts developed The Plantium because they recognize that plants are a powerful and critical component to successful sustainable design. Plants are not finishes or objects to be manipulated like furniture or construction materials—they comprise the living, breathing matrix of the planet. Plants bridge the human spirit, nature, and the built environment. The Plantium empowers students, wholesalers, designers, and landscape architects to connect with one another intelligently, successfully, and with ease.
videos are having their day in marketing, and everyone’s jumping on the YouTube train—including some garden designers. I found 15 who use video marketing and when I asked if it was working for them, the answer was been a resounding, “Yes!” What type of video should you make? That depends on your goals.

**Introductory Videos**
Introductory videos that show the designer speaking and talking about their services while showing off their gardens seem to me a no-brainer. If you make only one video, make it an introduction, maybe like this one by California designer Susan Taylor, who displays it on her website and social media accounts. Or this terrific one by English designer Tim Jennings. My videographer friends tell me that intro videos like those could be produced for under $500, even less if a student is hired to make it.

**Eye Candy**
Another type of marketing video is pure eye candy—glorious after shots of de-
signers’ projects. It can be as simple as this silent one ■ made from still photos or a livelier one like this one ■ that zooms and pans the still images with nice accompanying music.

**Works of Art**
Sure, if you’re a serious videography hobbyist like Dutch designer Noel van Mierlo, you can create works of art, like this one. ■ But if video’s not your passion, photo galleries of projects are sure easier and probably just as effective.

**Instructional**
A few designers, like Lee Burkhill in the U.K., have active YouTube channels ■ filled with instructional videos. Lee’s videos show his design/install process so he’s educating clients while establishing himself as an expert in his field. He writes that, “It allows new clients to see how I work, which I think is refreshing given many garden designers show the before and after, but not the actual work to get there! Clients comment that my videos have inspired them to either garden or transform their own back garden spaces.” And he believes the ➸
Process of videoing projects makes him a better designer: “It makes you really consider every decision and explain why you have chosen planting schemes or layouts.” He makes good use of videos on his website.

Videos that teach clients how to care for their new plants like design/installer John Holden’s must be great for client loyalty and attracting new ones too. Designers can make their own as he does or just select some good ones from YouTube to recommend or even embed on their site.

**Positioning Yourself as an Expert**

San Diego designer Laura Eubanks has become a recognized expert in succulents thanks to her **video series**, which she tells me has been viewed over a million times. Her videos are shot and edited on her cellphone alone.

Back East, **Ecobeneficial** founder Kim Eierman writes that, “I use my videos as both an educational tool and a marketing tool,” and they succeed at both.

No budget to hire a videographer? Some designers are getting great videos at no charge by appearing as on-camera expert for, say, the local water authority, as California designer Lisa Burton did in a **video about sustainable garden design**. It’s gotten 1,100 views so far, mostly viewers in her service area, I’m guessing. And Toronto designer Terry Ryan appeared on the
An effective marketing video can just be pure eye candy after shots of a designers’ projects set to music.

Do It Yourself!
Read our Tips for Making Videos Yourself. Good-enough video-making is probably easier than you think, even without a budget.

Watch and learn lots more from these 15 designers in North America and Europe who are using video to market their design services and related professional endeavors.

Spread the Word
Once you have a good gardening video, put it on YouTube, share it on your social media networks, post excerpts on Instagram, embed it in your website, and email the link (or embed the video into an email) to your email list.

Photo credits: Noel van Mierlo

“”
He Says;
She Says

AWARD-WINNING DESIGN-BUILD DUO
DAMIEN AND JACQUELINE HARRISON
TALK “COMPROMISE”
The landscape profession isn’t for the thin-skinned or the inflexible. It takes physical and mental agility, toughness and flexibility—like a good soil, equal measures of finesse and grit. Read about the art of compromise and what else makes business work in the complicated Manhattan market from Jacqueline and Damien Harrison of Brooklyn-based Harrison Green. The pair collaborated on three installations that won 2017 APLD International Design Awards. Separately, they gave their points of view.

