ASSOCIATION OF PROFESSIONAL LANDSCAPE DESIGNERS

the designer

Winter 2018

Setting the Stage

FOR DESIGN INSPIRATION, BUSINESS GROWTH, LIGHTING
The Show Must Go On!

I thought about the theme for this issue while I was watching the Cirque du Soleil performance of Corteo in New Orleans. (If ever there was a place to watch a theatrical production about a clown watching his own funeral, it’s in New Orleans.) The performers reworked the show for an arena tour knowing there would be an audience on each side of the area and that the stage would be located in the center, without a front or back. The result is a production much more focused on moving shapes and a play of light, movement, and music more than details or narrative. It was a masterful manipulation of the senses.

That’s what you do with your designs—manipulate space and people moving through it—and this issue is all about setting the stage for a successful show. Susan Morrison gets us started with a write-up of one of her favorite new plants. Joshua Gillow explains how he and his firm set their business up for a successful year, while Chris Freimuth gives tips for perfecting your portfolio photography. Lighting is a huge part of stagecraft (and design), and Bruce Dennis has that covered with a stairway lighting primer. Ryan McEaney describes the “audition” process for new plants—how plant breeders ensure that new introductions will be high performing, while Eva Leonard takes us on a tour of a new installation at a performing arts center in Brooklyn. Finally, Cathy Carr, FAPLD, describes how her tour to Kyoto, Japan, helps her deliver star-quality work to her clients.

This winter, set the stage for a productive 2019.

Happy Holidays!

Katie Elzer-Peters
editor@apld.org

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2019 LANDSCAPE SHRUB OF THE YEAR

Photograph by Kirsten Boehmer Photography

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Todd MacLean Outdoor Living’s South Flagler, West Palm Beach, Florida, residential design was a Silver Award winner in the 2018 APLD Design Awards. It’s a great example of exterior lighting. For more on lighting, go to page 42.
In the Director’s Chair

If we were to take the words of William Shakespeare to heart, we would consider the entire world a stage. As landscape designers, perhaps we see ourselves as the director working at the pleasure of the producer. The success of the scene—even the entire production—depends on careful consideration of more than colorful costumes and compelling script. The set and all its furnishings and props, backdrops, lighting, and music must all come together seamlessly. However, these are only the sensory aspects of the scenes. In order for a production to be truly successful, it must be working diligently and accurately behind the scenes, as well. Stagehands in the wings, managers backstage, and producers and accountants in the front office all must do their part.

The wise landscape designer knows that a successful garden requires more than the most colorful plants or the craftiest construction. An outdoor space must be a suitable backdrop for its human visitors to act out their parts, be they carefully scripted or extemporaneous. Important, too, are the supporting roles of crews and technicians. The gardeners, irrigation and lighting technicians, and the financial administrators who handle the annual budget.

How carefully and thoughtfully are you directing the play that is the garden? Which roles and responsibilities require more rehearsal, a tweak to the script, or a total set rebuild? As the director of our landscapes we know that the success or failure of this production falls squarely upon us.

Cheers,

DANIL0 MAFFEI FAPLD

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“DynaSCAPE Design and Color allow me to express myself, my style and ideas in a legible way to clients that may not know how to read plans. The finished design has become a part of my brand. It has the professional quality that allow us as a company to become known as the best and create a lifestyle that people are looking for.” - Matt Hiner, Hiner Landscapes (Colorado Springs, CO)
The designer wants you!

The only magazine written by designers for designers, The Designer is looking for talented members like you to share your stories, teach new techniques, and inspire with your designs.

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 Spring 2019 issue about ecological design. We’re always looking for writers for regular features including Wander.Lust, Travel Inspiration, Plant App(lication), Design 101, and Design Masterclass articles.

Not sure if your story is a good fit? As Editor in Chief for 2019 Katie Elzer-Peters is happy to discuss your idea with you. Reach her at editor@apld.org.

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David Thorne Landscape Architect, Inc. Oakland, CA, Mid-Century Modern, Piedmont, California, Residential Gold Design For more about landscape lighting see page 42.
Cathy Carr  
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Cathy believes strongly that beauty adds to people’s well-being. She understands the importance of well-constructed elements to good garden design, loves plants from all parts of the globe, and specializes in creating distinctive, four-season outdoor living spaces that relate to the home and delight the family who lives there.

Cathy was a founding member of the D.C./MD/VA. Chapter of APLD and is currently the chapter’s marketing/PR committee chair. She is the principal designer for her firm, **GreenHeartGarden Designs.com**.

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**Lead Designer and Founder of MasterPLAN Outdoor Living**, Joshua Gillow has always had an incredible respect and curiosity for Mother Nature and all of her infinite wisdom. After growing up working in a family-owned garden center, he received his degree in Architectural Design and Engineering, which led him to start his own firm. Joshua now designs and manages the construction of bold outdoor living spaces all over eastern Pennsylvania. When he isn’t spending time with his family or bringing families and friends closer together outdoors, he trains and competes around the country as #the_design_ninja with the goal of competing on the hit NBC TV show *American Ninja Warrior*.

