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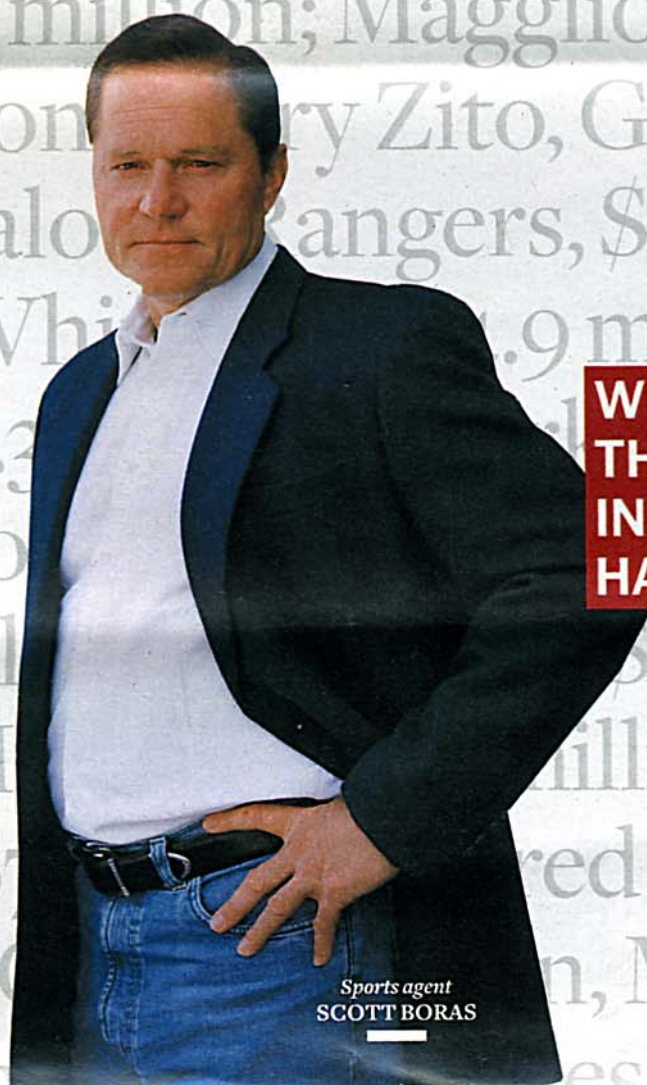
THE
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**WHY DOES
THE MOST HATED MAN
IN BASEBALL
HAVE SO MANY FRIENDS?**

BY CHARLES P. PIERCE

Sports agent
SCOTT BORAS

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Landscaping and Design



How you treat your landscape can say a lot about you. It shows that you care for your home, you love where you live, and you take the time to create an environment in which you, your family and friends can spend time and relax. We know exactly how you feel, which is why our Landscaping and Design supplement has you in mind. Read on to learn how to work with your natural surroundings to make your home the best it can be, from the outside in.

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Gardening on the Rocks: Hardscaping by Design

MICHÈLE M. MEAGHER



PHOTO COURTESY OF FOXGLOVES LANDSCAPE GARDENING

THERE ARE TWO kinds of homeowners. Those who cast away any kind of igneous, metamorphic or sedimentary rock erupting through green lawn or usurping garden space—no matter the cost or the difficulty. And then there are those who keep the ledge, the rocks, the boulders, and add still more field stone, granite, slate, sandstone, blue stone, marble and quartz—no matter the cost or the difficulty. If a sliver of geologist beats in your gardener's heart, then learn what you can do to downplay the landscape (the greenery) and highlight the hardscape (the rockery).

Ledge - Loving It or Heaving It?

It is not uncommon in New England to find that part of one's plot of land is solid rock, what landscapers call ledge, hidden under a thin coat of soil. When a homeowner intent on sinking a shovel into pliable earth strikes rock instead, dismay can set in: how do you deal with a bed of rock? For many landscape architects and designers, however, finding ledge can be a good thing; "The great thing about ledge is that it tells us exactly where we are, it tells us that we are in New England," states Lolly Gibson, ASLA, (American Society of Landscape Architects), of Laura Gibson Landscape Design, Manchester-by-the-Sea, Mass. (978.526.8790, lgld.com). "We shouldn't remove what makes the space unique."

Sometimes ledge covers the entire yard, as was the case for a suburban project undertaken by Mary LeBlanc, ASLA, owner of Cotuit-based Mary LeBlanc Landscape Design (508.428.1274). Since many plants only need 18-24 inches of soil for their root systems, LeBlanc added the needed soil for garden beds and even used the ledge as part of the retaining walls to hold the soil in place.

Working with What You Have

"We try to create a natural environment that looks like it has always been there," says Thomas Wirth, principal of Thomas Wirth Associates, Inc., in Sherborn, Mass. (508.651.3643, thomaswirthassociates.com). Wirth created a patio design that stone mason Brian Griffin, owner of Griffin Masonry of Millis, Mass., transformed into reality by cutting the huge slabs of granite on site to follow the contour of the river's edge that border the property. "The natural stone and boulders make it look as if it has always been there in that setting," describes Griffin. "The granite patio's edge meanders along the same curves as the river and the low stone walls don't force the patio into the existing landscape." To Wirth, projects like this create a meaningful connection between nature and people.

Retreating with Stone

For some, a garden retreat of pea stone, huge boulders, statuary, a fountain or sculpture interspersed with plantings can take on almost a spiritual quality. "Gardeners consider the stones as carefully as the other living materials. Rocks, homes to microscopic life with its moss and lichen, add a different dimension and depth to the garden experience," observes Dee Kricker, Landscape Maintenance Supervisor at FoxGloves Fine Gardening & Design in Lexington, Mass. (781.862.6927).