What’s your key to success as married partners in this field?

**JH:** We like to call it “clear definition of roles.” Damien is the design principal, and I manage maintenance and construction. Construction is where we meet. Fundamentally there’s role separation, which isn’t to say maintenance doesn’t understand design—there’s cross-pollinating. [Damien and I] meet weekly in a work context, and that helps us keep work and home separate.

**DH:** For a married couple, it’s about having intentional and specific roles, appreciating the other person’s contributions, and communicating. One hundred percent of this applies to our personal relationship. Jackie has incredible energy and a wonderful personality. We each bring different skills to the table.
What’s specific about your business model?

**JH:** In the urban garden context, there needs to be a firm that can do really excellent design, construction, and maintenance. We can do these three things well and see a project through, from design through...forever. We’re all working toward the same design, and the designer stays involved, to say, for example, “She doesn’t like red.”

**DH:** We are people and we work with people. We’re walking through their homes and have to be discreet and respect their privacy. We have to have trust with them. Stemming from that is a personal relationship.

How did it all start?

**JH:** We met at another firm where we both worked. He took work seriously. I liked how he worked with clients and how he managed—he'll work until someone’s happy—and I wanted to work with him. It happened so naturally. Hurricane Sandy triggered [creating Harrison Green]. We lived in South Street Seaport and had...
no home for nine months. Life turned upside down. We said, let’s just see what happens—and our vision was pretty locked. It was then what it is today: urban gardens.

**DH:** Jackie had left our firm and was sort of in limbo. She had started a maintenance firm that was getting traction out of Hurricane Sandy, and we took advantage. We were lucky, in hindsight; we were able to get enough work to sustain business. For one or two years, it was just us. Then we had one employee. Now we’re 12 people and we’ll be five years old in March. [Hurricane Sandy] was a very stressful time, but it forged a view: if we can survive this, we can do anything. We now have two rescue dogs—Scratchley and Ned, from two different hurricanes—and a toddler, Francis.

**How do you manage clients’ ideas and opinions?**

**JH:** One hundred percent of the time, they have an idea of what they want, because there’s Pinterest, Houzz, et cetera—they have these points of reference. It’s great
to start with a client who has imagery. We help them pick apart what they like and don’t like. Padding each project with very clear plans with imagery, and listening, help avoid confrontation.

**DH:** Clients are going to express opinions, because it’s their home. It’s our role to manage that. Our role is like counselor in listening and hearing what each person is saying, to the get the main issues for each individual, and there’s got to be compromise. At the same time, it’s our job to have strong ideas of our own and steer clients toward a result. But if you’re being engaged [on a project], they already like your work. They do want it. It’s about tailoring to their specific needs.

**How do you handle disagreements between clients who are, l ike you, partners?**

**JH:** We need to listen to them both. For example, on one residential terrace project, the husband wanted evergreens and the wife wanted flowers. So we said, how about rhodies? We see that constantly. Disagreements make us work harder.
We have to be creative and innovative, and that comes out of working collaboratively.

The architect also cares, and the designer is influencing, so there are multiple other players. These are all team projects, so we make sure we know how to listen to each person. The most successful design comes from the ability to free-flow ideas. It’s important to listen and feel listened to, and make sure it’s a safe space. Business can be hard; being co-designers and business partners is harder. If you can preserve that ability to listen, the best work is likely to come out of this approach.

**What’s next for Harrison Green?**

**DH:** We’re really figuring out who we want to be and what types of projects we want to do. We don’t necessarily want to be the biggest or best, just consistently doing great work and having very satisfied clients. And never losing sight of what’s important.
Inspired by its wild urban landscape, an abandoned section of Philadelphia’s former Reading Rail Line is transformed into an elevated park.

BY EVA LEONARD

Could the 19th-century workers at Philadelphia’s Baldwin Locomotive Works have envisioned that the railroad tracks that once carried passengers and freight past the factory would one day be transformed into a public park?