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**Christopher Freimuth** is the founder and director of **CF Gardens**, a landscape design firm based in New York City. He collaborates with a dedicated team of gardeners to design, install, and maintain rooftop and backyard gardens throughout NYC and the metro region. Trained at the New York Botanical Garden’s School of Professional Horticulture, Christopher’s aesthetic brings horticultural sophistication into the urban environment. By prioritizing ecological planting design, he creates gardens that support the people, plants, and pollinators of his beloved city and its surroundings.

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**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.

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**Ryan McEnaney** is a garden communicator and fifth-generation family member at Bailey Nurseries, one of the country’s largest wholesale growers of trees and shrubs. He also serves as spokesperson for the company’s consumer brands including **Endless Summer® Hydrangeas** and **First Editions® Plants**. McEnaney currently serves on the Board of Directors for the National Garden Bureau as well as multiple committees for the Garden Writers Association and Minnesota Nursery & Landscape Association.

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**Joshua Gillow**

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**Eva Leonard**

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**Ryan McEnaney**

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**Susan Morrison**

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**Cathy Carr**

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**Bruce Dennis**

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**Christopher Freimuth**

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**Joshua Gillow**

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**Eva Leonard**

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**Ryan McEnaney**

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**Susan Morrison**

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It seems all regions of the country have their own weather-related challenges. For the inland part of California, where I design, our struggle is punishing summer sun combined with a distinct lack of water resources. That’s why I was excited when the Sunset Western Garden Collection introduced the Lagerstroemia Delta series.

Heat-loving crape myrtles perform exceptionally well with limited water, but it can be difficult to get clients excited about a tree they see planted on every street corner. Fortunately, the glossy, deep burgundy leaves of the Delta series catapult this familiar standby into a whole new category. Available in a range of flower colors, I initially gravitated towards the elegant black-and-white combination of L. ’Twilight’, but I have come to prefer the flashier blooms on ‘Delta Fusion’ and ‘Delta Flame’.

As a bonus, this cross between a shrub and a small tree grows 4- to 6-feet wide and 8- to 10-feet tall, making it an exceptional vertical accent in a smaller garden. I added ‘Delta Fuchsia’ to my own garden this past spring, and in addition to acting as a dark foil for the surrounding plants, it is exactly the late-summer showstopper I imagined it would be once flowering begins in late August. Designers in the South will be pleased to learn this series is also part of the Southern Living Plant Collection.

PHOTO CREDIT: SAXON HOLT
Winter is the perfect time to curl up with a good book, and I think books are always great holiday gifts. Since we last highlighted two APLD members’ fantastic books, Nan Sterman’s Hot Color, Dry Garden and Susan Morrison’s The Less Is More Garden: Big Ideas for Designing Your Small Yard, both of which would be welcome as a gift at any time of the year, Timber Press has released several more garden and landscape books with plenty of eye-candy, inspiration, and tips for the plant lovers in your life. Some are more practically applicable to a design practice, while others will be good to flip through with a mug of tea on a snowy day. There’s something for virtually everyone here.

Happy reading!

>>Click on book or title to view online and buy.
THE GARDEN IN EVERY SENSE AND SEASON
By Tovah Martin
Photographs by Kindra Clineff

In this book, Tovah Martin encourages all of us to design not just for aesthetics or plant hardiness, but also for our senses, throughout the year. The principles and inspiration are applicable regardless of where you live and design. Do you have clients who love to live in their garden? Consider this one for a year-end gift.

>>Click on book or title to view online and buy.

GARDENING UNDER LIGHTS: The Complete Guide for Indoor Growers
By Leslie F. Halleck

Purely for the plant collectors reading this issue, Leslie Halleck’s new book has become the definitive primer on indoor gardening. It’s another fun pick as a client gift or for a fellow designer in zonal denial who could use some help overwintering all of those tropicals they couldn’t resist buying while on vacation.

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CREATE

Must-Have Biz Tools

BY KATIE ELZER-PETERS

Now’s the time to set the stage for big business in 2019. Here are some tools to help you streamline, organize, and up your game.

■ FREE STOCK PHOTOS
Pixabay.com can be hit or miss, but it does have lots of garden and landscape imagery, much of which would be suitable for use in social media posts or graphics.

■ PREMIUM STYLED STOCK IMAGES
APLD member Tina Krug pointed out this great resource. At www.scstockshop.com, you’ll find styled stock images sold in limited batches that are more along the lines of a designer’s aesthetic than what you might find at iStock.

■ INSTAGRAM SCHEDULING
Tailwind.com is, hands down, the best Instagram scheduling tool. Type out your posts, upload your photos, and then schedule a time for posting. If you have a business account this app will post for you, or you can enable a push notification for easy scheduling.

■ SCHEDULING CONFERENCE CALLS
If you’re tired of the “I don’t know, when are you free?” emails flying back and forth and you’re trying to schedule a conference or group meeting, www.doodle.com is your new best friend. Everyone can indicate times they’re available, making it easier to schedule your next group meeting.

■ ONLINE CONTRACT SIGNING
Say goodbye to scanning and emailing and hello to quick and easy online contract completion with HelloSign.

■ CRM (CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT)
Streamline your business with CRM software. Both Dubsado and 17 Hats bill themselves as CRM options for creatives. You can create proposals and contracts for review and signing, including invoices and payment schedules, and use the portals for client documents. Warning: these sites do take a fair amount of set-up time to be useful, but they can cut down on a lot of work in the long-term with their proposal and contract template features.

