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## MEET THE YOUNG GARDENERS

GROWING A LIVING ON THE VINEYARD

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# THE VINE

## Features

### 12 Meet the Young Gardeners

With dirty knees, strong backs, and over-filled trucks, six young gardeners are answering the question of how to make a (good) living on the Vineyard

BY LOUISA HUFSTADER

### 16 Built on Stilts

Nick Waldman's tree house design gives his clients an efficient multi-use space — and a maximum woodland view

BY LAURA D. ROOSEVELT

### 20 The Life-Changing Magic of Cottage Gardens

One flower can spark joy; plant a charming mess of perennials, and you'll be happy for summers to come

BY SUSIE MIDDLETON

## Departments

### 4 Editor's Note

### 5 On the Rock

Tools? Treats? Baby chicks? Bone broth? Chances are, we've got that.

### 9 Vine and Dine

Egg Sandwich Island

### 24 Insta Island

Barn Gram

### 26 House Talk

Ask the Architect: Porch or Attached Arbor?

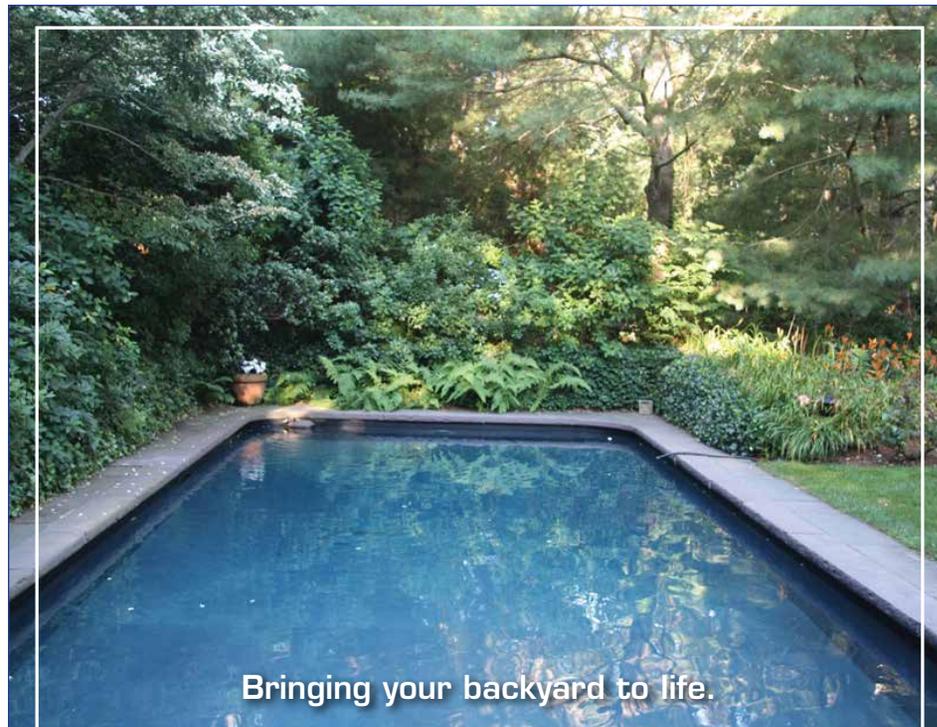
### 27 Q&A

**In Tile Style** An Interview with Annie Bradshaw

### 29 By the Numbers

Of Homework and High Design

**Cover photo:** Professional gardeners Ruby Hoy (right) and Tara Gayle (left). Photo by Jeanna Shepard. Story on p. 12



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### Editor's Note

### Spring Forward, Gracefully

Congratulations on making it through the winter without blowing up the woodstove or asking your spouse to go live in the shed. Winter's hard. But at least you get to hibernate for part of it. Now that spring is here, suddenly the pressure is on to get outside, tidy up, plant a garden, reinvent the wheel.

Don't worry, if you're an Islander—or a frequent visitor—you are, by definition, resourceful.

But we all need help and inspiration. In this issue of *The Vine*, we'll plan a cottage garden (p. 20), get expert advice about outdoor living spaces (p. 26), and consider how home design works from the inside looking out (p. 16). And we'll get totally inspired by a group of young Islanders making a living as gardeners and landscapers. (Now, if we could just find a place for them to live...)

Lastly, the most pressing matters: Where to buy baby chicks (p. 5); what to get for Mother's Day (p. 5); and how to find great egg sandwiches (p. 9).

Rest easy, spring (and the focus on joyful reinvention) passes quickly.

—Susie Middleton

## THE VINE

Vineyard Gazette Media Group

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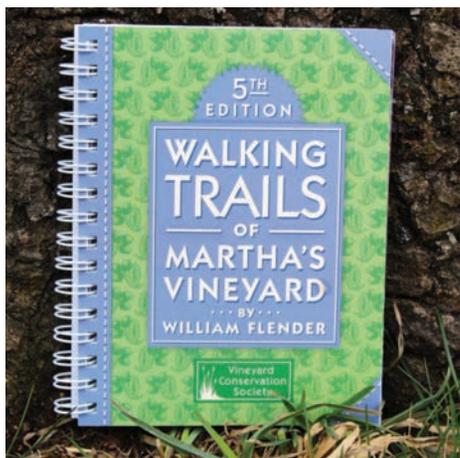


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## BOOK IT Happy Trails

Run, don't walk, to pick up the all-new, long-awaited 5th Edition of William Flender's *Walking Trails of Martha's Vineyard* (\$14.95). Ever since the 4th edition sold out last year, hikers have been standing by, waiting to lace up their

boots and start exploring 11 new trails—and 53 old favorites.

Now that copies of the 20th anniversary edition of the popular guidebook have arrived, the burning question is this: Which new trail to trek first? Signe Benjamin, programs and membership manager at Vineyard Conservation Society, told us, "Definitely, the new blue trail at Cedar Tree Neck Sanctuary."

The blue trail is a half-mile addition to the already breathtaking West Tisbury walk. According to Flenders, "The new blue trail follows the crest of the bluff, parallel to the beach, and like the Brown [trail] offers numerous viewpoints of the Sound." Say no more.

Boots on, people. And get ready for a long drive down a bumpy road.

Published by VCS, *Walking Trails of Martha's Vineyard* is available at Bunch of Grapes bookstore, Alley's General Store, Polly Hill Arboretum, and online at [vineyardconservation.org](http://vineyardconservation.org).

## LOCAL-LY Breakfast, Not in Bed

Breakfast in bed is great. But a week of ready-to-go breakfasts, post-Mother's Day, is even better. This year, along with the pancakes, surprise mom with a Vineyard breakfast kit of locally grown and made goodies: Squibnocket Rocket Chilmark Coffee (\$15, 12-oz. bag); a bag of Rosewater Market & Take Away's House Granola (\$10); a quart of raw milk from The Grey Barn and Farm (\$3.50 + \$2 bottle deposit); a dozen chicken or duck eggs (goose egg not included) from The GOOD Farm, sold at The Larder (\$8). Bonus prize: A polka-dot Emma Bridge-water mug from Rainy Day (\$28.95).

For vendors and locations:



[Chilmarkcoffeeco.com](http://Chilmarkcoffeeco.com); [Rosewatermv.com](http://Rosewatermv.com); [thegreybarnandfarm.com](http://thegreybarnandfarm.com); The Larder (714-785-0112); [Rainydaymv.com](http://Rainydaymv.com).

## TO GO, GO TO Something Sweet, On Second Thought

If breakfast isn't Mom's thing, visit Sonia and Valerio DeStefani's bustling little bakery, Sweet Bites, which opened this winter in the old Beetlebung Café



Anna Sylvia

## CHICK KIT Live-Action Peeps

Fair warning: Don't go into SBS The Grain Store to look at baby chicks without having a plan. That's like going to the animal rescue joint to "just look." On the other hand, if you do decide, on the spur of the moment (or even after much family discussion, preferably without tears) that it is time to start a small flock of laying hens, don't worry, you don't need a full-size coop—yet.

Here's what you will need: At least four or five baby chicks (\$2.80 each) so they can huddle together; starter feed (\$10.89 per bag), a feeder (\$2.19), a waterer (\$3.99), and maybe a bag of shavings (\$7.89). You'll also want one of those nifty aluminum heat lamps (\$19.99) and a bulb (\$11.39) to keep the little gals warm as they grow. At home you'll need to carve out a warm, protected spot for the babies.

Everything but the little hands for chick-cuddling available at SBS The Grain Store, 480 State Rd., Vineyard Haven. Chicks are heavy-breed brown-egg layers.

at Five Corners, and walk out with a clutch of chocolate cream-filled profiteroles, a sampling of brigadeiros (Brazilian truffles made from chocolate, condensed milk, and butter), or a little lemon meringue tart (\$5.99). (Good choice, that one. Ahem, in case anyone is listening.)