That’s exactly what’s happening to three miles of two former Reading rail lines that transect Philadelphia’s Callowhill neighborhood, once home to heavy industry such as the Baldwin steam locomotive factory. Comprising a quarter mile, Phase One of Philadelphia’s Rail Park, inspired by Paris’ Promenade Plantee, the world’s first elevated parkway, is scheduled to open in 2018.
Bryan Hanes of Philadelphia’s Studio Bryan Hanes, the lead landscape architecture firm for the Rail Park, says that the local community loved the rugged, “weedy” character that existed on the rail line’s viaduct, which had been abandoned in the mid-1980s. Says Hanes, “We are attempting to recreate, in a certain sense, that wildness, but in a palette of plants that is generally considered native.”

Aiding in that endeavor, Marion A. Holmes and Alfred E. Schuyler of Drexel University’s Academy of Natural Sciences visited the Reading viaduct portion in December 2011. The viaduct portion is to be the park’s one-mile elevated section.

They identified more than 50 species of indigenous plants. They collected and pressed specimens including goldenrod, common chickweed, common mullein, pokeweed, black cherry, mugwort, tree of heaven, multiflora rose, clamping Ve-
nus’ looking glass, bittersweet nightshade, hairy bittercress, Japanese knotweed, and wild carrot, which will be housed in the herbarium of the Academy of Natural Sciences.

Lisa McDonald Hanes, ASLA, PLA, principal of Philadelphia’s TEND Landscape, horticultural consultants to the project, says that after the rail line was abandoned, “The viaduct slowly became a wild landscape from seeds blown in or deposited by birds or other urban wildlife germinating in cracks and crevasses, silt, and dust. The debris of the pioneer plants accumulated, creating a deeper layer of substrate for woody plants to take hold.

Fast forward 25 years or so, and you have a new, or novel urban ecosystem. The landscape that emerged looked like a meadow or woodland, but was made up of wild urban plants.”

McDonald Hanes explains that the extensive construction work necessary to secure the structure and turn the viaduct into a public park made it impossible to save the former landscape.

“While the beauty and fascination of the wild urban landscape was the inspiration, the new planting is completely designed and intentional. Plants were chosen based on several criteria of beauty and performance, such as form, habit, seasonal interest, texture, flower type, drought tolerance, hardiness, and disease resistance.”
The Details

Early on, says McDonald Hanes, the design team set out goals for the plant choices. Plants must:

- Be attractive—invoke the spirit and intrigue of the existing rail line landscape while being clearly intentional and complement the overall design
- Be meaningful—be able to tell a relevant story, tell something about the place
- Provide comfort and variety of experiences
- Provide environmental function
“The ultimate planting plan calls for a very thickly planted and very diverse landscape,” explains McDonald Hanes, “with 15 canopy trees installed at sizable caliper (between 4 inches to 8 inches) and with another 200 understory trees and shrubs, as well as several hundred perennials and grasses.”

London planetree and Kentucky coffee tree were chosen as canopy trees, while understory trees include river birch, American holly, and smooth sumac. Among the shrubs are Virginia sweetspire and chokeberry, and grasses include crinkle hair grass and prairie junegrass. Among the two dozen types of perennials are ‘Fireworks’ goldenrod, wild petunia, wild geranium, skyblue and New England asters, and ostrich, cinnamon, and Eastern wood ferns.
**Ecotypes**

The team broke the planting down into ecotypes: hedgerow, window box/stoop, thicket, and verge.

The hedgerow (or fence line) ecotype is composed of layers—trees, shrubs, and groundcover that provide vertical repetition, shade, and habitat.

The window box/stoop ecotype is an acknowledgement of the urban homeowner’s garden. It is an area with more ornamental character that enhances or frames views, particularly at street intersections, establishing landmarks, or portals.

The thicket ecotype is comprised of multiples of a few species, creating a graduated mass of branches and dimension. The thicket appears in the open area at 13th Street and is a contrast to the large-scale window box planter at the bridge girder.

