

Take it Outside

Tips that will help you love your landscape and crank up curb appeal

COMPILED BY MARY VINNEDGE

THE SECOND INSTALLMENT of our 2014 series “The Takeaways” presents information for enhancing landscape aesthetics and curb appeal, caring for plants, and enjoying the outdoors around your home. The following timeless advice, statistics and how-to tips were excerpted from past issues of *Design NJ*.

Before making major landscaping additions or changes, check local ordinances for restrictions on impervious hardscaping (materials that block drainage), setbacks and other requirements, advises Mitchell Knapp of Scenic Landscaping in Haskell.

October/November 2011

Repeating plant and hardscape materials within a landscape design will create continuity and cohesiveness. Landscape design by Cross River Design in Annandale. ►

August/September 2012

When installing a landscape, leave enough space between plants so they can grow to their mature size without crowding and also for air circulation to avoid problems such as mold, says Ron Cording of Cording Landscape in Towaco.

April/May 2006



PHOTOGRAPHY PETERRYMWI



COURTESY OF CHUX LANDSCAPING

▲ Some New Jersey municipalities don't count steppingstones interspersed with lawn or ground cover as impervious hardscaping. Here's an example in Tenafly. Design by Chux Landscaping, now part of Artisan Landscapes and Pools in Pine Brook. *April/May 2005*



COURTESY OF CIPRIANO LANDSCAPE DESIGN

▲ Materials used in hardscaping — such as retaining walls, columns and steps — should match or complement the home, says Chris Cipriano of Cipriano Landscape Design in Mahwah. *October/November 2006*



PHOTO BY ROSEMARY CARROLL

▲ Container plantings can break up a blah expanse of siding, wood or masonry next to a deck or patio, and they look great on steps. Pots can be moved around within the landscape: front and center when prettiest; around the corner or on the side of the house when not in bloom. Another plus: Container plantings seldom get weeds. *April/May 2003*

TWO REASONS TO BE A TREE-HUGGER:
The net cooling power of a young, healthy tree equals 10 room-size air conditioners operating 20 hours a day. One acre of forest absorbs six tons of carbon dioxide and puts out four tons of oxygen — meeting the annual needs of 18 people. *June/July 2005*



COURTESY OF CIPRIANO LANDSCAPE DESIGN

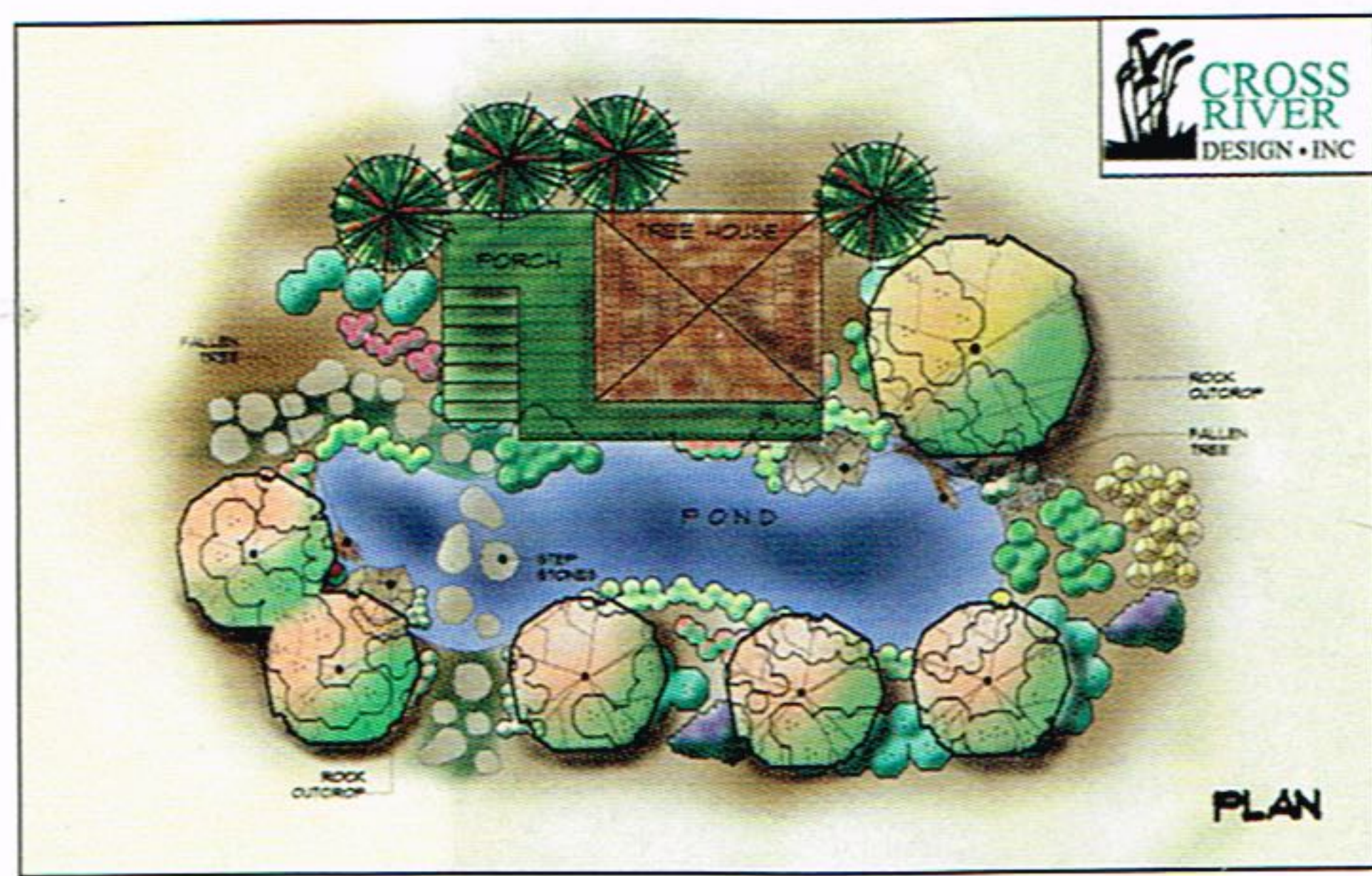
◀ "Economists always rank landscaping among the top five home improvements for return on investment" — as much as 258 percent, says Chris Cipriano of Cipriano Landscape Design in Mahwah. *August/September 2011*