Sweet Bites, 32 Beach St., Vineyard Haven.

## TEST DRIVE Plucky Shears

We have it on good authority that these compact shears made it through an entire season on a busy small farmette with no sharpening needed. If you have a cutting garden—herbs, flowers, or vegetables—it's time to give up the habit of grabbing a dull pair of scissors. Instead, tuck a pair of these little (6-inch) Dramm shears (\$15), into your back pocket.

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Three-inch WFH terra cotta pots, footed or not, \$12.75 at Donaroma's.



**SNEAKY SHOPPER**

**Finding the First Fresh Asparagus**

The Morning Glory Farm farmstand opens May 5, and you know what that means: Spring's first local asparagus. But a week or so before the farm stand opens, impatient asparagus lovers can nonchalantly hang around the Morning Glory parking lot—kind of like a dog staring at the kitchen counter—and perhaps get lucky. Some years, when the first asparagus is ready to cut around the very end of April, Morning Glory will sell bunches out of their greenhouse before the farm stand opens. Good luck.

**OPEN FOR BUSINESS**

**The Larder, and a Kitchen for Rent**

Your pickles [jam, granola, tomato sauce] are the best, right? Maybe you're thinking of taking the leap to selling and marketing them this summer. Head's up: There's a new certified kitchen for rent in Vineyard Haven. Farmer Jefferson Munroe (The GOOD Farm) and restaurateur Daniele Barrick (Scottish Bakehouse) have teamed up on a redo of the space that formerly housed Tisbury Farm Market on 342 State Road.

The storefront is home to The Larder, the place to go for custom meat cuts, fresh sausages, bone broth, soups, duck confit, smoked meats, fresh eggs, and all manner of old-fashioned butchery and charcuterie.

The back of the shop houses the new commercial kitchen, which is available to rent by the hour. Because the kitchen is certified for prepared food production, it solves one-half of the equation if you need a space to get a small business going.

The other half? You'll need your ServSafe certification. Lucky for you, there's a class coming up on the Island—May 8 at the Portuguese-American Club.

Visit [servsafe.com](http://servsafe.com) for more information on classes. The Larder is currently open Friday, Saturday, Sunday, 12 to 6. For more information on kitchen rental, call 714-785-0112.



**FLOWER POWER**

**Double-Click on Cosmos**

Now is the perfect time to plant annual flower seeds in trays. Seedlings will need a little protection from cold nights (you can bring them inside or cover with plastic), but they will be just the right size for transplanting in early June.

Starting your flowers early can also bring you earlier blooms. In fact, some annual flowers, like the easy-to-grow and hard-not-to-love cosmos, have a built-in late blooming gene which can actually be short-circuited if seeds are started early. So while you'll still have a profusion of cosmos in late summer, you'll have blooms in June and July, too.

Why not just buy your flower seedlings at one of the nurseries when the time comes? That's a fine idea to supplement your own, especially if you want a lot of plants. But the cool thing about growing your own is the range of varieties. At nurseries, you'll sometimes only

see the old-fashioned single Cosmos "Sensation." But there's an astounding variety of cosmos you can grow from seed. Each has slightly different petals, and color ranges from palest pink to deepest crimson. The "double" variety known as Double Click is stunning.

Cosmos, Double Click Blend, Botanical Interests Seeds, \$2.99 for 25 seeds, available at Vineyard Gardens.



Susie Middleton photos

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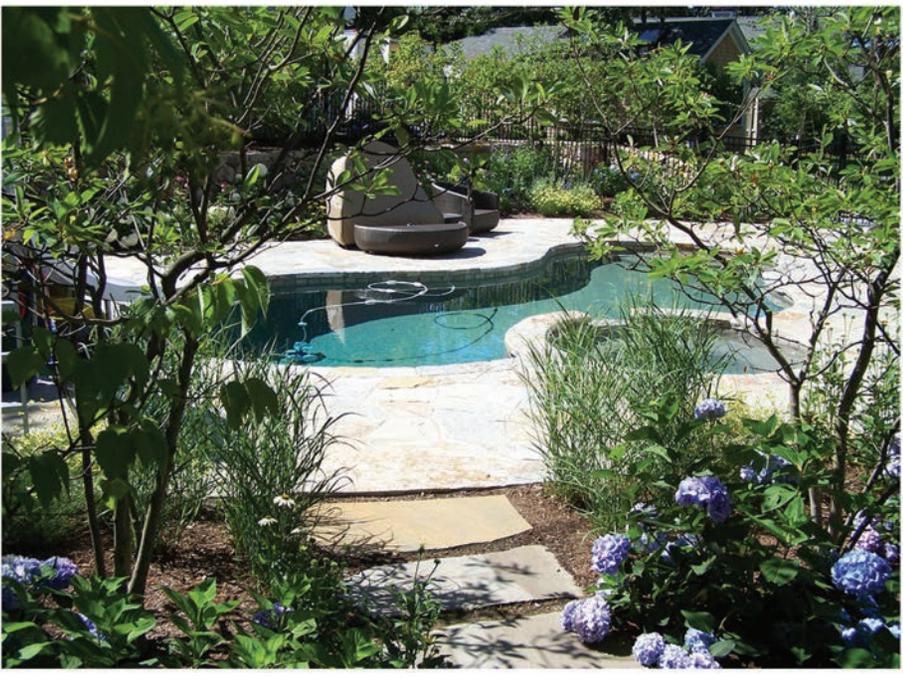
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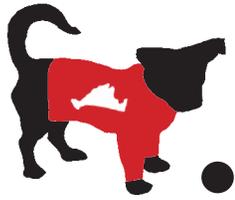


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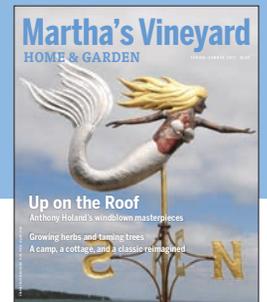
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Alison L. Mead

## EGG SANDWICH ISLAND

**With more than 30 restaurants on the Island serving egg sandwiches, there's no excuse for arriving at work hungry. We took a bite out of three.**

BY ALISON L. MEAD

No one knows for sure how the egg sandwich got to Martha's Vineyard; there is no mention of it in any of our history books, no photos of Victorian ladies picnicking on the cliffs with a hamper of egg sandwiches.

What we do know: The sandwich probably originated in 19th century industrial London as a street snack for factory workers heading off to early shifts. When it crossed the Atlantic, it took up with railroad workers and settlers traveling west, and the first truly American version called "The Denver" featured a ham, onion, and pepper omelette between two pieces of white bread.

It's no accident that the egg sandwich gained popularity as more people left work on the farm (and the tradition of big, generous breakfasts) and began to work in factories. Here was a budget meal-in-one that could be eaten on the go.

But while American workers were probably eating egg sandwiches throughout the early 20th century, it

took Jack-in-the-Box to debut it in 1971 on a fast-food menu. Only a year later, McDonald's launched the Egg McMuffin®, a smartly designed hand-held gem that filled bellies for a cheap price. The perfectly round fried egg (cooked in a ring), American cheese, Canadian bacon, salt, and pepper on a toasted, buttered



Alison L. Mead

English muffin became a nationwide sensation.

It took a few decades, but eventually the egg sandwich evolved. It became customizable. Rolls, biscuits and bagels were options. Cheddar or Swiss cheese offered more flavor than American. Sausage and bacon could swap out for Canadian bacon. Vegetables like sautéed mushrooms or caramelized onions snuck in. Pickles, sriracha, and kimchi appeared.

And every self-respecting breakfast joint put an egg sandwich on its menu. Restaurants even began offering local eggs as an option—for a little extra charge. (It's not documented, but perhaps that was our contribution to egg sandwich history!)

Who knows when egg sandwiches made the leap to the Vineyard, but one thing is certain: They are here to stay. More than 30 restaurants in all six towns serve egg sandwiches. That probably tops the number of places serving burgers or even chowder. And a majority of those restaurants offer take-out, of course, in the spirit of eating your egg sandwich on the run (or in your truck... with your dog).

Despite the heavy competition in the Best of the Vineyard contest, sponsored by Martha's Vineyard Magazine, the egg sandwiches of two restaurants—Scottish Bakehouse and 7afoods—have come out on top for the last two years. With upstart Little House Café doing a pretty brisk sandwich business, we decided to take a gander at a sandwich from each of these three spots. The most interesting difference between the three? The bread. Muffin? Roll? Biscuit? You decide.