The verge is open, grassy, and field-like. The blond color of the grasses and their wispy flow contrasts with the heavy, dark steel trestle.
Planting

As the park takes shape, planting has begun in earnest. The Timberland footwear company partnered with Philadelphia's Center City District and the Center City District Foundation to assist with park planting and restoration. In October 2017, dozens of volunteers, including Timberland employees and business partners from Journeys, KicksUSA, and Urban Outfitters, descended on the site, distributing more than 65 cubic yards of topsoil and planting more than 800 plants and shrubs.

Says Atlanta McIlwraith, Timberland’s Senior Manager of Community Engagement and Communication, “Timberland provided financial support to the Rail Park project, as well as volunteer power. More than 100 volunteers pulled on their boots and installed roughly 25,000 square feet of landscaping.”
Dustin Gimbel is one of Southern California’s up-and-coming landscape designers, with a very impressive pedigree. As a teenager, he worked for the late Mary Lou Heard, a noted Southern California plantswoman. After earning a horticulture degree from California State Polytechnic University, Pomona, in 2002, Gimbel embarked on a series of horticultural internships across the globe.

Gimbel has worked with the best, including Dan Hinkley at Heronswood and Christopher Lloyd at Great Dixter in England. After earning the Royal Horticultural Society’s Wisley Diploma in Practical Horticulture, Gimbel returned home to California for a brief vacation. When he rediscovered what it felt like to live in year-round sunshine, he decided to stick around.

Gimbel designs gardens along California’s south coast. His own garden surrounds a pistachio-colored 1930s bungalow only two miles in from the surf in the city of Long Beach. The home’s front garden is small, just 60 feet deep by 150 feet wide, and enveloped in a “green wall” of evergreen fig (*Ficus nitida*). The tall hedge buffers noise and offers privacy from the neighborhood traffic. And, Gimbel says, he likes living “in a big green box.”

Blue, orange, burgundy, silver, and black form the color palette in Gimbel’s front garden, starting with a tall *Acacia pendula* (weeping

**ALL PHOTOGRAPHS COURTESY THE AUTHOR**
In this small garden Gimbel laid a diagonal “boardwalk” made from wood scraps. Silver-leaved Acacia pendula at the far end pulls the eye past golds, purples, blacks, chartreuse, and orange tones along the way.
acacia) that towers over a walkway that cuts a diagonal across the garden. The tree’s coppery brown bark is topped in silver, blue-gray leaves. Beneath the tree is a tall ceramic pot glazed in the same copper brown as the acacia bark. Wispy fronds of *Russelia ‘Night Lights Tangerine’* (firecracker plant) spill out and over the pot, each tipped in a tube-shaped, sherbet orange flower.

Gimbel is all about creating mood in the garden. “It’s about excitement and contrast and little surprises,” he says. Black in particular seems to catch his eye, including the dramatic burgundy-almost-black foliage of *Euphorbia ‘Blackbird’*. Next to a miniature lawn of the tiny-leaved, creeping groundcover *Frankenia thymifolia* (sea heath), Gimbel planted *Dyckia ‘Black Gold’*. Dyckias are armored bromeliads
with purple or black blades that are silvery underneath and have stalks of golden yellow or orange flowers. “From one angle you don’t see the dyckia at all,” Gimbel says, “but then you turn around and there it is.” Similarly, he underplanted an almost black-leaved succulent, *Aeonium ‘Zwartkop’*, with bright orange *Sedum nussbaumerianum* (coppertone stonecrop).

This intensity is balanced with a nearby cluster of plants all in soft greens and silvers that give the space a restful aura. It features many succulents, such as *Agave attenuata*, *Echeveria gigantea* (giant hen and chicks), and *Cotyledon orbiculata var. oblonga* ‘Flavida’ (finger aloe), along with broad-leaved plants such as fringy silver-green *Adenanthos sericea* (coastal wooly bush). The plants play off stacked “screens” of rustic, round gray “stones” that Gimbel makes of hypertufa (concrete mixed with perlite). The net effect? “When your eyes hit the combination of colors and textures it creates excitement,” Gimbel explains, “then your eye jumps away and then jumps back.”