"The worst winter threat [to plants] is windburn," says Doug Collinson of Collinson Bros. Landscaping/Premier Pools by Collinson in Wharton. Hydrate well before winter and add a 2- to 3-inch layer of bark mulch in bed areas of trees, shrubs and perennials so they can fend off dryness. *October/November 2010*

Remember this sage advice for planting trees: "If you plant it low [too deep in the soil], you never know. If you plant it high, it will never die," says Ron Cording of Cording Landscape in Towaco. *April/May 2006*

Before hiring a landscape designer, look at the landscapes he or she did three, five, eight, 10 years ago, says Howard Roberts, then of Cross River Design in Annandale and Red Bank and now owner of Liquid Inc. in Pittstown. In each site, the scene should be attractive, with healthy plants that don't look overgrown. *February/March 2010*

Before you powerwash brick, presoak it with water before applying detergent to avoid discoloration, says Scott Alderton of Briggs & Stratton. *August/September 2006*



COURTESY OF CROSS RIVER DESIGN

▲ "The master plan is typically the smallest cost associated with a [landscape] project, but it's the engine that drives the whole thing, says Howard Roberts, then of Cross River Design and now of Liquid Inc.

April/May 2008

Dealing with Poison Ivy

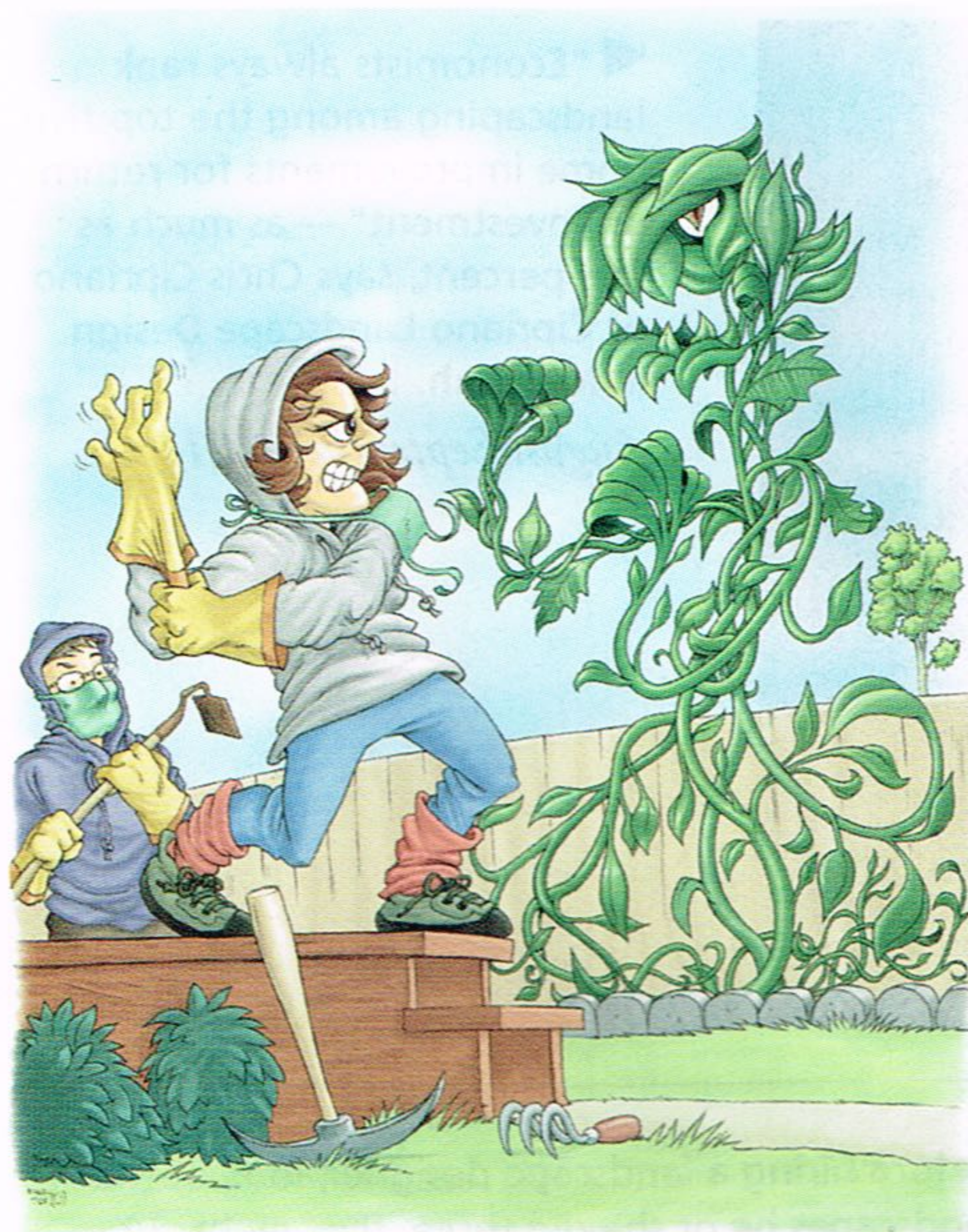


ILLUSTRATION BY MIKE SCOTT

▲ You can't burn it (the smoke is potentially fatal), and herbicides don't neutralize the plant's toxic oil, urushiol; pulling it out of the ground is the most effective option. But this makes the urushiol airborne, so it can land on clothes and skin. When doing battle, cover up well and take periodic breaks (if you've got a major project) to let the airborne urushiol settle. Then take a shower and scrub thoroughly.