■ MAKE YOUR OWN GRAPHICS
Most of you have probably heard of Canva.com by now, but if not, you’re missing out! It’s a free design program so you don’t have to get out Photoshop. Conveniently, they have templates and ready-made canvas sizes for frequently used social media and printing specifications. You can save templates with your colors and give access to multiple team members.

■ SCREENCAST TO EXPLAIN THINGS
The Vidyard Chrome extension has saved my life many a time when I’m trying to explain something to a client. Rather than typing out an extremely long email with multiple annotated screenshots, I just turn on the recording extension and walk through a project on video, narrating key points of interest for my clients. Then, Vidyard generates a link I can send to clients for easy viewing. I get a notification if they’ve viewed it, so I can stay on top of the project.

■ CALL SCHEDULING
Another nifty tool to avoid back and forth when scheduling meetings between two people. I use Acuity, but many people like Calendly. They’re both similar and allow you to set up different calendars with availability. It’s possible to accept payment for consultations (such as design consultations) at the time of scheduling as well. Just set up your appointment types and send clients the links to book. Both integrate with other calendar, project management, and CRM programs.
SET THE STAGE FOR A SUCCESSFUL YEAR

Review, Revise, and Polish

BY JOSHUA GILLOW

MasterPLAN Outdoor Living is an outdoor design/build firm focusing on structure and landscape in eastern Pennsylvania. Depending on the graces of Mother Nature, we are fortunate enough to build footed structures until the ground freezes, so our work flow is steadier than most at this time of year. However, our workload is noticeably lighter in the winter, so we make it a priority to review, revise, and polish our message, systems, and strategies to guarantee that the upcoming year will run smoother and be more successful than the prior year.

REVIEW
Knowing that the only constant in our market is change, we start by taking an intrinsic look at what worked, what didn’t, and where the kinks are in the chain. Not completely satisfied with your CRM, design software, or lead generators? Don’t let them continue to hinder your progress, drag you down, or cost you money; search for systems and avenues that will fully allow you to do what you need to do and take you where you need to go. Once proper programs are in place, take the time to learn all of the nuances because there are usually timesaving tricks and tools that we tend to overlook when we are too busy to explore.

REVISE
Not only do we examine our systems, we analyze our relationships with our partners. Having in-person meetings with suppliers and installers to discuss one another’s successes and annual challenges is a humanistic approach to understanding and creating a mutually successful upcoming year. For example, establishing pricing models for the next twelve months is a win-win for everyone involved. Not only does that establish firm numbers for the key features and materials we use in our designs, but we can then efficiently and accurately...
relay information to our clients. As we all know, a green light on a project typically boils down to cost and being able to speed the budgeting process and set the proper expectations with our clients yield faster decisions and quicker construction.

Nonetheless, don’t limit yourself to meeting only with those who directly relate to your business; it is incredibly beneficial to branch out and make good, solid connections with others in complementary markets. We have found tremendous value forging connections with pool builders, homebuilders, architects, engineers, and even real estate agents and furniture designers. While it may take some phone calls and meetings to find a few solid connections with values and standards as high (if not higher) than yours, expanding outside your industry will create a network of experts to refer to, which can ultimately lead to long-term and profitable work for all.

POLISH

Even with the best experts behind you, your business will only be as good as the clients you attract. Now is the time to take a look at the leads that came in for the year. Looking deeper, you will find that your most viable clients have a common thread. Whether that thread lies in age, career, income, or hobbies, you can use your downtime to establish strategies that primarily speak to your ideal potential clients. Create a targeted marketing campaign that will translate to incoming phone calls and inquiries that are more likely to be a good fit. This will make it easier for you to say “yes” to projects rather than needing to explain why your company would not be a good fit for the proposition.

It isn’t always easy to critique your own business, but we have found that the effort to do so is fruitful. We know that when the pace picks up for the coming year, we guarantee we will fully appreciate all of the time we invested during the winter, and so will you.

QUICK TIPS

Being able to start a fresh year off with confidence in your processes, systems, and direction will set the tone and open doors to new opportunities. Here are some ideas:

- **Set design goals.** Focus on a few different features you would like to design and incorporate into your projects. Out-of-the-box thinking will signal the universe to send the right people your way.

- **Use your downtime to update promotional materials.** Whether it’s updating photos on your website, rewriting your Houzz profile, or giving your trade show booth a makeover, you will need to refresh your image to the world to stay innovative and ahead of the curve!

- **Travel!** If you can swing it, use a week or two to go somewhere you haven’t been before. Gaining inspiration from around the globe will fuel your creativity and inspire your work.

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New Plant Trials

To Reduce Design Risk

BY RYAN MCELANEY

FAVORITE NEW PLANT FOR 2019
Fireside™ Ninebark for its intensely red-purple foliage and resistance to powdery mildew.
—Ryan McEnaney
new plant introductions are persistent; even our industry can’t keep up at times. On one hand, new plants sell (especially to end-user consumers). On the other hand, as horticulture professionals we have to ensure quality over marketing-speak. So it’s not just about the shiny new plant—it’s about the best of the new.