Broad-leaved plants mix easily with succulents that require no more than hand watering once every week or two, even in the heat of summer (“and I probably water too much,” Gimbel says). As much as the succulents contribute to the garden, “it would be boring to do 100% succulents,” he says. “You just can’t get all the textures you need... I want it to be low water but not look like a desert garden.”

Gimbel’s rear garden has an entirely different color palette and offers an entirely different experience. Part of the space is a small nursery where he propagates hard-to-find plants. He has a toolshed, beehive, vegetable garden, and an outdoor dining room—all in a 20 by 30 foot area.
Gimbel makes stacked screens of hypertufa stones. Their rounded forms and soft gray colors counterbalance the bright intensity of the plants.
Here, the color palette is yellow, gold, purple, burgundy, and gray. Gimbel applied hardy board to a wall he shares with a neighbor, then painted it gray. He painted the backside of the detached garage dusky purple to “be sympathetic” with the gray. Where the two walls intersect is a bed of golden yellow Coleonema ‘Sunset Gold’ (breath of heaven) combined with purple-blush Melianthus major ‘Purple Haze’ (dwarf honeybush), yellow-blooming Achillea ‘Moonshine’ (yarrow), wine-bladed Cordyline ‘Festival Grass’, yellow-orbed Craspedia globosa (billy buttons), and burgundy-leaved Dodonaea viscosa ‘Purpurea’ (hopseed bush).

In spring, the purple wall is nearly hidden by the vining Aristolochia gigantea (giant Dutchman’s pipe) that in another climate zone would need much more
irrigation than here, so near the coast. By summer, the vine is covered with its enormous and slightly erotic looking burgundy purple flowers.

Closer to the house, Gimbel erected what he calls a “deconstructed screen” to define a room within the room. “The idea is that it's like a fence that someone came back and added windows to,” he says, “so there are nice framed views into other garden spaces. It creates an intimate dining area without losing the views and sense of space.” The connection between inside the dining area and outside is made in part, by a water feature—not quite a pond—built of gray cinder blocks, that transects the screen.

The gray cinder block echoes the gray garden wall, while yellow glass orbs that bob in the water pick up the colors of the plants behind. Bright golden California poppies bloom around the cinderblock in spring.

Gimbel explains his color choices, “golden colors are exciting. There are many...
Gimbel’s so-called deconstructed screen is meant to act like a “fence that someone came back and added windows to.” He also added elements to traverse the screen, like this cinderblock pond with its upright papyrus and yellow glass floats.
Gimbel plays with shapes and textures, as well as colors. Here, the focus is on burgundy-almost-black played off bright greens and silver grays, along with touches of burnt orange. In this coastal garden, all of these plants thrive with almost no irrigation.

cloudy day at the beach. The gold looks great in morning and in afternoon when it’s cloudy. Burgundies balance that.” His color combinations are fantastic, if not unusual. When asked about them, he pauses for a moment. “Most of the stuff is instinctual. I don’t think about it, I just do it," he says. “I spent a lot of time in gardens in England. I would find a bench and just sit. . . . It’s about creating experience. The more defined or controlled the colors are, the more you can predict what someone is going to get out of the experience.”

“People should be more willing to try new things in the garden,” Gimbel continues, “and not to fear failure. If a plant dies it’s an opportunity to try something else. . . . It’s the same thing for color combinations. Try something you may not expect to like. You can always change it.”
Reflections in the garden: shiny yellow glass floats and still water at sunset.