April/May 2010

Decorative painting — specifically trompe l'oeil (fool the eye) brushwork — adorns the steps and porch of a Trenton home. ►

April/May 2006

ANOTHER OPTION: You can faux-paint concrete sidewalks to resemble bricks; chalkboard erasers can serve as stamps for the project.

The rule of green thumb is to plant bulbs at a depth two times their diameter.

October/November 2006

A container-gardening must: Make sure all plants in a single pot share the same water, soil, fertilizer and light needs.

April/May 2003

"A mulching lawn mower can recycle the nitrogen from clippings so one application of a natural fertilizer may be all you need each year. Certainly no grass clippings need ever be removed from the lawn if it is mowed at a height of 3½ inches," says William Weiss III of Greenland Landscape Co. in Paramus.

December 2011/January 2012

Plant spring-blooming bulbs in fall after two solid weeks of sweater weather, says Jo-Anne van den Berg-Ohms of Van Engelen and John Scheepers bulb companies.

October/November 2006

Deadhead the spent blossoms of spring-blooming bulbs so the plant doesn't spend energy producing a seedpod. But leave the foliage to decompose and return nutrients to the bulbs to be used for the next year's blossoms.

October/November 2006

Alliums, muscari (grape hyacinths) and narcissuses are deer-resistant bulbs that are planted in fall and bloom in spring and summer, says Mitchell Knapp of Scenic Landscaping in Haskell.

