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On the Cover:
Property 6

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well as increased use of drought-resistant native plants. Almost three quarters say the amount of space devoted to a lawn will be reduced.

Chris Cipriano, owner of Cipriano Landscape Design in Ramsey, N.J., suggests owners replace grass with low-maintenance alternatives such as meadow gardens that take advantage of species such as indigenous grasses and wildflowers such as black-eyed susans, butterfly weed, lilies, asters and others. Since they are native to his region, they require little or no irrigation and can survive in thin, poor to average soil.

There is also a good chance that some of the space occupied by grass will be devoted to growing food. Approximately 78 percent of landscape architects report a strong interest from clients in vegetable gardens as well as orchards and vineyards. “People want to incorporate that into their lives,” observes Pulver, who sees dwarf varieties of citrus and apple trees becoming more popular.

Less Formal and Fussy

In addition to superior design, materials and good soil — “you can’t build a quality landscape on an old parking lot,” Brown quips — maintenance is key for any landscape. Brown reflects, “If they can’t maintain it, we haven’t done them any favors.”

Architects often favor a certain aesthetic. J’Nell Bryson, a landscape architect in Charlotte, N.C., admits she’s not a cottage garden designer. Today she finds she uses fewer plants and larger specimens. “People can get into maintenance problems very quickly,” she adds.

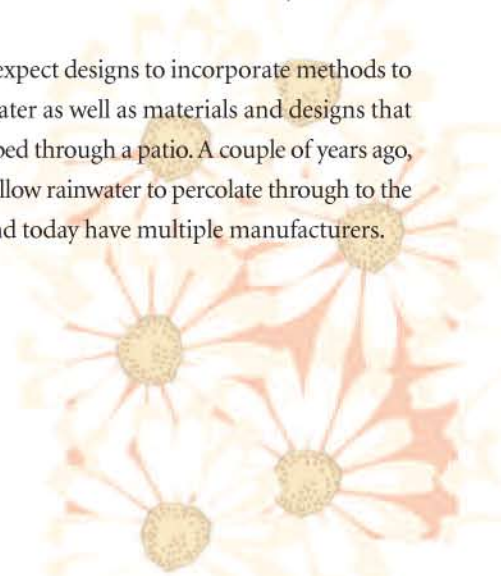
Although gardens patterned after those found in traditional estates in England haven’t gone out of vogue, the trend is toward more streamlined, less fussy plantings. “What I’ve seen a little bit is that people are moving away from formal gardens. But they still want a nice setting for their outdoor living areas with gardens that are well integrated and provide seasonal interest,” observes Winward.

Look for an increase in design elements that reduce time and energy. In the ASLA survey, 94 percent of residential architects expect to see more low-maintenance landscapes this year as