“The number one question we receive from growers, retailers, and landscape professionals is, ‘How is this new plant better than what I’m already using?’” says Natalia Hamill, Brand & Business Development Manager for Bailey Nurseries. This is the crux of the new plant conversation. “Why new Plant X over Plant Y? We’ve used Plant Y for 15 years, and it performs.”

There is a resurgence of breeding developments with improvements to historical species as well as to ones that don’t perform as advertised or aren’t genuinely unique. So how do you differentiate between the two when marketing programs are so convincing? Trials.

“[Bailey] uses trial data and comparison...”

Every part of the plant is carefully evaluated and inspected, from root to tip.
photos to reinforce the fact that our new introductions represent a significant improvement over what is already in the marketplace," adds Hamill.

“Solid trial data allow us to speak with conviction about our new plants and market them with confidence because we have the data to back up the claims, and that is a powerful marketing tool.”

Many breeders employ a network of universities, trade organizations, and partner grow sites for data collection.

“We provide breeding companies with performance data for our climactic region,” shares Dr. Jeb Fields, LSU AgCenter Hammond Research Station Trial Garden Director. “We offer extreme trialing conditions, so our trials truly highlight the best of the best. For designers, our results help identify plant choices that are appropriate for our region and their specific job.”

Organizations such as LSU and others create standardized test landscapes to recreate a regional homeowner landscape without the use of insecticides or fungicides. These trials test for disease resistance, water needs, heat and cold tolerance, insect susceptibility, and more based on species.

“Before introduction, our plants are evaluated at least three to four years at national trial sites all using the same computer evaluation program,” explains Bailey’s External Trials Coordinator Chris Selin. Species with generally
known hardiness zones may have regional trials, while “… unfamiliar species like *Distylium* or breakthrough hybridizing like *Vitex* Flip Side” are sent beyond traditional growing regions specifically to understand their full potential.”

Collecting and utilizing data points from these external trials complement in-ground tests done by the plant breeding companies at their own locations. A combination of this data is used to determine if the introduction will move forward and how best to showcase its unique attributes.

All-America Selections (AAS) honors breakthroughs in breeding each year for edibles, herbaceous perennials, and ornamentals from seed or vegetative cuttings. Their trial gardens are used in a similar way, though via blind testing and judging by volunteer horticultural professionals across North America. Executive Director Diane Blazek explains that “… nonwinning varieties often aren’t introduced,” and that if “… a variety isn’t uniform enough for an award, oftentimes the breeder goes back and works on correcting uniformity before introducing the variety to market.”

Much of this data collection is available to designers while researching which new varieties to trust. The LSU AgCenter Hammond Research Station, for example, hosts two field days annually to see the varieties in-ground. While AAS does not publish their trial data, Blazek is confident that “… if it’s an AAS Winner, you can be assured it will perform,” and that each variety’s reasons for winning are available on their website.

The process of trialing new plants before market introduction is intentionally tedious and thorough. It aims to instill confidence in each variety—and plant breeding company—as it hits the market. It provides data points to showcase how the new plant outperforms what exists in the market. So don’t be timid about trying *Distylium* ’Vintage Jade’ instead of *Buxus* or powdery mildew-resistant *Lagerstroemia* ’Purple Magic’ in a more compact space. Move forward confidently knowing there are years of trial data to support a new introduction’s place in the landscape. When you find the right partners that share trial data, you can produce cutting-edge planting designs without the risk of poor performance.

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**FAVORITE NEW PLANT FOR 2019**

*Summer Crush™ Hydrangea* for its intense, rich raspberry-red bloom color, compact habit, and prolific bloom.

—Natalia Hamill

**FAVORITE NEW PLANT FOR 2019**

*Flip Side™ Vitex* for its great improvement in bloom quality over the species.

—Dr. Jeb Fields
Shooting in the “golden hours” of dawn and dusk helps to emphasize a garden’s feeling of warmth and invitation.
“No, trust me; the photos don’t do it justice.”

How many times have you muttered this line to a client while self-consciously fumbling through your iPhone, looking for decent images of your work? You’ve got a whole catalogue of incredible gardens in your portfolio, and yet all you can find are grids of embarrassingly pixelated snapshots showing…wait, is that Lady’s Mantle or wood shavings?

It doesn’t have to be like that, though. **Jude Parkinson-Morgan**, a garden photographer based in Lafayette, California, (and the photographer of APLD member Susan Morrison’s latest book, *The Less Is More Garden: Big Ideas for Designing Your Small Yard*) is here to save the day for designers. Formally trained both in garden design and photography, Jude’s tips and tricks will help you put your portfolio to work so that you can sell more work.

**Before the Shoot**

- **Take. Your. Time.** As a garden designer, nobody expects you to show up on a new site pulling final drafts of design renderings from your back pocket, right? There is a whole process of observation, study, research, and preparation that takes place between first sight and final draft.

    The same goes for garden photography. “A lot of people photograph without thinking,” Jude tells me. “With smartphones, it’s almost like a reflex. I prefer to slow down and really consider what the shot’s going to look like, and how I’m going to tackle it.”

