

LAND LOVER

Landscape designer Mary LeBlanc's vision is rooted in providing personalized hands-on service to each client.

Mary LeBlanc and her husband, Michael, literally built their Cotuit home brick by brick. Their property, backing a conservation area, is dotted with a constellation of flowers, shrubs, and trees, including her favorite, a Japanese Stewartia that LeBlanc got as a seedling from the Brooklyn Botanic Gardens many years ago that now towers over her half Cape house.

LeBlanc tends the plants, just as she does at the couple's summer cottage in Falmouth, and the landscape on their property in Vermont. Experiencing gardening in a variety of microclimates—wetland, woodland, and oceanfront—has deeply influenced her personal and professional connection to the earth and provided an invaluable base of knowledge for her business, Mary LeBlanc Landscape Design.

"I really feel I have a hands-on experience with these microclimates," LeBlanc says. "I'm not sitting in a box. It's personal."

LeBlanc cultivates just as close a relationship with her clients. "First and foremost, my philosophy is to design a landscape that is appropriate and suitable for the unique needs of the client," she says. "Every project is new, fresh, and unique. I really feel it's a collaboration."

PHOTOS BY MARY LEBLANC

With hands-on experience gardening in several different New England microclimates, Mary LeBlanc can provide customized design and installation services to each client.

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BUSINESS focus

LeBlanc summured on the Cape and gardened throughout childhood. As a science major in college, she nonetheless nurtured an artistic flair. Then, “for whatever reason,” she relates with a chuckle, she went to work in marketing for a residential developer, where she sat through conceptual design reviews. That was it for LeBlanc; a new career was born.

One of LeBlanc’s recent projects, on Popponesset Island, came as close to ideal as the veteran landscaper can imagine. First and foremost, the owners and the architect (Vladimir Janovsky of Lincoln) were enthusiastically involved. Because they started with what LeBlanc calls “a blank slate,” her first step was to assess the property’s layout, nearby roads, and neighboring houses.

“There were some great challenges on the site,” LeBlanc says. The oceanfront location meant sandy soil, windy weather, and strict conservation guidelines, which LeBlanc embraces. She is grateful for the opportunity to protect local ecology with environmentally sensitive designs and practices. The Popponesset project featured liberal use of native plants. “One of the things

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“Perfect is close enough.”



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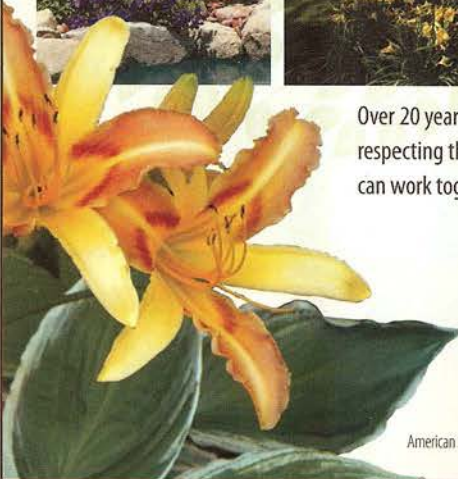
I'm really striving to do is make native landscapes appealing," she says. "Minimizing water use is important to me."

LeBlanc talked with the Poppon-
esset couple about plant mate-
rial choices and the family's out-
door activities. "You have to be
a little bit of a sleuth," she says
of her work. The family spends a
lot of time outside, hosting lob-
ster bakes and summer compa-
ny. LeBlanc spent many happy
times plant shopping with the
husband. "I love it when folks
are engaged," she says.

The best part came recently,
when LeBlanc went back to
check in with the homeowners.
"They were so happy," she says.
"I thought, We nailed it."

For more information,
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