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Into the Garden

4 Landscapes

THAT TAKE CUES
FROM
THE EARTH,
FROM FOOTBRIDGE
BEACH TO MDI

UNTAMED
BEAUTY
ON
VINALHAVEN

Plus!
**ARCHITECTURE
VS. NATURE**
A MINI
MASTER CLASS

A Historic
Kennebunk
Home

(WITH THE
MOST BEAUTIFUL TREE
IN TOWN)

NATURE'S COWORKERS

THROUGHOUT MAINE, **LANDSCAPE DESIGN** IS MAKING A POINTED EFFORT TO INCORPORATE AND PRESERVE THE STATE'S NATURAL RICHES

Written by **BRIAN SHUFF**

IT DOES NOT TAKE MORE THAN A GLANCE AT THE PAPER—or out the window—to notice the earth reasserting itself. As our leaders' efforts to curb climate change progress unsatisfactorily, the fallout—erratic temperatures, wildfires, tornadoes, more aggressive and widespread disease—has become undeniable.

In the world of landscape design, practitioners have shifted their work, reexamining what it means to create a living environment. More environmentally thoughtful measures are replacing traditional “clear, cut, and cover” practices, and the field's most innovative minds are seeking ways to invite nature closer rather than hold it at bay. Indeed, what distinguishes the projects featured here are not the ways in which their makers have tamed and hedged the natural world, but rather how they have made it a partner.

Following concept plans by landscape architect Emma Kelly, Mike made tweaks as dictated by the situation on the ground. Photo by Michael D. Wilson.






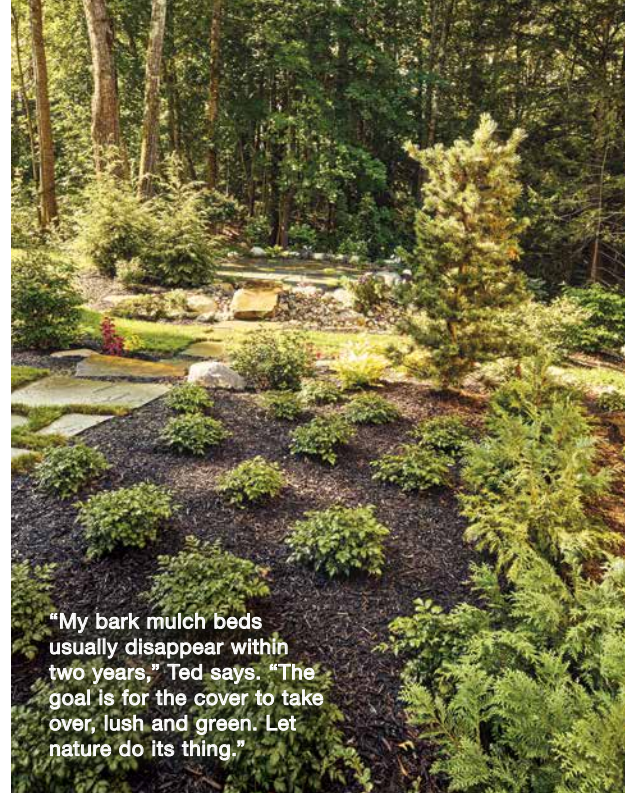
At the end of a residential street in Falmouth, Ted Carter's encyclopedic knowledge of plants links a home to its surroundings