Defining by Design

In addition to featuring rock in the garden, hardscape can create visual interest. "You can really do wonderful things such as adding other materials to the stone if you have a talented stone mason," says David Bartsch, ASLA, the president of David Bartsch Landscape Architecture, Inc., with offices

in Boston and on Nantucket (617.482.1081, david-bartsch.com). For example, you can add interest by mixing shells, glass, tiles or found items very subtly so that one has to be up close to notice.

Accenting with Plants

"I don't think of plantings and hardscape as separate things," says Gibson. "Plants and stone are part of the whole." All of the landscape professionals interviewed agree with Gibson that one compliments the other, as is the case with plants like the ones Bartsch uses in pathways.

Stepables®, grown by Frances Hopkins of Under a Foot Plant Co. (stepables.com), are plants that don't mind being trodden upon by feet or paws. For example, in a terrace made of three huge stone slabs, Wirth used Stepables to fill in the spaces. "When you use plants with varying degrees of stepability like creeping mints or florific thyme, you can really create a soft natural environment of plants and beautiful natural stones," Wirth explains.

LeBlanc uses a palette of indigenous plants that work well in a rocky garden such as a perennial called snow-in-summer and bearberry (not to be confused with invasive barberry), a flowering evergreen ground cover. Terrific for year round interest are heath and heather. Low growing epimediums will grow in dry shade and come in hundreds of varieties.

Landscaping with Hardscape — Where to Turn

Two helpful websites for locating a landscape architect or designer professional are those of the American Society of Landscape Architects (online.asla.org) and the Organic Land Care Committee for Massachusetts and Connecticut (organiclandcare.net). Professionals recommend that you do some preliminary research, not only viewing portfolios but visiting actual projects as well.

"The best sites utilize what's there naturally and pay great attention to the context," says Bartsch. "The local vernacular which springs from local materials is very important." In New England, this native language includes ledge, boulders and stone, along with indigenous plants and trees. By integrating greenery and rockery in your gardens to echo how the natural world arranges itself, you are on the way to creating an outdoor sanctuary that pleases the eye and nurtures the spirit. ●



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Going Native

KAREN BURNETT



PHOTO COURTESY OF NEW ENGLAND WILDFLOWER SOCIETY

NOW THAT SPRING is here, who can resist the urge to pick up a trowel and a pair of gardening gloves and head out to play in the dirt? Before you plant your garden this year, consider using plants native to our region to bring out your landscape's natural beauty. Horticulturalists agree that gardening with native plants can benefit wildlife, the environment, and your backyard. A gradual but steadily-growing interest in native gardening has coincided with increased availability of native plants in area nurseries, along with

many native plant classes and workshops offered by conservation groups.

What are native plants and why should we care about them? According to Deborah Strick, marketing and public relations director of the New England Wild Flower Society in Framingham (508.877.7630; newfs.org), a simple definition of native plants is "everything that grew here before European settlement." Because they have been part of the New England environment for many

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If we had no winter, the spring would not be so pleasant; if we did not sometimes taste of adversity, prosperity would not be so welcome.

-Anne Bradstreet

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generations, native plants offer specific food in the form of nuts, leaves, and wood to the wildlife that depends upon them. Non-natives are plants that were introduced to a new area by humans, either intentionally or unintentionally. Some non-native plants and monopolize resources such as light, nutrients, water, and space to the detriment of other species. Invasives come without their natural predators, and some of them produce large amounts of seeds, which are carried by wind and animals even farther a field. Certain invasives disrupt the delicate balance that exists between plants, animals, and insects in the environment.

Ann Uppington, a landscape designer and horticulturist in Byfield (978.465.0827; uppingtongardens.com), specializes in organic gardening and the historical background of gardens. She explains that many non-native plants journeyed to New England from Europe centuries ago in the form of ships' ballasts, contaminated food stores, and medicinal herbs. "The early settlers brought overseas the healing plantain as a poultice for feverish joints or injuries. The dandelion may have come over that way as well," she says. "A non-native plant called bishop's weed, or gout weed, was introduced in medieval times as a medicine for gout in Britain. It was once considered a 'trouble-free' ground cover. It is very difficult to remove. Trouble free can mean troublesome."

Landscape Designer Paul Miskovsky, owner of Miskovsky Landscaping, Inc., in Falmouth (508.540.6800), has been in the gardening business for 23 years, and over the past few years he has seen an increase in demand for native plants from his clientele. "Looking at a native garden is all about subtleties. The real purists are aficionados," he says.

Contrary to popular opinion, native plants don't necessarily take care of themselves. "Native plants require as much care as any other plants," Miskovsky states. "I like to say, 'A plant for a place, a place for a plant.' Soil prep is key. You need to pay attention to what type of light they are getting. Some natives love shade. Some don't. You can consult a professional to determine what your natives will need. Just do your homework."

A purveyor of perennials, Leo Blanchette, owner of Blanchette Gardens in Carlisle (978.369.2962; blanchettegardens.com), a family-run business for 26 years, proudly states that all of the native plants he sells are propagated at his nursery, not collected in the wild. Known for offering many rare and unusual perennials, Blanchette Gardens opens during the last week of April. "Native plants have thrived in New England for thousands of years. They are used to the climate, the droughts and the harsh heat," says Blanchette. "I have a thing for the shade-loving natives. I love the anemonellas, the trilliums, and the iris cristatas." Blanchette Gardens grows unusual double-flower versions of both the anemonellas and the trilliums, among other special varieties of native plants. "You can also use the phlox stolonisera, which works wonderfully well underneath rhododendron and azaleas. And don't discount native ferns. There's a tremendous assortment of native plants out there if people just take the time to look for them."

As you envision your garden this spring, picture a paradise that celebrates and preserves what is unique about New England's natural environment. Maybe it's time to go native! ●

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