

# HC & G

Hamptons Cottages and Gardens

COTTAGESGARDENS.COM | JULY 1, 2017



# ARTISTS & COLLECTORS





GARDENING



# Garden Guru

In her new book, landscape architect Janice Parker celebrates the natural world



**Beautifully Preserved**

Parker restored the dolphin fountain, balustrade, and steps on a side terrace at an early-20th-century property designed by Ellen Biddle Shipman. (INSET) 'Sky Pencil' holly is softened by perennials and hydrangeas. See Resources.

**HC&G: What got you into landscape architecture?**

**JANICE PARKER, landscape architect and author, *Designing a Vision (Images, 2017)*:** My first memory is of a flower—it must have been a peony, because it was the size of my head. I grew up in Astoria, New York, yet I was always drawn to the natural world. I eventually worked at Renny, doing the best parties and decorating Studio 54. It was such a playground, the most fun job I ever had.

When I studied landscape architecture, I wanted to be able to build mountains and dig lakes, but at the end of any project, it's the flowers that matter. Flowers draw you in, and

as you learn to understand the natural world, you start to think about landscaping, not gardening. Is there anything more fun than going to a nursery and buying a perennial? It's the cheapest high.

**Which flower ranks among your top picks for the summer?**

People in the Hamptons want beautiful color all season long, so I would suggest summer-flowering bulbs, which are inexpensive, delightful, and unusual, even though they are not native. *Acidantha* [*Gladiolus murielae*], my favorite summer bulb, has the upright foliage of an iris and a scented gladiolus-like flower.



NELL LANDING, JR.





**Vantage Points**

(CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE LEFT) A waterside path planted with hydrangeas and *Pennisetum* leads to a bronze *Pomme de New York* sculpture by Les Lalanne. Clipped *Syringa reticulata* trees are surrounded by hydrangeas in box-edged parterres. Vines clamber up a poolside pergola. A limestone pathway featuring grass joints leads to a sunken terrace with views of Long Island Sound. A stone arch frames a garden entryway. See Resources.



**Regarding plants that are native, how are changes in the environment affecting your work?**

It's more important than ever to study a piece of land before starting a project. Dr. Donald J. Leopold [SUNY College of Environmental Science and Forestry, Syracuse (ESF)] and Dr. James Gibbs [director, Roosevelt Wild Life Station, Syracuse (RWLS)] have created a fascinating program called a bioblitz, which analyzes the land and animal life on a property and helps map out a plan for regaining the natural beauty of the landscape.

**How does it work?**

It's an extremely intensive 24-hour cataloging of a specific piece of land, a sort of eco-

assessment. With interns from SUNY Syracuse ESF, we recently studied a great swath of land in Southampton that was overrun with vines and deer. The bioblitz report enabled us to do a successful remediation and planting project on the property.

**Just how bad is our deer problem?**

Our evergreen palette has become very limited, so our winter gardens have lost a lot of diversity—and that's six months of the year! And the bigger picture is that our grandchildren will have no maples and oaks.

There are answers, but everyone needs to be included in a collaborative and innovative conversation about the situation. It's imperative that we try to do the right thing not just by the animal, but also by the environment. Deer exclusion doesn't work.

**What's your favorite natural landscape on Long Island?**

I don't know if it gets any better than Gerard Drive. I mean, the ocean beaches are great, but there's nothing like the rugged landscape of Gardiners Bay. —Alejandro Saralegui

TOP LEFT: MARLENE PILEY; ALL OTHER PHOTOS: NEIL LANDINO, JR.