## EGG SANDWICHES, TOWN BY TOWN\*

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\*List may not include all restaurants

## Taking a Bite Out of Three Egg Sandwiches

### 7AFOODS

#### Best on a biscuit

Years ago, when 7afoods chef and owner Dan Sauer lived in New York city, the egg sandwich was part of his daily life.

“When I worked early mornings, I’d go to the bodega and they would make me an egg sandwich and I would eat it on the way to the subway and, especially in the winter, it was just the perfect start of the day,” he said.

Now Mr. Sauer serves egg sandwiches to a line of hungry Islanders and visitors every morning but Sunday.

While 7a offers a choice of English muffin, biscuit, or cheddar jalapeño biscuit, the flaky, buttery biscuits have become famous Island-wide, and fans will wait for the latest batch to come out of the oven, just because. In addition to egg (fried or scrambled) and cheese, 7a also offers extras—spinach, tomato, red onion, bacon or housemade sausage.

Dan Sauer’s personal favorite? Egg, housemade sausage, tomato and cheese on a cheddar jalapeño biscuit.

*7afoods Egg Sandwich, \$4.75, plus \$2 per extra meat, \$1 more for local egg.*



### SCOTTISH BAKEHOUSE

#### The works on a muffin

For starters, Scottish Bakehouse offers a standard sandwich called “The Works” which tops a toasted, buttered English muffin with two fried eggs, spinach, red onion, cheese, and a choice of meat, all for one price.

“That’s the standard,” says Erica DeLorenzo, head of catering. “But you can customize it; sky’s the limit.”

The optional extras are almost limitless; with a combination of bread, meat, cheese, and vegetable selections, it’s almost like a slot machine of choices: croissant, local egg whites, tomato, goat cheese, and Fakin’ Bacon; gluten-free

bread, scrambled egg, cheddar and sausage; Portuguese cheese bread, fried egg, onion and linguica.

“You could turn a \$5 egg sandwich into a \$10 egg sandwich,” said Ms. DeLorenzo.

Breakfast is served all day at Scottish Bakehouse and early risers can even place their order online the night before so it’s ready right at 6 a.m.

“We believe in it; it’s something that people can count on, so we’re really proud of it,” said Ms. DeLorenzo. “It’s quick, it’s easy, it’s fast. It’s that staple—it’s so basic.”

*Scottish Bakehouse egg sandwich, \$5.00, plus \$1 each for extras.*



### LITTLE HOUSE CAFÉ

#### The egg roll

Ask Little House Café chef and owner Merrick Carreiro what the essential elements of an egg sandwich are and she doesn’t skip a beat.

“Soft bread, melted cheese, and a well-seasoned egg,” she says.

From 7:30 a.m. to 11 a.m., Ms. Carreiro and her staff serve their version of the classic egg sandwich: Fried egg and cheese on a Ciabatta roll. But their sandwich is customizable, too: Substitute local eggs and add avocado, grilled onion, feta cheese and arugula, for example.

“Very rarely do I just get a regular egg sandwich order, so rarely that when I get one I’ll ask the servers, “Are you sure they just wanted an egg and cheese sandwich?” she said.

Since Ms. Carreiro cooks breakfast at the café every morning, she even knows regulars’ special orders by heart.

“Nothing gets by me,” she said. “I know them so well that I’ll look at the name and I don’t even read the ticket. So when they change it, it throws me off a little.”

*Little House Café egg sandwich, \$4.50, plus \$1 for extras*



Susie Middleton photos



Photo courtesy of Peacock Alley

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Ruby Hoy, 27 (left), works for Wild Violets in West Tisbury. Tara Gayle, 32 (right), started Gayle Gardens three years ago.

## MEET THE YOUNG GARDENERS

**With dirty knees, strong backs, and overfilled trucks, six young gardeners are answering the question of how to make a (good) living on the Vineyard**

BY LOUISA HUFSTADER • PHOTOS BY JEANNA SHEPARD

Gardening is big business all over Martha's Vineyard. Vacation property owners want manicured flower beds, aging Island residents hire professionals for the garden tasks they used to delight in doing themselves, and busy homeowners outsource their vegetable and herb patches.

To meet this demand, the Vineyard's long-established landscape and garden companies have been joined in recent years by a wave of younger gardeners. We caught up with six of them. Ranging in age from 27 to 37, these Islanders are taking advantage of a big opportunity to

carve out a spot for themselves in the Island economy.

By all accounts, there is no shortage of work.

Not for sissies, the hours are long and the job is physically demanding (see "A Day in the Gardening Life..." p. 14). But the pay is good and winters off allow for traveling. There's job growth, as well, if the entrepreneurial spirit takes hold; each of the gardeners we talked to has apprenticed with an established Island gardener, and many are starting or plan to start their own businesses.

"There's almost too much work. It's

mind-blowing," said Ryan White, 32, whose company The Avant Gardener specializes in formal English and Parisian-style gardens, many in Edgartown.

Tara Gayle, also 32 and the owner of her own company in Chilmark, agreed. "I think there is plenty of work here for everyone," said Gayle, a former art student who founded Gayle Gardens in 2014 and tends both ornamental and edible gardens, mostly up-Island.

"It was really scary when I first got started, because I didn't know if I would sink or swim," Gayle admitted. "I put an ad in the paper, I came up with a logo, I

put up cards and I just went with it."

Her gamble paid off: Gayle acquired enough garden accounts in her first year to keep going, and business has increased yearly since, allowing her to hire assistants to help with the workload.

"We're still small, but we're growing," says Gayle, who also raises vegetables for her own use and flowers for her floral design company, Hunter's Bend. This year, in her own garden, she is experimenting with planting heirloom grains—Scottish bere barley, red bearded upland rice and Tartary buckwheat — all of which, she said, were cultivated on the Vineyard during the Colonial era.

When she was growing up in New York, Gayle recalled, her botanically-minded father filled the family home with "billions of plants" and tended extensive gardens around the property. But, she added, "I never thought of it as a career path" until she began working for Arnie Fischer at Moonlight Gardening in

West Tisbury.

“He was a great teacher,” Gayle said. “He trusted you to use your creativity and your instincts. He let me design pots and gardens, and I learned very quickly because of him.”

### Art meets science

Vineyard native Ruby Hoy, 27, also got her start with Mr. Fischer and now works for Mary Wirtz, owner of Wild Violets. “She’s the mastermind, but she does allow me a lot of freedom in designing pots and different gardens,” said Ms. Hoy, who is also a photographer and assists with the company website.

For Hoy, the work of garden design and maintenance falls comfortably between her talent for visual art and the gift for sciences that earned her a scholarship to the University of Massachusetts in Amherst.

“Being a gardener feels like it brings together the creative and scientific aspects of my personality,” she said. “It’s a seasonal job, but that’s also a nice thing because you can travel for a couple of months.” When she’s not traveling—this year she visited Spain and Italy during the winter—Hoy lives at her family’s home in West Tisbury.

### Love and roses

Being a gardener can also lead to romance. (Who knew?) Emmy Sharkey, 26, and Elliott Tholen, 28, met on the job with Chase and Wood, a gardening service based in Edgartown. Now they’re planning a November wedding.

They both said they love the work

they do, hers chiefly with containers and gardens and his with heavier landscaping tasks. “There’s always something to do. It’s never-ending, which is great,” Tholen said.

Sharkey added that although she enjoys designing planters and gardens, this is likely to become more of a hobby in the future. She recently accepted a part-time job at the Edgartown Public Library and is looking to establish a library career.

For his part, Tholen sees a promising future. “It’s a great paying job,” he said, and there’s the possibility of starting his own company in time — if, he said, he can find a location to base it.

### Strictly edible

While Gayle Gardens, Wild Violets and Chase and Wood handle a variety of gardens and The Avant Gardener specializes in formal European designs, Leia French focuses strictly on the edible. After working for two seasons at Morning Glory Farm, French has designed and maintained private food gardens up-Island since 2012, recently naming her West Tisbury-based company Turnips and Thyme Vegetable Gardening.

Like others who have entered the Vineyard gardening industry over the past five years or so, French, now 37, got a boost from an established gardener.

“The person I was working for in 2012 asked if I wanted to take over,” she said. “I inherited a lot of gardens.”

A new mom with a baby daughter, French is scaling back her work this year. In 2016, she cared for 11 vegetable gardens, down from 15 at her busiest. This



Ryan White, 32, took over The Avant Gardener in Edgartown five years ago at the request of owner Mike Faraca, who was dying of cancer.

season she has referred all but four to other gardeners.

Demand for edible gardening services continues to increase, said French. “I’ve turned people away every year,” she said. “So far it hasn’t been slowing down at all. I feel there’s momentum forward.”