FACTS AND FIGURES

■ Elevation
25 feet

■ Annual Average Rainfall
14 inches between November and March; dry in summer

■ Annual Rainy Days
21

■ Summer High
81°F, typically in August

■ Winter Low
49°F in December and January

■ Humidity
Between 72% (November) and 88% (September)

■ Irrigation
Hand watered at most once weekly or every two weeks in the heat of summer

■ Soil Type
Silty loam

■ USDA Zone 10b

■ Dominant Plant Type
Mixed Mediterranean

KEY PLANTS FOR COLOR

Achillea ‘Moonshine’

Aeonium ‘Cyclops’ and ‘Zwartkop’

Agave attenuata

Dyckia ‘Black Gold’

Echeveria gigantea

Euphorbia ‘Blackbird’

Euphorbia cotinifolia

Euphorbia milii ‘Apricot’

Leucospermum ‘Veldfire’

Melianthus major ‘Purple Haze’
Green, brick red, and yellow are the dominant colors of this house, garage, and furnishings.
Buffalo,
New York
THE POWER OF GARDENS
In Buffalo, New York, the part of the city called the Cottage District is filled with unique homes and gardens. Each garden was designed by its owner, many of whom participate in Buffalo’s annual Garden Walk, the largest in the United States. Talking with some of the owners, I learned that fifteen years ago this area was fairly derelict. What rescued it? The power of gardening.

One of the homeowners, an avid gardener, not only planted his own front yard, he decided to plant six other front yards at his own expense. This inspired more people to start gardening, often by replacing their tiny lawns with perennials and shrubs and to then start renovating their front porches. This was the beginning of a community. Since then, homes that were purchased for ridiculously low prices have been resold for more than anyone could have imagined.

Many of the houses are brightly and beautifully painted, and the gardens are, of course, full of color, art, and attention to detail. One of my favorites has a white picket fence around the tiny front yard, which is very simple, mostly green, and accented by pots of hanging ferns on the porch. From this vantage point, it looks deceptively simple. Walking from the driveway to the back, one encounters a gate that is painted white with A deceptively unassuming front yard hides a very colorful back yard.
A glimmer of color can be seen over an artistically painted gate as one approaches the back yard.

purple flowers. Once inside the gate, there is a garden full of bright colors (chartreuse, red, orange, and yellow) and several seating areas. Just inside the gate is a small seating area with wicker chairs and orange cushions that echo the colors of the coleus in the bed on the other side of the driveway and the orange trim of the garage. There is also a rusty red fence, the color of which is repeated by several coleus cultivars in front it and on the inside of the entry gate.

There is an idiom, “The devil is in the detail,” meaning something might seem simple at first but will it take more time and effort to complete and comprehend than expected. This is true of another fascinating garden named “The Harry Potter House.” This one was designed using the diamond pattern from Hogwarts. The house, actually a shed, has diamond-patterned windows and the
narrow bed on one side is cut with a zig-zag edge. Between the shed and a raised bed is a “foyer” that is laid in alternating diamonds of stone and turf. Beyond the house is a patio with a diamond-shaped cut stone floor. It is just an incredible attention to detail.

Anyone with a property that has a very long, boring fence would benefit from seeing what one handy fellow created for his fence. Interspersed among interesting pieces of art are long shelves into which holes have been sawn. These holes are the perfect size to hold six-inch terra cotta pots, which hold an array of shade-tolerant annuals. Avid gardeners, of course, never have enough space for potting but this gentleman created a double potting bench with space for bins, tools, and pots. Over it is a huge garden umbrella and...
Choosing the right finial may seem like a minor detail but it is crucial to overall design.

Who wouldn't want a potting shed like this?
nearby is a standpipe with hose. The color of the umbrella is repeated in some of the plantings.

Roof lines are often a combination of rectangles and diagonals. I loved the traditional white picket fence enlivened with copper finials. In the back yard is a dog house with its own picket fence.

The architectural details of these houses have been lovingly highlighted in an array of colors that reflect the tastes of those who live within. One homeowner has chosen privacy curtains that echo the colors of the house. Another has transformed an ordinary fence into a garden, and a third has planted flowers that echo the house’s trim.

This long fence offers the visitor a panorama of plants and art.
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