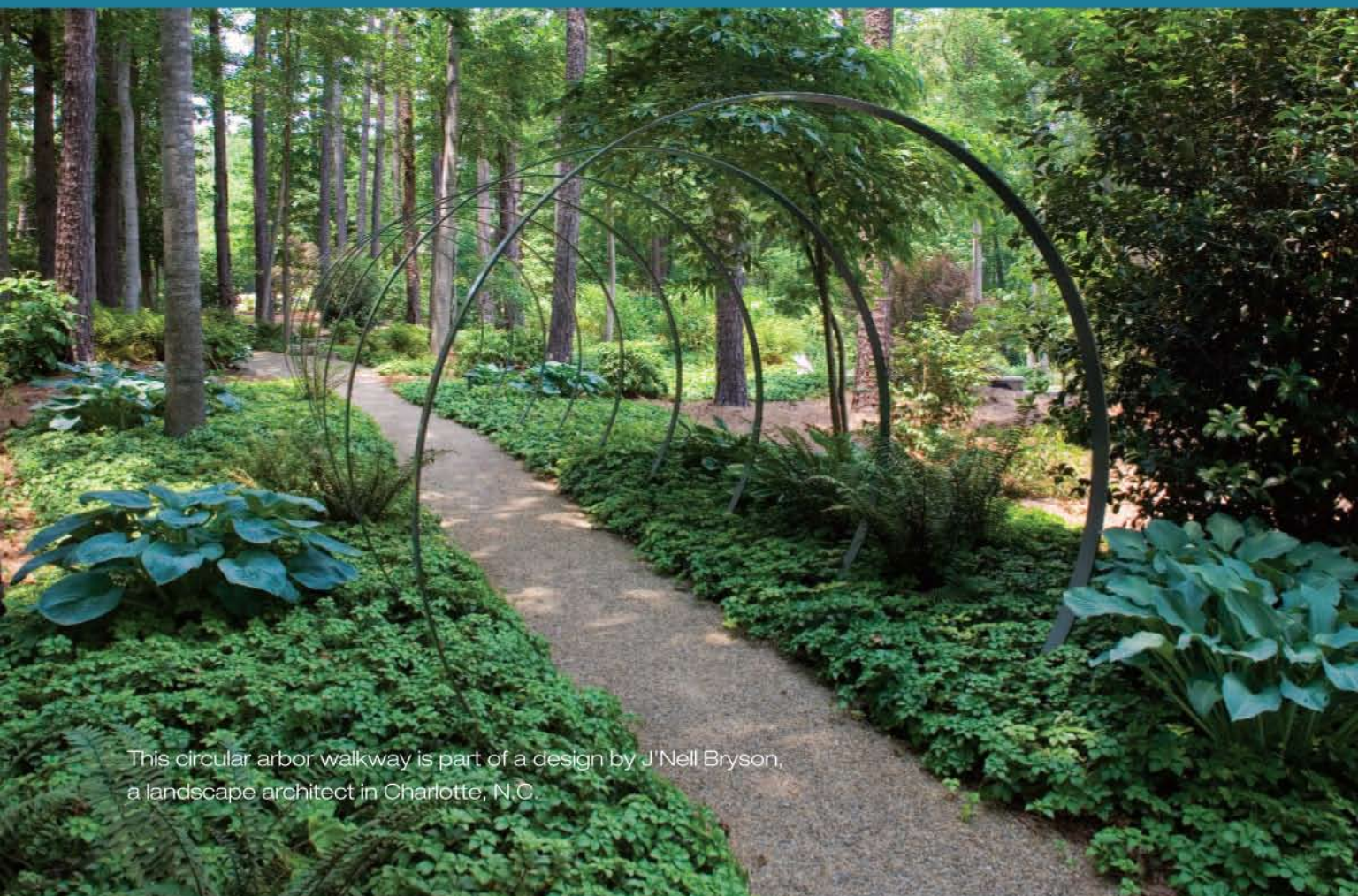
Conserving Water

Other priorities are gardens that do not require chemicals and use little water. “Water conservation in landscaping, natural resource preservation in landscaping, energy-efficient landscaping and sustainable building in landscaping are the chief concerns of landscape professionals for the foreseeable future,” comments Cipriano.

Looking ahead, expect designs to incorporate methods to collect and store rainwater as well as materials and designs that allow water to be absorbed through a patio. A couple of years ago, permeable pavers that allow rainwater to percolate through to the soil were introduced and today have multiple manufacturers.



Feathering Your Outdoor Nest



This circular arbor walkway is part of a design by J'Nell Bryson, a landscape architect in Charlotte, N.C.

art. "There is nothing more delightful than finding something that really speaks to you and setting out in the garden and then moving it around to a place that seems just right to you," observes Messervy.

Also, be sure not to overlook a simple and inexpensive detail: a bird feeder, which Messervy describes as a dynamic focal point. "It brings something to wildlife and brings wildlife to your garden."

As much as they rely on her to provide art for the landscape, J'Nell Bryson, a landscape architect in Charlotte, N.C., says consumers often hire her to give the art context so "it becomes part of the experience of the landscape rather than just an ornament out in the yard." When placed on a pathway or around a corner, art or found items can be a destination for that part of the garden.

When selecting decor, it's important



The 'Edwin' chair and ottoman here add color and comfort.



These sleek, modern chairs serve as a contrast to the natural surroundings, and are a great example of art that is usable.

This intricate ironwork is made in Haiti from used oil drums.



to consider scale. Something might look great on a store shelf and end up looking awful outside. Generally it needs to be larger than you would have inside,” advises Bryson.

Your Level of Comfort

Furnishings are another way customers are customizing outdoor spaces. According to David Petersen, owner of Maine Cottage Furniture, the overarching theme for furniture is taking indoor designs and putting them outside. “It’s not the aluminum folding chair anymore.”

With sturdy frames in metal or wood, resin finishes that mimic wicker or other materials and a range of fabrics, outdoor furniture easily rivals indoor in terms of durability and comfort. Five or six years ago, fabrics were limited to one or two lines of stiff materials made for the outdoors. Now, there are jacquards, woven blends and a huge array of prints suitable for use outdoors. Maine Cottage, as an example, has a fabric made out of linen, and, Petersen says, “a lot of chemistry” to make it work outdoors.

Teak is making a comeback. “The demand is for things curvaceous and more comfortable,” says Peterson, “and it’s the curving lines that make these pieces look like indoor furniture.” Also

gaining in popularity is rattan.

Accessories Make the Living Easy

Accessories are still important to feathering your nest outside. Although fewer consumers are installing all the accouterments associated with outdoor kitchens, none are skimping on grills. And for a majority of upscale consumers, a stereo system is an important feature of any outdoor room. Another essential is a fireplace or fire pits, as well as a water feature or fountain. A few also incorporate large-screen TVs into their outdoor room.

Another trend becoming very strong, especially in New York, according to Liz Pulver, a landscape architect with Town and Gardens Limited, are vertical gardens in which plantings literally spring out of a wall or other vertical surface. The containers and irrigation systems are hidden. Also, some garden outlets are offering living artwork — mosaics made out of plants, often succulents, which can be hung on a wall like artwork.

Like all the best things, it is the synergy of everything coming together — furnishings, accessories and art leavened with a large measure of whimsy — that creates a personal haven.