Photographer MICHAEL D. WILSON
Sitework SHAW EARTHWORKS

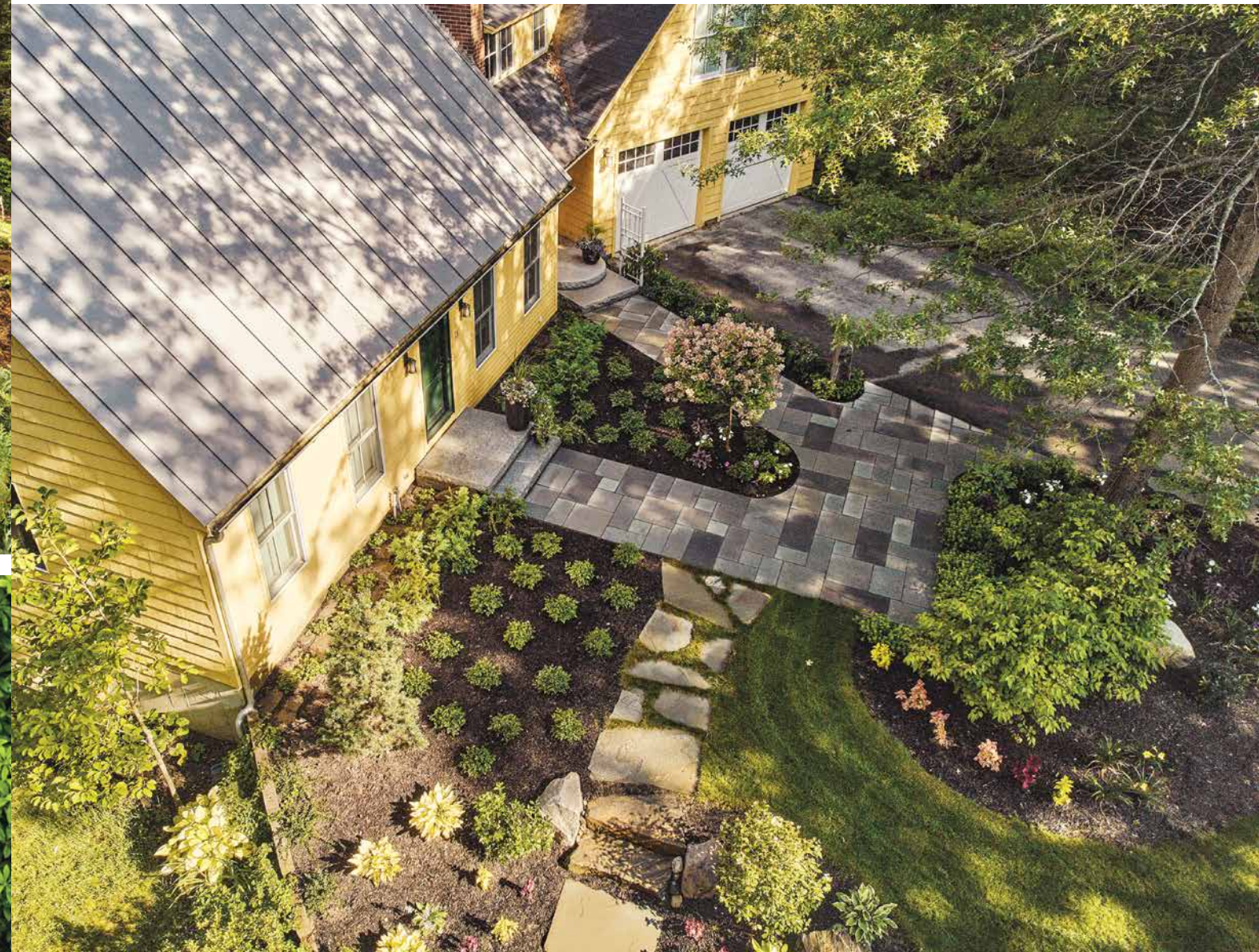
WELL-PLANTED



"One of the conundrums," Ted says, "is how to transition between cultivated landscape and natural landscape." **OPPOSITE:** With a limited backyard, Ted recaptured the front landscape to create a terrace garden.



"My bark mulch beds usually disappear within two years," Ted says. "The goal is for the cover to take over, lush and green. Let nature do its thing."



TOP, LEFT: Off the terrace, a dry bed handles drainage. After rain or snow, it becomes a running creek. **ABOVE:** "We elevated the grade, put in new granite, and reworked the entire entrance," says Ted. **RIGHT:** A slab of rough back stone from the mountaintops of midcoast Maine traverses the creek.

TED CARTER'S LOVE OF PLANTS IS INFECTIOUS. "It's a dear little thing," he'll say of *Galium odoratum*—commonly called sweet woodruff—and the phrase might seem overmuch, but then you see the sprouting plant and can't help but agree, yes, it *is* dear.

No fan of bark mulch—"way too suburban"—Ted aims to cover ground quickly and fills out his designs with the plantings he admires and knows well, always finding ways to surprise, creating links with nature where they hadn't before existed. Notice the sliver bed he added alongside the driveway of this Falmouth home. "It goes to sleep in the winter when it's covered in snow," he says, "but it opens up in the spring with buddleia—the Pugster series, a low-type cultivar which works nicely and doesn't go crazy like a lot of buddleia does."

Ted's true gift, however, is an instinct for stepping aside and letting the natural environment handle the real

show. For the Falmouth home's circular terrace—beautifully rough-cut from Maine-quarried granite—the goal was to enhance visual and aural access to a nearby waterfall. "It's quite a magical place," Ted says of the home's location. "That waterfall runs year-round, and we did a bit of clearing to get more visibility from the garden. Now, when you sit out there, you can hear the waterfall *and* see it."

Ted downplays his undeniably involved role. "It's always about the natural setting, if you want to know the truth," he says. "Focus should go to what's being made available by nature, much more so than anything that might spring from a landscaper's heavy hand."

ABOVE: Ted designed the garden to offer two ways into the house. "I always want a gracious entrance," he says. **(OPPOSITE) MIDDLE, RIGHT:** "It's sort of like painting with plants. You put in different layers." **BOTTOM, RIGHT:** *Galium*, *Dicentra*, *Waldsteinia*, and Hennie Graafland create an expansive palette.