- **Go on a site visit.** Before a shoot, Jude suggests going on a photo scouting visit so you can get to know the space and assess its strengths and liabilities. On these visits, look for angles and features that you’ll want to capture on the day of the actual shoot—and practice taking snapshots of the compositions you like best. This will make the day of the shoot much more efficient, helping you to focus on getting your planned shots completed as they can change so quickly.
Prepare the space. Jude advocates giving your garden a good cleanup a day or two before shooting. Prune those renegade branches, pick up stray leaves, maybe tuck some flowers into a vase on that adorable café table under the arbor. For distracting elements that can’t be removed with a simple hand rake, such as the telephone pole behind the Lespedeza or the neighbor’s crumbling roof in the background, jot down a reminder for yourself so you can plan your compositions around them by stepping to the left or right, crouching, or angling your shots differently.

Schedule the shoot. Many outdoor photographers prefer shooting during the “golden hour”—that sweet spot of soft light at either dawn or dusk. Jude especially prefers dawn; it tends to be less windy, which means less blurred foliage resulting from random gusts. If you can’t manage sunrise or sunset, try shooting on an overcast day when light is diffused through the clouds. This will help reduce the sharp contrasts that produce glaring highlights and dark shadows.

This shot was taken before the sun had even risen. Taking the time to “create a scene” for a shot helps viewers imagine themselves in the garden.

In addition to wide shots that show an entire space, Jude recommends including vignettes that show special features and moments in the garden.
During the Shoot

- **Compose your images the way you design your gardens.** In garden design, we like to talk about choreographing people’s experiences through space. In photography, we can borrow this concept, substituting actual movement with visual movement. Jude harkens back to her days in the design studio, focusing her images on leading lines and tried-and-true formulas like the golden ratio or rule of thirds. (The “golden ratio” uses the Fibonacci sequence to create a perfectly balanced imaginary “spiral.” Photography uses the golden ratio to lead a viewer’s eye through the entire image by focusing the point of interest on the smallest point of the spiral. The “rule of thirds” states a composition can be divided equally spacing two vertical lines and two horizontal lines to yield nine equal parts. Important compositional elements should then be placed along these lines or their intersections.)

- **Bring the right gear.** “I never leave home without my tripod,” Jude says, referring to one of her most useful tools. Especially if you’re going to shoot in the relatively low light conditions of dawn and dusk, a tripod will do wonders for sharpness and clarity and helps slow the process of composing your shots.

- **Clean your phone camera lens.** This may seem obvious, but according to Jude a dirty lens can be the culprit behind crummy photos taken with your phone. Find a soft, clean cloth and wipe that grit from your phone lens!

Post Production

- **Edit on your phone.** “The fine tuning that’s available now,” Jude says, talking about phone and basic computer editing software, “is exponential. The way it’s changing, you’ve got a lot of possibilities.” Don’t underestimate the editing capabilities that are free with your devices.

- **Invest in software.** While Photoshop still maintains a strong presence in the market, Jude recommends Adobe Lightroom for her client editing. A little bonus advice: rather than hyper-saturating your photos to explode the color, try playing around with Lightroom’s “vibrance” feature.

Additional Resources


- Seattle-based iPhone photographer extraordinaire David Perry. Classes and workshops: https://davidperryphoto.myportfolio.com


To see Jude Parkinson-Morgan’s work go to judepmphotography.com

Portfolio Tips for Your Website

- Keep in mind that 50 percent of web traffic is mobile. Knowing this will help you design a more user-friendly layout for your website and portfolio.

- Just as you’ve likely developed a design style that is consistent throughout your gardens, it’s important to maintain consistency in the style of photography in your portfolio. If you hire a photographer, try sticking with that person for all of your garden photography. If you photograph your own gardens, remember this tip to develop and maintain a consistent style of photography.

- Generally, plan to include 5 to 10 photos per garden in your portfolio. You want to give a good representation, but not demand too much of people’s time and attention.
Portfolio Photography Pointers

Shooting in the “golden hours” of dawn and dusk helps to emphasize a garden’s feeling of warmth and invitation.
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■ Take. Your. Time. As a garden designer, nobody expects you to show up on a new site pulling final drafts of design renderings from your back pocket, right? There is a whole process of observation, study, research, and preparation that takes place between first sight and final draft.

■ Go on a site visit. Before a shoot, Jude suggests going on a photo scouting visit so you can get to know the space and assess its strengths and liabilities. On these visits, look for angles and features that you’ll want to capture on the day of the actual shoot—and practice taking snapshots of the compositions you like best. This will make the day of the shoot much more efficient, helping you to focus on getting your planned shots completed as they can change so quickly.
Prepare the space. Jude advocates giving your garden a good cleanup a day or two before shooting. Prune those renegade branches, pick up stray leaves, maybe tuck some flowers into a vase on that adorable café table under the arbor. For distracting elements that can’t be removed with a simple hand rake, such as the telephone pole behind the Lespedeza or the neighbor’s crumbling roof in the background, jot down a reminder for yourself so you can plan your compositions around them by stepping to the left or right, crouching, or angling your shots differently.

Schedule the shoot. Many outdoor photographers prefer shooting during the “golden hour”—that sweet spot of soft light at either dawn or dusk. Jude especially prefers dawn; it tends to be less windy, which means less blurred foliage resulting from random gusts. If you can’t manage sunrise or sunset, try shooting on an overcast day when light is diffused through the clouds. This will help reduce the sharp contrasts that produce glaring highlights and dark shadows.