### Short list, long on service

Another gardener who got his start with a longtime Vineyard firm is Ryan White, whose company was founded before he was born. He took over The Avant Gardener five years ago at the request of owner Mike Faraca, who was dying of cancer.

With a degree in business from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, White had been working in the pharmaceutical industry. But he had also apprenticed with Faraca, whom the late Bailey Norton dubbed “the steward of North Water Street,” almost every season since he was a 13-year-old summer kid.

When Faraca told him The Avant Gardener would fold if he didn’t take it over, “I took a leap of faith and left my corporate existence and came back to the job I love the most,” White said.

Now Faraca’s son Lee is apprenticing with Mr. White during the high season,



Elliott Tholen, 28, loves the work he does as a landscaper with Edgartown’s Chase & Wood, and sees a good future for himself in the profession.



Leia French, 37, carved a niche for herself as a vegetable gardener. With a new baby, she’ll cut back this summer to four clients from a high of as many as 15.

while he completes his studies in landscape architecture and environmental engineering at Cal Poly during the school year.

“I’m very proud of him and I know his dad would be too, if he was still here,” White said. “He always has a job with me.”

If the younger Faraca should decide to strike out on his own one day, there’s plenty of precedent — and plenty of customers. The Avant Gardener serves only seven families, by choice.

“We have a small, highly select client portfolio and a concierge level of service,” said White, who has been known to send an employee home for violating the company dress code of tucked-in polo shirts from Vineyard Vines and a clean-shaven appearance.

“I turn work away frequently,” White added. “That sacrifice is necessary to keep the quality high. You can’t get greedy in this line of work. There’s so much work available.”

### Keeping it real

But while demand for gardeners remains plentiful, starting—or expanding—almost any business on the Vineyard means confronting the Island’s intractable housing problem. “There is just nothing for Islanders,” Gayle said, herself a renter who performs the twice-a-year “Island shuffle” between summer and winter tenancies.

“A lot of my friends and I are having trouble finding people to work for us,” Gayle added. “I’d like to hire people who live here. It’s a good job, it’s good money and it’s a great way to make a living—you’re outside all day playing in the dirt.”

But, she said, “They have to have a place to live.”

The Vineyard’s pro gardeners also must contend with seasonal traffic woes, weather extremes, and managing both customers’ expectations and the anxiety they can cause.

“It’s just the nature of the Island,” Hoy said. “It’s very polar and it just gets crazy so quickly.”

“Your work totally depends on the weather,” Gayle said. And Vineyard weather is not friendly to some of the plants that customers want to see in their gardens.

“Tomatoes are the number one request of most people, which is difficult because they don’t grow well here,” laments French. She’s also battled downy mildew in basil plants, and lost.

“I really like to do a good job, so sometimes I’m under a lot of stress,” she added. “Clients have very specific expectations.”

But no matter how hectic the job can get in high season, autumn always arrives. For many gardeners, it’s their favorite time of year.

“All the pressure’s off,” Mr. Tholen said. “Everybody’s gone home.”



## A DAY IN THE (GARDENING) LIFE OF TARA GAYLE

### AND SO IT BEGINS

5 a.m. Wake up with every intention of getting to the gym by 6. Snooze until 5:20 and then rush out the door to speed to the (Crossfit) gym for the 6 a.m. class. Very shortly thereafter, I eat an irresponsibly large breakfast (hopefully this includes a gluten-free cupcake from the Scottish Bakehouse), change, and head to West Tisbury to a vegetable garden I’ll tend for an hour.

### MEET THE CREW

8 a.m. I meet my crew at 7afoods around 8 and hope no one has quit because of, you know, Lyme disease. I buy a large coffee and stare longingly at the bulletin board for a year-round rental situation, even though those don’t exist because we have a housing crisis out here.

Around 8:30 a.m., we head to the first client of the day for a few hours. It’s a grab bag of mosquito, tick, or poison ivy infested locations, but every property is beautiful. Ten points if there’s an intolerable dog. I will either stay and work alongside my amazing crew, or move on to a different property.

### PAUSING (NOT) AT MIDDAY

11 a.m. I perpetuate my non-removable and horribly unattractive shorts tan while working in the morning sun. Around 12:30, if we’re in the area, we swing back by 7a for lunch. Preferably a tuna melt; it’s amazing.

1 p.m. I send the crew to the second property of the day while I head to the nursery; schedule orders, deliveries, and meetings; and contemplate what I’m doing with my life, all while trying not to clip my client’s mailbox.

### REALITY, CHECKING IN

1:30 p.m. I fantasize about what a day in a pencil skirt with a decent manicure must be like, seeing how I am eternally dressed in a tattered flannel.

2 p.m. I realize that I have the best life ever as I try to ignore the time-crunch of our short season and the stress that comes with it, while driving back up Island past the Allen Farm and the Atlantic ocean.

I split the next five hours between a couple different properties—weeding, pruning, planting pots, and watering everything in—and repeat a few of the same kinds of tasks I did in the morning.

### SLEEP, REPEAT

8:30 p.m. I finish my day well after the sun goes down, with just enough energy to make dinner, which might be a sweet potato that I eat standing up, over the stove. #bachelormeals

In the morning, I will get up and do it again. During a typical season, I tend to work seven days a week, having to force a few Sundays off to keep my sanity. But despite the high demands and the short season, I feel lucky to live a life I love in such a beautiful place.

— Tara Gayle



Elliott Tholen, 28, and Emmy Sharkey, 26, met on the job. A November wedding is planned.



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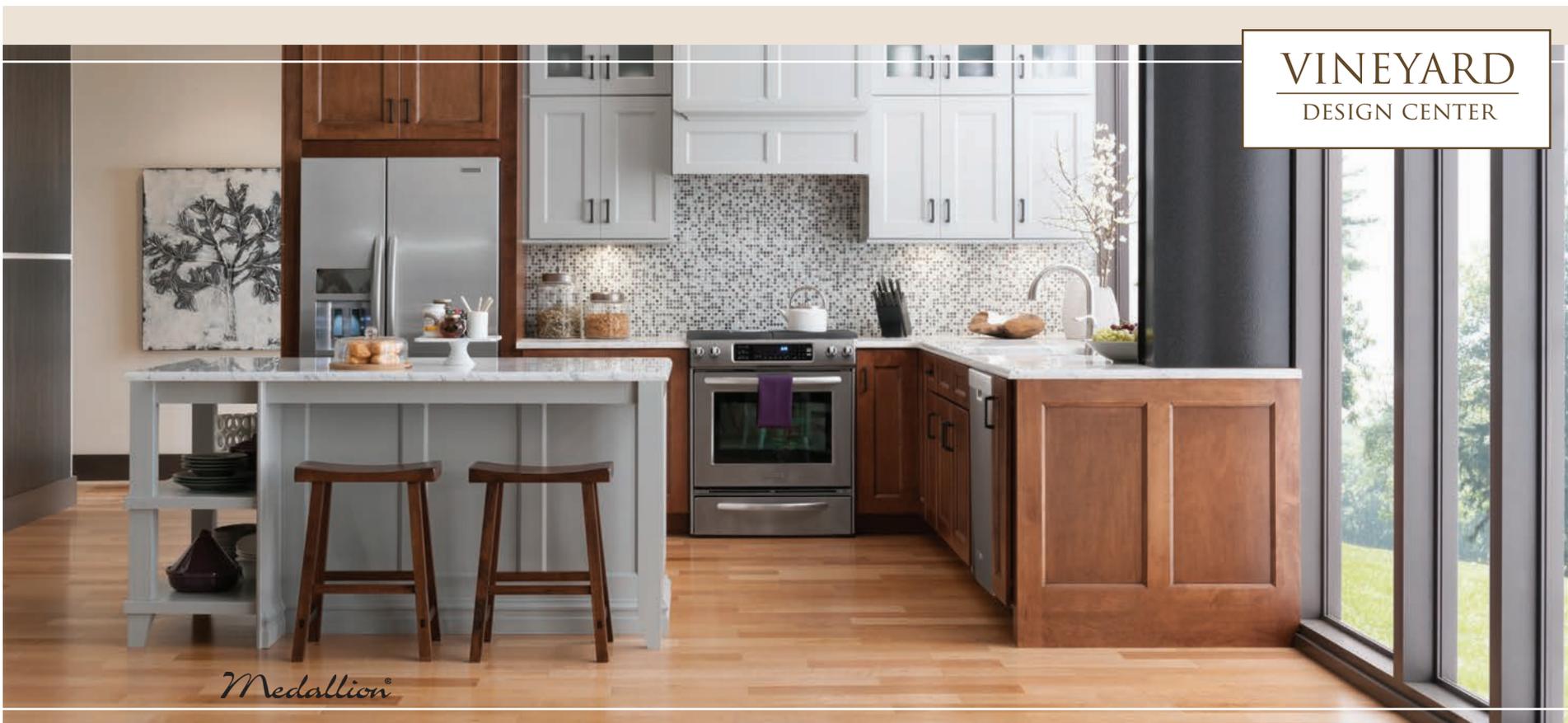
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Nick Waldman photos

When the studio is lit up at night, the garage fades into the darkness, adding to the impression that the treehouse is floating.