October/November 2010



PHOTO BY KELLY S. AND

To avoid fungal diseases and root rot, use pot feet under container plants, advises Peg Reynolds of Reynolds Landscaping in Manahawkin.

June/July 2011

After eight to 10 years, you can paint vinyl siding, says Eileen McComb of Benjamin Moore.

October/November 2005



PHOTO BY ROSEMARY CA

▲ Draperies used in outdoor rooms diffuse harsh sunlight, provide a softening effect against wood and masonry, and define the boundaries of spaces. Leann Lavin of Duchess Designs in Monmouth Beach devised these porch drapes (made of Sunbrella® fabric).

August/September 2008



COURTESY OF ARAPAHOE LANDSCAPE CONTRACTORS

Noisy Neighborhood?

Try these tactics to muffle racket from traffic or exuberant neighbors:

◀ John Butler of Arapahoe Landscape Contractors installs waterfalls and fountains, which add a sense of tranquility as well as drown out noise.

October/November 2011

Pamela Dabah of Dabah Landscape Designs in Morristown advises the use of walls. Stone is a beautiful but costly option; stucco-covered cinderblocks with bluestone coping are attractive and less expensive, she says.

October/November 2011

If you're hiding a central air-conditioning unit, an oil tank or anything else you will need to access, live screening options include arborvitae, rhododendron and Schip laurel, says landscaper Scott Parker of Parker Homescape LLC in Basking Ridge ...

... Or use wood, such as a section of fencing, which will cut down on sound from an air-conditioning unit, adds Oakland landscape architect Edward Clark; put plants in front of it to soften the look.

February/March 2007

Bill Moore, a landscape architect with Cipriano Landscape Design, reminds homeowners to be patient with perennials by reciting this gardening adage: "The first year, they sleep; the second year, they creep; the third year, they leap."

February/March 2006

Most culinary herbs should be fed no more than every other week, says Drew Madlinger of Madlinger Exterior Design in Branchburg. Overfertilizing will dilute herbs' flavor.

June/July 2013

Replacing your front door? Go with something in a style that harmonizes with the exterior architecture rather than the first one that catches your attention. If you have a simple Cape Cod-style home, for instance, a classic six-panel door works well. Then there's the matter of color: "Matching the door to the shutters is a safe way to get it right," says Sheila Rich, an allied member of the American Society of Interior Designers, member of the International Interior Design Association and owner of Sheila Rich Interiors in Monmouth Beach. "To do something special, go with a contrasting color that lets the door stand out," Rich adds. Alexander Bol, AIA, of Bol Architecture in Berkeley Heights, offers this important postscript: Light colors tend to hold up better under exposure to the elements.

October/November 2009

Dealing with Deer

An 8-foot fence will keep them out. If you can't go that tall, erect two 4-foot-tall fences 5 feet apart, which prevent deer from the running start needed to leap a fence. Even a picket fence is a strong deterrent, because deer don't like being enclosed.

June/July 2011

Deer don't care for ferns, which — while known for liking moist, shady sites — are surprisingly versatile plants, say John Butler of Arapahoe Landscape Contractors in Mahwah and Britney O'Donnell of Britney O'Donnell Landscape Designs in Stockton. Autumn fern, male fern and hay-scented fern tolerate dry shade; ostrich fern, hay-scented fern, male fern and royal fern tolerate sun; cinnamon and royal ferns tolerate wet sites. ▼

August/September 2013



PHOTO BY GRAHAM TOMLIN

▲ If you want a certain plant in your yard despite knowing it's deer catnip — perhaps hostas, roses or arborvitae — set it inside a border of plants they dislike. "Hide the roses in the middle of butterfly bush [buddleia]," for instance, says Bob Malgieri of Borst Landscape & Design in Allendale. Other plants deer avoid include rosemary and marigolds.

June/July 2011



PHOTO BY PLEASANT RUN NURSERY

Plants have a tough time dealing with airborne salt near the shore. Peg Reynolds of Reynolds Landscaping in Manahawkin says sedums, Montauk daisies, ice plant, catmint, lavender and lamb's-ear are all up to the challenge.

April/May 2004

Cut down perennials in the fall (or at least before growth begins the next spring).

February/March 2006

Turn up curb appeal to get buyers inside your home, says Gail Meyer of Staged Homes in Holmdel. For example, she will purchase topiaries or chrysanthemum plants (with blooms that complement the color of the home) and wicker furniture to amp up the exterior ambience.

February/March 2009