This shot was taken before the sun had even risen. Taking the time to “create a scene” for a shot helps viewers imagine themselves in the garden.

In addition to wide shots that show an entire space, Jude recommends including vignettes that show special features and moments in the garden.
During the Shoot

- **Compose your images the way you design your gardens.** In garden design, we like to talk about choreographing people’s experiences through space. In photography, we can borrow this concept, substituting actual movement with visual movement. Jude harkens back to her days in the design studio, focusing her images on leading lines and tried-and-true formulas like the golden ratio or rule of thirds. (The “golden ratio” uses the Fibonacci sequence to create a perfectly balanced imaginary “spiral.” Photography uses the golden ratio to lead a viewer’s eye through the entire image by focusing the point of interest on the smallest point of the spiral. The “rule of thirds” states a composition can be divided equally spacing two vertical lines and two horizontal lines to yield nine equal parts. Important compositional elements should then be placed along these lines or their intersections.)

- **Bring the right gear.** “I never leave home without my tripod,” Jude says, referring to one of her most useful tools. Especially if you’re going to shoot in the relatively low light conditions of dawn and dusk, a tripod will do wonders for sharpness and clarity and helps slow the process of composing your shots.

- **Clean your phone camera lens.** This may seem obvious, but according to Jude a dirty lens can be the culprit behind crummy photos taken with your phone. Find a soft, clean cloth and wipe that grit from your phone lens!

Post Production

- **Edit on your phone.** “The fine tuning that’s available now,” Jude says, talking about phone and basic computer editing software, “is exponential. The way it’s changing, you’ve got a lot of possibilities.” Don’t underestimate the editing capabilities that are free with your devices.

- **Invest in software.** While Photoshop still maintains a strong presence in the market, Jude recommends Adobe Lightroom for her client editing. A little bonus advice: rather than hyper-saturating your photos to explode the color, try playing around with Lightroom’s “vibrance” feature.

Additional Resources


- Seattle-based iPhone photographer extraordinaire David Perry. Classes and workshops: https://davidperryphoto.myportfolio.com


To see Jude Parkinson-Morgan’s work go to judepmphotography.com

Portfolio Tips for Your Website

- **Keep in mind that 50 percent of web traffic is mobile.** Knowing this will help you design a more user-friendly layout for your website and portfolio.

- **Just as you’ve likely developed a design style that is consistent throughout your gardens, it’s important to maintain consistency in the style of photography in your portfolio.** If you hire a photographer, try sticking with that person for all of your garden photography. If you photograph your own gardens, remember this tip to develop and maintain a consistent style of photography.

- **Generally, plan to include 5 to 10 photos per garden in your portfolio.** You want to give a good representation, but not demand too much of people’s time and attention.
SETTING THE STAGE FOR SAFETY

Exterior Stairway Lighting

A critical feature for residential properties, providing safety, security, beauty, and visual comfort.
The importance of proper lighting for steps and stairs cannot be overestimated. A dark stairway can be extremely dangerous with a single misstep possibly resulting in a painful outcome (physically and legally). Proper stairway illumination can help prevent accidents and provide visual guidance at night. Consider this: every year more than one million people are either injured, hospitalized, or killed due to stair trip-and-fall issues. Adequate illumination for stairs, steps, and landings is a big part of stair safety, and it is regulated by many national and international codes and guidelines.

Exterior step, deck, and stair lighting fixtures are available in many designs and mounting options, as well as voltages (12V or 120V), wattage/lumens, and kelvin light color choices. Here’s how to decide what to spec.

**Safety Codes and Standards**

These are the two most common building and safety code requirements regarding residential stair lighting:

1. **All stairs and landings must have adequate illumination.** This typically means 1 foot-candle or 12 watts of visible light per square foot.

2. **Lighting for exterior stairs must be switched on either from inside a residence or with an automatic timer or sensor.**

Please check with your local building code department for more information and/or updated changes. Codes may vary by location.
General Guidelines for Lighting Steps and Stairs

Keep these points in mind when designing your lighting plan.

■ Allow 1–2 watts of light per square foot of stair.
■ For practical purposes, illumination should follow the pattern of the ingress/egress.
■ Avoid glare. Choose fixtures that are properly shielded or that are not invasive to the eye.
■ Do not overlight; having too many fixtures can be distracting.
■ The fixture height, distance, and placement will affect the illumination pattern. The illumination will continue to spread as the placement height increases.
■ Warm light (2700K–3000K) is most desired for residential applications
■ Consider usage, long-term maintenance, and landscape conditions when selecting the fixture
■ Consider illuminating other hazards such as elevation changes, uneven surfaces, and sharp objects
■ Generally, as we age we require more light for visibility and comfort
■ Test the light output and placement at night prior to the installation. Fixture placement is critical.

Start by determining the required light pattern for adequate illumination and then select a fixture to match your design.

How to Select the Right Lighting Fixtures

Let’s start with a basic stair design. The maximum stair height for the vertical riser is 7 ¾ inches; the minimum depth of the walking tread is 10 inches; the common horizontal length of a stair is 36 inches; and a typical nosing projection is 1 to 1 ½ inches over the riser.