## Built on Stilts

**Nick Waldman's treehouse design gave his clients an efficient multi-use space—and a maximum view of the surrounding woods.**

BY LAURA D. ROOSEVELT

Architectural designer Nicholas Waldman has no beef with traditional Vineyard architecture; he just thinks that people a hundred years ago did it a little better than they do now. “I’m not anti-traditional,” he says; “I’m just more interested in architecture that responds to the specific site that it’s placed in and the specific needs of the homeowners.”

Today’s home builders’ requirements will differ from those of the people who built the first Capes and Colonials and Victorians, of course. Contemporary

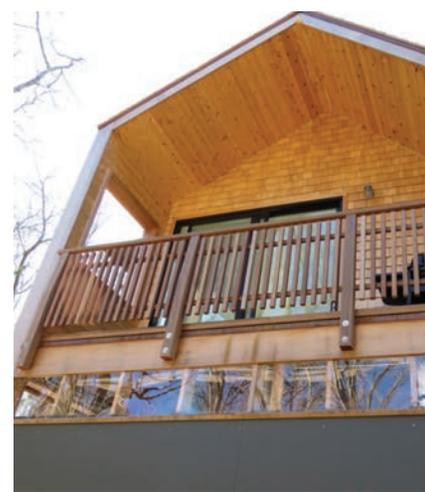
homeowners might want a large wall for a flat-screen TV, a bathroom on every floor, or energy efficient windows and doors. Daniel and Carolina Cooney, fellow parents who got to know Waldman at preschool drop-off and pick-up, wanted an above-garage detached bedroom for visiting relatives, plus a studio for Daniel, who is a graphic novelist. The resulting space incorporates a bedroom on one end, a studio (or living) area on the other, and a central bathroom flanked by two narrow hallways, one of which

provides Cooney with a large expanse of wall for exhibiting his work. Generous use of skylights and windows makes the space feel bright and airy, and perhaps because there are no interior doors other than that to the “floating” central bathroom, it feels larger than its 400 square feet.

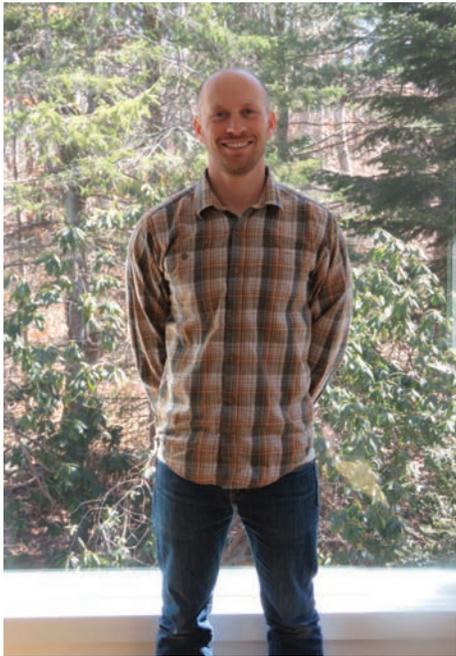
The Cooneys wanted the living space to take advantage of the woodland beauty of their property. In addition, they were on a tight budget. So Waldman designed what he calls a “treehouse.” While not actually situated in a tree, the space is designed to feel as though it is. “I wanted it to feel elevated,” Waldman says, “kind of like on

stilts.” To enhance this effect, he placed a strip of clear polycarbonate around the entire outside of the structure, just below the floor of the living space; when you walk up the exterior stairs to the “house”, the plastic strip offers views of the framing lumber – the vertical 2x6 studs (like stilts) – that lie behind it. The ground floor garage is covered in dark Hardie board (an inexpensive building material made of fiber and cement), giving the whole building the feeling of “a light box floating on a heavier base.” Imag-

ining a nighttime view of the structure, Waldman realized that the lower section of the structure would blend into the darkness, making the lighter-colored,



Laura D. Roosevelt



Laura D. Roosevelt  
Waldman, 35, met his clients at preschool.



Nick Waldman  
A low window creates a view from the bed.



Nick Waldman

On the most private side of the studio, extra-large windows draw the outdoors in.

cedar-shingled upper living quarters appear to be floating in the trees.

Window size and placement were driven by the location of the house on the property, and by the views that would be seen by people inside. Because the structure is close to the main house, the windows on that side are small and relatively low in the wall, so as to create as much privacy as possible, while still allowing in natural light. The height of the interior wall on that side is considerably lower than that of the wall across from it, creating an asymmetrical, salt-box ceiling and roofline. The opposite wall's relative height allows for large, nearly floor-to-ceiling windows that look out upon trees. These windows were placed with less regard for a symmetrical exterior appearance ("although it still has to be beautiful," Waldman hastens to add), and more for what would be seen through them by people inside the building. They are situated just far enough above the floor so that people sitting down, or lying in bed, see only trees and

sky — no driveway or ground — further enhancing the treehouse effect.

The covered deck, which extends across the entire back of the building, follows similar "rules:" On the main house side, a wall shields the deck and the main house from each other, while on the opposite side, a large, glassless window allows for forest views to the right as well as straight ahead. "The experience from the living areas" says Waldman, "which is where people experience architecture ninety percent of the time, is calibrated to what's outside, so you maximize the connection to nature."

The treehouse theme carries through into the house's fixtures. In the bathroom, the sink faucet was put together by the plumber from copper plumbing materials, following a rough sketch made by Waldman. Waldman then designed and built the toilet paper holder and towel rack from the same kinds of materials, all purchased at a plumber's supply store. "They have a kind of ad hoc, cobbled together feel," says Wald-

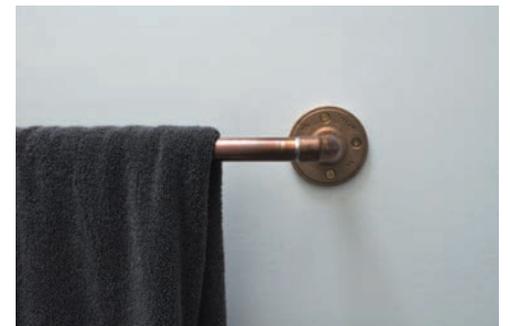
man, "like the kinds of things you might find in an actual treehouse. Only these are built to last." He notes that the railing on the deck, which is mahogany and structurally strong and durable, was designed to hint at the bunch-of-sticks-nailed-together construction common to treehouses. Throughout the indoors, the simple, wall-mounted light bulb fixtures (ceramic, priced at about \$2 each), were a cost saving measure, but also deliberately "humble," to fit in with the overall theme.

"It was nice to be able to make something that was well designed but not expensive," says Waldman, "and for a normal Island family who are going to use it year-round. I think it's really important that architecture and design be for everybody here, not just for the big projects."

Laura D. Roosevelt is a West Tisbury writer, photographer and poet.

For more information on Nick Waldman's designs, visit [Nickwaldman.com](http://Nickwaldman.com)

**RUSTIC STYLE, BUILT TO LAST:** Waldman worked with a plumber to fashion the sink faucet from copper plumbing, then designed and made the toilet paper holder and towel bar with similar materials.