First, determine how the lighting will be used. Is it accent lighting or task lighting?

■ Accent lighting is soft/ambient and indirect light, and it is usually placed on the vertical stair riser or overhanging nose/lip.
■ Task lighting is projected/directional articulating light, and it is typically placed on the side of the stair or step.

Then, decide where you will place the lighting because that can determine the type of fixture that will work best.

■ On the vertical riser: surface or recessed mount designs
■ On the stair wall or side of the stair-case: surface or recessed mount designs
■ Under the stair nose lip or cap: mason hardscape or LED tape light
■ Landscape fixtures: directional light onto the stairs, steps, or pathway
■ Landscape post or bollard: decorative fixtures that will provide general, ambient light on the ground
■ Overhead: down lighting on to the stairs, steps, or ground

Finally, consider the electrical and mounting options.

Most Popular Stair Lighting Options
Electrical Options

- 12V LED: considered the most practical for cost and ease of installation, many design options
- 120V LED: hard-wired and must be installed by a licensed electrician
- Other 120V options (e.g., fluorescent): not as efficient as LED technology
- Solar: not practical due to inconsistent power, sensitivity to available sunlight, and battery life

Mounting and Category Options

- Surface mount: installs with anchors and screws directly onto a hardscape surface
- Recessed/ in wall / in paver: installs with a housing box and a outside cover plate
- Linear tape, field-cuttable LED, LED tape: installs with landscape adhesives; can be used with or without a mounting channel and/or lens
- Hardscape module: sealed and potted compact fixture; installs under the hardscape lip or cap.

Incorporate aesthetics into your safety lighting plan. Great designs do both: illuminate pathways and seating areas while enhancing the ambiance.
Making an Entrance

Mathews Nielsen Landscape Architects sets the stage for an important cultural asset in Brooklyn that is undergoing a transformation.
When Brooklyn College for the Performing Arts needed a new landscape design for the rebuild and renovation of two of its primary buildings, the college turned to New York City-based Mathews Nielsen Landscape Architects (MNLA) as consultants to Pfeiffer Partners, the architects for the project.

MNLA was tasked with creating a new entry to the Brooklyn College campus that also serves as the main entry to the Leonard & Claire Tow Center for the Performing Arts (formerly the Gershwin Theatre). The project also involved designing a plaza for the theater and an entry, as well as a garden nestled between the Tow Center and Whitman Hall, still under renovation and home to another theater.

“This performing arts venue is really important to Brooklyn,” says Signe Nielsen, founding principal of MNLA. “It attracts a lot of local residents and it brings quite fine performances of music, dance, and theater.”

Hampered by funding hurdles, the project was more than a decade in the making. “We started the project, believe it or not, in 2007,” says Nielsen, “and it was literally just finished a couple of months ago.”
The Plan

Nielsen notes that the new center for the performing arts is on a corner, and owing to the angle of the street, its façade is visible from a distance and from mass transit. The entrance to the theater is through a gate that students also use to enter the campus.

"The entrance also needed major upgrading," Nielsen says. "So we had to relocate a guard booth and bike racks and reconfigure the circulation so that the theater-directed patrons and students going to classes were not all falling on top of each other. The entrance was improved right to the property line and fairly deep into the campus so that it’s also tied into access to Whitman Hall and other parts of the campus. It makes a welcoming plaza for people to gather before, during, or after performances."

The Garden

The area that would become the garden was, on first encounter, a mystery that Nielsen describes as “this really strange, leftover rhomboid of a space,” When she first viewed it, Nielsen wondered why it sloped downhill and thought that perhaps it was supposed to be an outdoor amphitheater, but she then wondered why it was asphalt.
“And then I discovered that underneath it is a major sewer line, which is why that area is un-built. So we could only have a light touch on top of this—we couldn’t plant any trees, and it has a rather thin soil profile. The area is also fairly shady because of the two theaters on either side, so we planted things like ferns and woodland perennials and evergreen groundcover.

The Plaza
MNLA used precast concrete pavers for the plaza as a kind of border, responding to some of the geometry of the performing arts center and to tie into the entrance. They also added seating pockets and plantings closer to the theater.

“There’s the space that’s immediately near the theater for patrons, then the next zone out is the circulation space shared by students and patrons. The next zone is seating, which serves as an interface between the campus and the theater. Then beyond these zones, the landscape is all softscape and merges into the rest of the campus landscape at that point. It’s kind of a gradation, like a ripple within a pond,” notes Nielsen.

Plantings
“We transplanted as many trees as we could that were in the way—cherries, a linden, and a Japanese maple,” says Nielsen. “Then we added to the mix a golden rain-tree and dogwood, and we tied the transplanted cherries into a cherry walk.

“We put in all new street trees but didn’t put in any major canopy trees because we preserved all of those. It’s more the understory that the campus was missing. We find that many landscapes that aren’t very well maintained are just turf and big trees, with no midscale plantings.

“We wanted to bring the scale down without really encumbering their maintenance staff, so we used understory flowering trees, and then in the donor garden, we used low-level groundcovers.”

Sitting Areas
Due to budget constraints, the first material of choice for the sitting areas was mulch. Nielsen says that in an attempt to save money and to be more sustainable, MNLA suggested that compacted stone dust be used for the sitting areas outside of the main line of foot traffic. “That way we could have the trees growing up through it, and it would be seamless and lovely,” she explained. Although there was initial resistance to using the compacted stone dust, due to concerns that it would become messy, in the end, says Nielsen, the college agreed to it.

Completion
The renovation of the college’s Whitman Hall, which includes the 2,400-seat Walt Whitman Theatre, is scheduled to wrap up in spring 2019. The building will be fronted by its own plaza, which is, in turn, fronted by trees and softscape, completing the setting for the transformation.
Shisen-do Villa Garden with momiji. Imagine this scene in spring when the azaleas provide full bloom.

GETTING INSPIRED IN
Kyoto, Japan

PHOTOGRAPHY BY CATHY CARR, FAPLD
When I noticed five small people standing on the tarmac below the massive Boeing 777 in which I was seated, waving goodbye to my fellow passengers and me, I was shocked and delighted. What a unique culture I was entering! The ground crew was wishing us a safe journey from Tokyo’s Narita to Kyoto’s Osaka airport.

Last November, I joined a nine-day tour of Kyoto gardens arranged by British-Colombian photographer Allan Mandell and led by author Judith Clancy, who has lived in Kyoto for over forty years. Allan’s APLD Webinar on landscape photography a few years ago featured images of Kyoto that touched my soul, so I jumped at the chance to join one of Allan’s spring and fall garden tours in Kyoto. I was attracted to seeing Japan’s ephemeral fall foliage, specifically, Japanese maples, called momiji.

My practice of garden design has always hinged on the changing experiences of each garden. My trip to Kyoto’s gardens, while brief, confirmed and deepened my practice.

Plant Selection: The Importance of Evergreens

Landscape designers embrace the use of native plants to foster biodiversity in our gardens. However, because there are few native evergreen shrubs and perennials where I design, I use non-invasive, non-native plants to fulfill aesthetic goals as long as they thrive in my site’s environmental conditions.
Crane stone and turtle islands in the lake at Renge-ji.

I depend on a large number of Japanese plant species for evergreen interest. *Rhododendron* (both azaleas and rhodies), *Camellia, Aucuba, Pieris, Pachysandra, Taxus,* and *Cryptomeria* have unique qualities and thrive in the Mid-Atlantic region. I often use dwarf *Chamaecyparis;* its whorled foliage is an incomparable rich, satiny velvet. Often, my designs contain up to one-third evergreen plants.

Some of the most revered gardens in Kyoto are almost completely evergreen. We visited gardens where 30, 50, or even 100 types of moss were nurtured. Moss complements dry Zen gardens, and its vibrancy fluctuates with the amount of rainfall.

**Appreciating Seasonality More Deeply**

Japan has also given us marvelous deciduous species such as mophead hydrangeas, *Corylopsis, Hamamelis,* fragrant *Lilium, Magnolia,* chrysanthemums, and (to my mind), the most beautiful species of crape myrtle, *Lagerstroemia faurei.* Not last among deciduous aristocrats are the Japanese maples, of course.
I chose to practice landscape design because of my love for the changeability of plants, and I often specify deciduous plants because they do vary throughout the year. *Amsonia hubrichtii, Itea virginica, Fothergilla gardenii*, and *Aesculus parviflora* are favorite multiseasonal plants.

Japanese culture venerates nature and in Kyoto, recognition of the seasons is intense. *Momiji-gari*, or “hunting autumn leaves,” is as popular as *Hanami*, or “cherry blossom viewing.” Forest-bathing, insect-listening, and snow- and moon-viewing parties are also common.

During my autumn trip, I found that textiles selected for dressing or for a tokonoma’s wall hanging might be decorated with a sculptural *momiji*’s line, color, texture, and grace. A *kaiseki-ryōri* (an exquisitely balanced, seasonally appropriate, multicourse meal) included autumnal specialties like walnut-flavored tofu cut into the shape of a maple leaf and served
on finely patterned plates of seasonal motifs. Ginkgo berries garnished a dessert ice. I saw autumnal *Ikebana* with seedpods, berries, branches, and material that alluded to spiderwebs.

**Beyond Appreciation to Acceptance, Humility, and Peace**

Beyond revering the physicality of nature, however, Japanese culture esteems the rustic, the aged, and admires the markings of humans and history. Raked sand, for example, is symbolic of life’s entire cycle of birth, aging, and passing away. I absorbed the deep Japanese awareness of life as ever-changing and fleeting.

The Japanese also train themselves to celebrate impermanence, known as *wabi-sabi*, which is a way of life. The art of living a positive and graceful life requires attention to intrinsic beauty for all five senses while also accepting the inevitable processes of growth, ripening, and decay. Japanese gardens exude a cultural sixth sense of acceptance, tranquility, and peace. I was often humbled by a powerful sensation of spirituality in Kyoto’s gardens.

*Heisei* is the Japanese term that describes a completely mature person who accepts impermanence and develops mental composure. My visit to the gardens of Kyoto inspired me to create peaceful atmospheres that encourage contemplation and induce a deep appreciation of harmony, imperfection, and beauty. I aspire to infuse an essence of acceptance and spiritual solace into the gardens I design.
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