Nick Waldman photos



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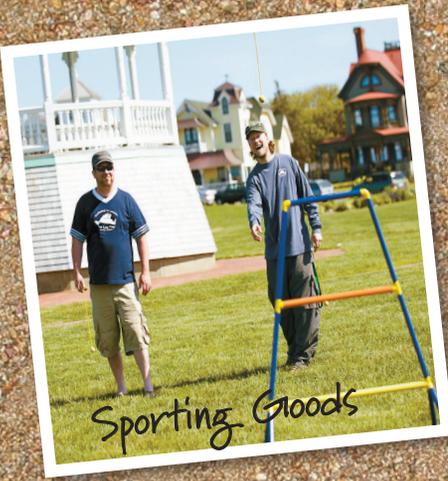
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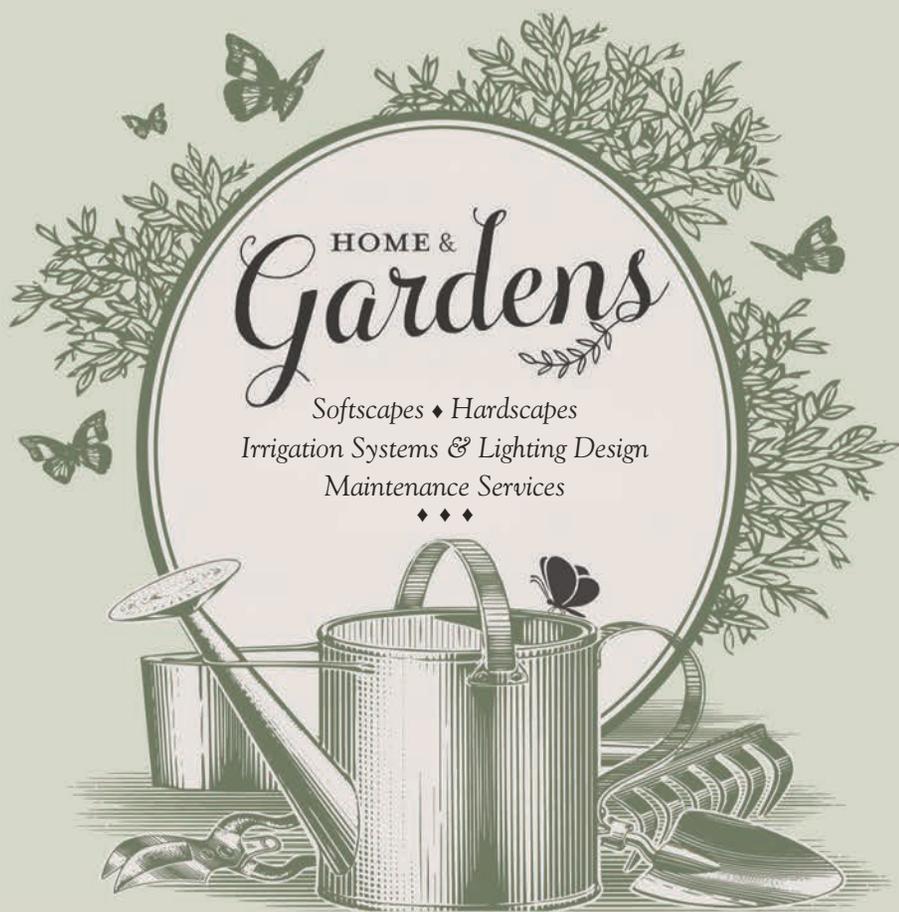


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# The Life-Changing Magic of Cottage Gardens

One flower can spark joy; plant a whole mess of perennials in a charming spot, and you'll be happy for summers to come

BY SUSIE MIDDLETON

"Cottage gardens are very personal," West Tisbury garden designer Mary Wirtz tells me. "There is no wrong way to do them."

Hallelujah.

Those of you who worship straight lines and sharp angles, you can all shuffle to the other side of the room for now. (Though feel free to eavesdrop and come shuffling back.)

The rest of you, we're going to have an inspiring, creative session about the fun stuff that goes into a cottage garden. Sure, we're going to impose a few guide-

lines (because we all crave boundaries), but we're mostly going to focus on beauty and whimsy.

We've consulted with Wirtz, who has been designing and maintaining gardens all over the Island for 24 years through her business Wild Violets, to help us distill the useful bits and to offer inspiration, too.

### Cottage Garden 101

First, we should all get on the same page about what a cottage garden is. You

know, in the very broadest sense.

A cottage garden is small; cozy if you will. It's loosely defined by a low fence, a stone wall, or a shrub border. It generally hugs a structure. It may settle itself right outside the kitchen door, or it may fall in behind the picket fence in your front yard. Or it's a little side garden next to a shed. But it's not a fancy border stretching as far as the eye can see. Fancy? No. Fanciful, yes.

Often a path—a gravel path, a stone path, a brick path—meanders through a cottage garden. Interesting objects pop

out where you least expect them; objects like bird houses, bird baths, bird whirligigs, actual birds. When ambling through, you might spy a cool structure, like an arbor or an espalier, a trellis or a teepee. Obelisks and topiaries—they're all welcome.

And a cottage garden is a riotous, colorful, jambalaya-jumble of flowering plants. In fact, the first thing you'll want to think about, when considering a cottage garden, is the flowers.

Did we mention that it's all about the flowers?



5

Susie Middleton

## Flower Power

There's nothing quite like walking outside on a warm breezy day and pausing to sniff the fragrance of a summer rose, to watch a bee go nectar-diving in a foxglove, to take in the arresting surprise of a bright orange poppy that's burst on the scene, or to snip a few daisy blossoms to drop in a tin can next to your computer. A flower garden is pure joy, we're sure of that. So how do we get started?

"A cottage garden is an evolution. You don't have to do it all at once—in fact you really can't. I actually added my greenhouse after the garden started to take shape, and I added the stone wall last!" Wirtz told us.

In the space where her cottage garden (pictured at left) is now, Wirtz first turned the soil over for a few vegetable beds. But they slowly disappeared under a flurry of flowers, which Wirtz began

collecting enthusiastically. You can do the same thing, starting with just a few plants.

We asked Wirtz whether we should plant perennials (flowering plants that live longer than two years) or annuals (plants that may bloom profusely through the summer but that only live one year).

For a cottage garden, Wirtz favors mostly perennials, with just a few annuals like white cosmos and deep blue salvias sprinkled in—and maybe a nasturtium or two. "I let the [perennial] flowers do what they are meant to do throughout the season," instead of trading annuals in and out. "At the end of the season, I don't mind if a perennial is mostly stems and seed heads with a few re-blooms. I tuck pumpkins and maybe a few cabbages around and enjoy the look."

Many perennials will only bloom for a



4

Susie Middleton



7

Mary Wirtz



6

Ruby Hoy



Ruby Hoy

few weeks during one period in the summer, but some will re-bloom if cut back, and in all cases, the blossoms—and often the foliage—are worth it. The biggest advantage to perennials, of course, is that they do not need to be replanted every year.

Wirtz's favorite flowers are roses. She especially likes the fragrant and gorgeous David Austin English roses, many of which are repeat-bloomers. She now has about 25 different varieties. Climbing roses, which can be trained over fences or up trellises, are cottage garden icons, too. (Sadly, in some parts of the Island, and depending on where the garden is located, deer may feast on roses if they're unprotected.)

But in addition to roses, Wirtz recommends choosing a variety of plants based on when they tend to bloom, so that you can have color from late spring through fall. (For a list of Wirtz's favorite cottage

garden plants, organized by bloom-time, see p. 23).

In addition to seasonality, consider choosing plants of varying heights and those that have interesting foliage when the blooms are over. Wirtz loves the foliage of tree peonies.

You'll also want to put some of your plants in pots or other containers. Herbs that might spread, like mint, are good candidates. And you'll want to keep decorative plants like topiaries in pots so that they can be brought into a greenhouse or sunroom for the winter. Sprinkling the garden with pots also adds some stockier shapes to contrast with taller perennial flowers.

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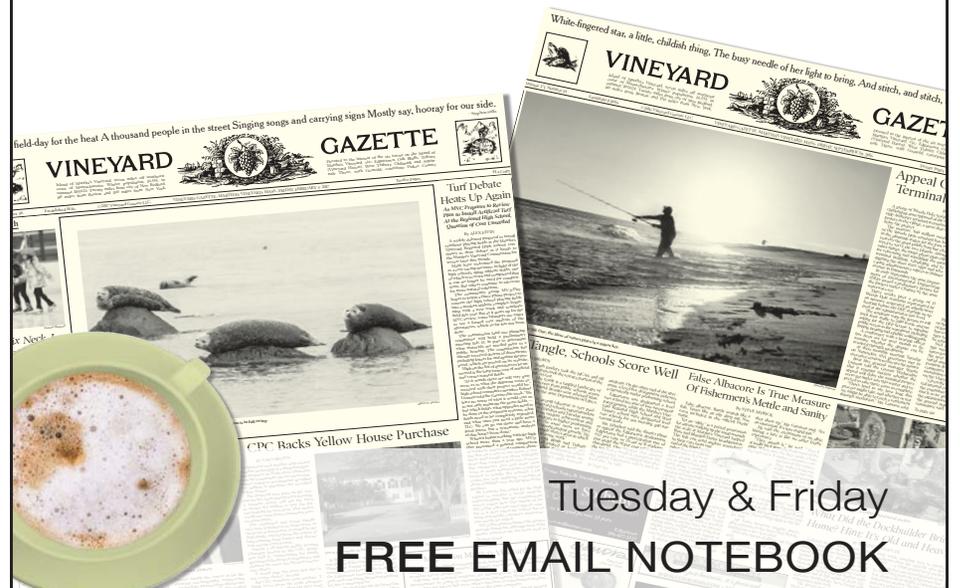
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## Adding Character

Now this is where things get interesting. You certainly don't want your cottage garden to look like it's the depository for rejects from the Dumpique, but you do want personality. Before Wirtz had a stone wall, she repurposed odd lengths of picket fence that she'd found and nudged them around the garden. She is obsessed with topiaries of all shapes, and with urns. One urn, minus its base, sits atop a tree stump as a planter. Three birdhouses are in the garden—as are a couple of stone bunnies along the moss- and thyme-covered stone path.

On the Vineyard, there is no shortage of beautifully time-worn objects to add to a cottage garden: galvanized metal feed buckets, glass bottles, jugs, old window frames, locust branches, wagon or bicycle wheels, wooden carts, old rakes and garden tools, kitchen colanders, saucers, teacups, cast iron or wooden gates. Add an old cast iron or metal café chair or improvise a seat with rocks.

Shopping for new items is fun, too. The little garden shop at Heather Gardens has a lovely and interesting selection of garden ornaments, including watering cans, pots, and bird houses. Donoroma's "Antique" greenhouse is a garden decorator's dream. And Eden, SBS, Mahoney's, and Middletown Nursery are good stops, too, for small items or larger ones like trellises or benches.

A bird bath, a sundial, a totem, or a stone statue can make a wonderful focal point for a cottage garden, but since these are big-ticket items, you can add them in later years if you like.

Sheer whimsy? Glass flowers, whirligigs, scarecrows, glazed balls, bottle trees, tin roosters or dragonflies, fairies of any sort. Need inspiration? Hint: Pinterest.

You don't ever have to stop adding to your cottage garden, or taking away from it. Its character will get richer and livelier as years go by. A few things will die, others will seed like crazy and pop up everywhere. Your cat will find his favorite spot to stretch out, maybe on a carpet of thyme. Or perhaps a rabbit will make her nest under a hydrangea. A climbing rose will find its way over the fence; hummingbirds and bees will return every year to visit the foxgloves and the hollyhocks; maybe you'll even build a little greenhouse to overwinter your topiaries or to start seedlings in the spring. Who knows? And that's the best part.

## Favorite Cottage Garden Flowers

Garden designer Mary Wirtz recommends planting a mix of flowering plants based on their bloom time

### LATE SPRING BLOOMERS:

- alliums**
- brunnera**
- columbine**
- iris** (*near left*)
- lady's mantle**
- primrose**
- peony** (*far right*)
- poppy**



Susie Middleton



Ruby Hoy

### SUMMER BLOOMERS:

- catmint (nepeta)**
- daylily** (*near left*)
- delphinium**
- foxglove**
- hollyhock**
- lavender**
- roses**
- Shasta daisy**
- verbascum** (*far right*)
- veronica** (*groundcover*)



Susie Middleton



Elizabeth Cecil

### SUMMER/EARLY FALL BLOOMERS

- black eyed susan (rudbeckia)**
- catmint (nepeta)**
- coneflower (echinacea)**, *left*
- hydrangea**
- phlox** (*garden*)
- dill** (*far right*)



Susie Middleton



Susie Middleton



*Misty Meadows, West Tisbury*

**@khinstagram**

KATIE HUTCHISON



*Muskoday Farm, Katama*

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SANDRA AND JOHN TALANIAN



*Misty Meadows, West Tisbury*

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## The Barn Gram

In this issue of the Vine, we celebrate one of our favorite rural icons, looking through the eyes of some talented Vineyard Instagrammers. Next issue: windowboxes. To submit your photos, tag them:

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**BARN:** **barn** \bärn\ **noun**

[Middle English bern, from Old English berærn : bere, barley]\*

- 1) A large farm building used for storing grain, hay, or straw or for housing livestock
- 2) A shelter where you wait for the weather to pass
- 3) A place, especially on Martha's Vineyard, to dance until your feet fall off
- 4) The scene of a stolen kiss
- 5) An undeniable photo opportunity

*\*The Free Dictionary*

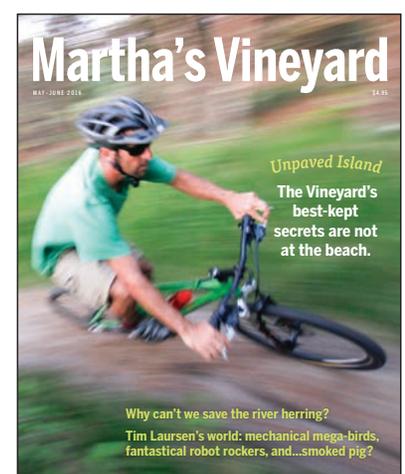
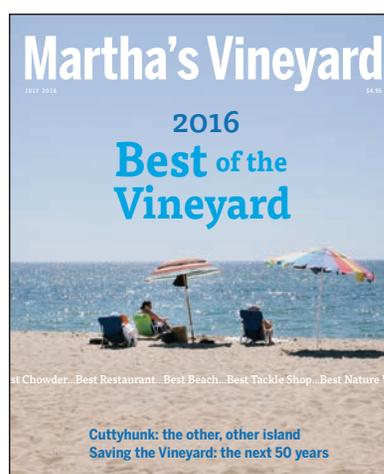
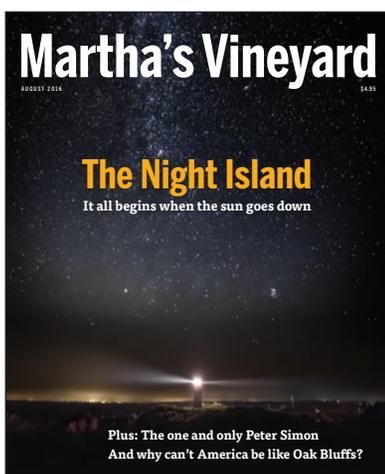
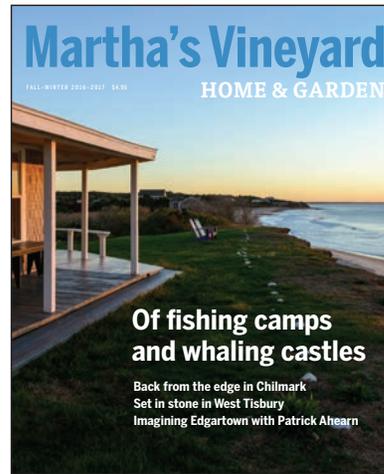
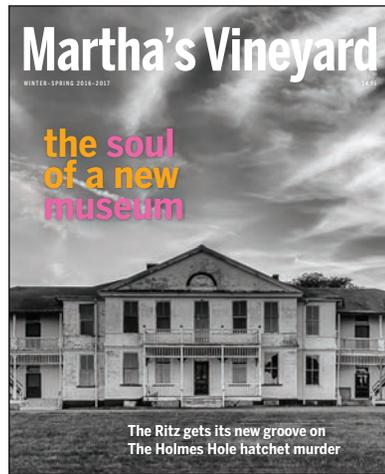
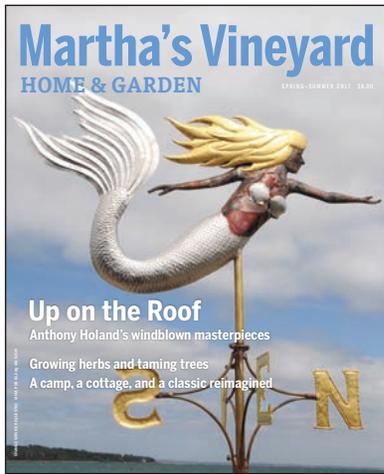


*West Tisbury*

**@tmillervineyard**

TINA MILLER

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## Ask the Architect: Porch or Attached Arbor — Which Works Best?

BY KATIE HUTCHISON

If you're lucky, your Vineyard getaway or year-round home already has a porch or an attached arbor, maybe even both. Each creates a space that is neither indoors or out, a delightfully in-between space where you can savor island breezes, salty scents, and framed views all from within a partial shelter. But if you're thinking of building, renovating, or adding on, you might want to consider the distinct benefits and tradeoffs of a porch versus an attached arbor.

The advantage of a porch, which by definition includes overhead cover, is that it provides protection from passing showers and harsh, high, summer sun. As a result, wicker and cedar furnishings on a porch typically out endure furnishings of the same material on an attached arbor or patio. Thanks to its ceiling, a

large open porch (often referred to as a veranda when it also includes a guard rail) can feel more room-like than an attached arbor. A disadvantage of a porch is that, depending on its depth, it can darken adjacent rooms that look onto and through it. Painting the porch ceiling a light, sky blue is a Vineyard touch that can help lighten both the space below and neighboring rooms whose windows border the porch.

An attached arbor (sometimes incorrectly identified as a pergola, which is a colonnade with an open structure above) is much more porous than a porch. It offers filtered daylight and exposure to showers, depending on how dense the structure and/or plant life atop it is. The overhead structure alone can create interesting shadow lines, and the addition



A porch offers better cover.



An arbor lets more light inside.

of climbing plants like wisteria, grapevine, clematis, etc. can soften the feel and lend color, scent, and texture, while gently buffering the elements. Rooms with windows that look onto or through an attached arbor don't generally suffer from the intrinsic shade a porch affords. When an attached arbor extends over a deck and includes a semi-solid guard rail as in the example shown here, it borrows attributes often associated with more room-like porches, while providing airiness overhead. An attached arbor can also transition nicely to an even more open patio.

If you're trying to decide between building (or occupying) a porch or an attached arbor, consider how enclosing you desire both the space itself and those adjacent to it to feel. Whichever you choose, enjoy the nuance of a space that is both indoors and out, on an island like no other.

*Katie Hutchison is a New England architect with Vineyard family and clients. She's the author of The New Small House. More at [katiehutchison.com](http://katiehutchison.com)*

*Photos courtesy sullivan + associates architects*

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# IN TILE STYLE

WITH ANNIE BRADSHAW

Interview By Paula Lyons



Susie Middleton

## Q: How did you happen to create MV Tile?

A: My mother had the largest ceramic supply company in New England (before she suffered a cerebral hemorrhage), so I grew up in the ceramics business. But I did it all the way from the clay through to the different glazes.

My first ceramics store on Church Street in Vineyard Haven was called Island Flair. In the first year, I made everything we sold there — place settings, cups, bowls, everything! With two small boys, 18 months apart, and a disabled mother, yes, I made every single thing sold in the store. I also carried a line of tile, and that tile really sold. People started asking me for more and I thought, hmm, I've got something here. We switched to all-tile the next year.

**NAME:** Annie Bradshaw

**NICKNAME OR ALIAS:** Belle

**PROFESSION:** Co-owner, Martha's Vineyard Tile Company

**WASHED ASHORE FROM:** Medford

**YEARS AGO:** 22

**JOB IN A FORMER LIFE:** Lancome Cosmetics Sales

**FAVORITE SPOT ON THE ISLAND:** Quansoo

**FAVORITE ROOM IN THE HOUSE:** Kitchen

When your husband, who has spent nearly every summer of his life on William Street in Vineyard Haven, announces he wants the family to move to the Island full-time, what do you say?

Annie Bradshaw said yes!

So Annie, Jeremy, their two small boys and her disabled mother, moved to the place where Annie had enjoyed summers, too. And thanks to Annie's creative and entrepreneurial spirit, her whole family has thrived. Together she and husband Jeremy created Martha's Vineyard Tile Company in 1996. Twenty-one years later, they're still at it.

## Q. But how?

A. I went to Bunch of Grapes bookstore and found a book on tile. It was filled with really cool stuff, and in the back was a list of every tile manufacturer and distributor included in the book. So one day, I just got on the phone. "Hi, I am opening up a tile store on Martha's Vineyard, and I'm wondering if you would like to see your tile there?" Every single person said yes! And that's how it began.

## Q: And for Jeremy?

A: When I started the business Jeremy was painting and doing other labor work, and I said, "You know what? You need to start learning how to install tile. We can do this together."

He went to Home Depot and got a video on installing tile and he just started slowly, working with contractors who walked him through it. Now he's one of the best tile guys on the island.

## Q: So it's 21 years now. Ever tire of it?

A: I don't tire of this (pointing to the showroom), but the back end, yeah—the bookkeeping, the invoicing, etc. I do get tired of that.

## Q. What keeps you interested?

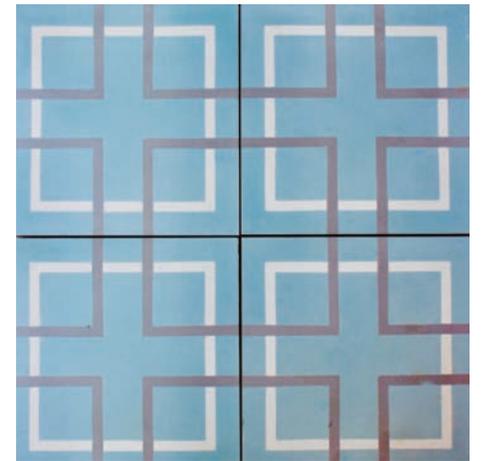
A. We get new things every day and things do change. I think if we dealt with the same lines and never took on new projects and new lines, that I would be bored out of my mind. But the new stuff keeps me entertained.

## Q. What would people be surprised to learn about this business?

A. How detailed everything is. Everything has a number, everything comes in multiple sizes. You have 30 different vendors that each carry 300 lines. You need to know what goes with what. Does it come with a bullnose, or with a chair rail, a two-inch floor tile for the shower, or do we have to find another element for that?

## Q. Who is your ideal client?

A. One who knows what he or she doesn't like.



## Q. What gives you the greatest satisfaction?

A. I think the most satisfaction is fulfilling my creativity. Growing up in the ceramic world, I was creating something every day. So this is my way of doing that without getting dirty!

*Paula Lyons is a former ABC and CBS television consumer journalist who is now semi-retired. She lives in Vineyard Haven*



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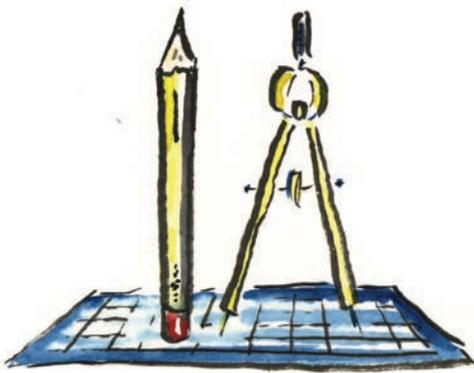
Explore Vineyard History.

# T I M E M A C H I N E

[vineyardgazette.com/timemachine](http://vineyardgazette.com/timemachine)

## Of Homework and High Design

BY NICOLE GRACE MERCIER  
ILLUSTRATIONS BY CHRIS BURRELL



American Modernist. Architect Patrick Ahearn has been on the Island since 1989 and over that timespan has had a hand in more than 200 design projects, many of which have been 7,000 to 10,000-square-foot homes.

# 200 DESIGNS

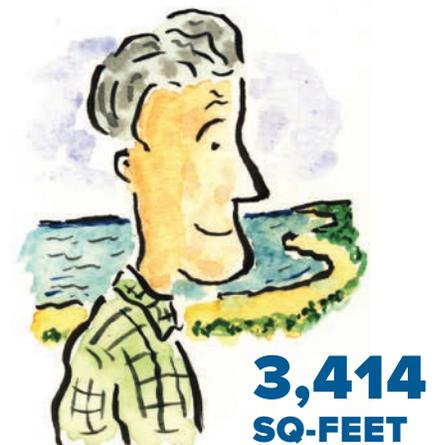


Life's a beech. The next time you are crunching on a Beechnut you found on the ground, think of this: It takes 40 years for the American Beech tree to produce seeds, and another 20 before it's able to provide a crop of nuts.



← ←  
Swaying in the wind. A customized weathervane from sculptor extraordinaire Anthony Holand can cost between \$18,000 and \$20,000. Don't wanna break the bank? Pick up a numbered edition, which range from \$5,000 to \$10,000.

Homegrown! Island chef and cookbook author Catherine Walthers started a culinary herb section in her garden last year for a whopping \$3. We like the taste of that.



Kerry on. In March, former Secretary of State John F. Kerry purchased an historic 1924 property at Seven Gates Farm in Chilmark. It features a 3,414 square-foot home with seven bedrooms overlooking the Sound on an 18.50-acre lot.

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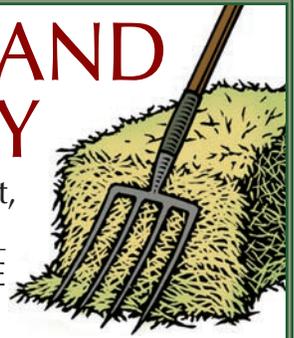
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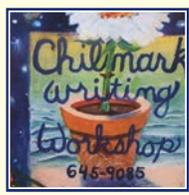
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