

GARDENS YOU ASKED FOR: Low Water Wonders

2011
COUNTRY
ALMANAC®
NO. 139

BACKYARD SOLUTIONS

DREAM BACKYARDS FROM PROBLEM SPACES

magical
makeovers!

65
amazing
spaces

low cost, big impact
transform patios • shade • bare spots
dry areas • paths • slopes • sideyards

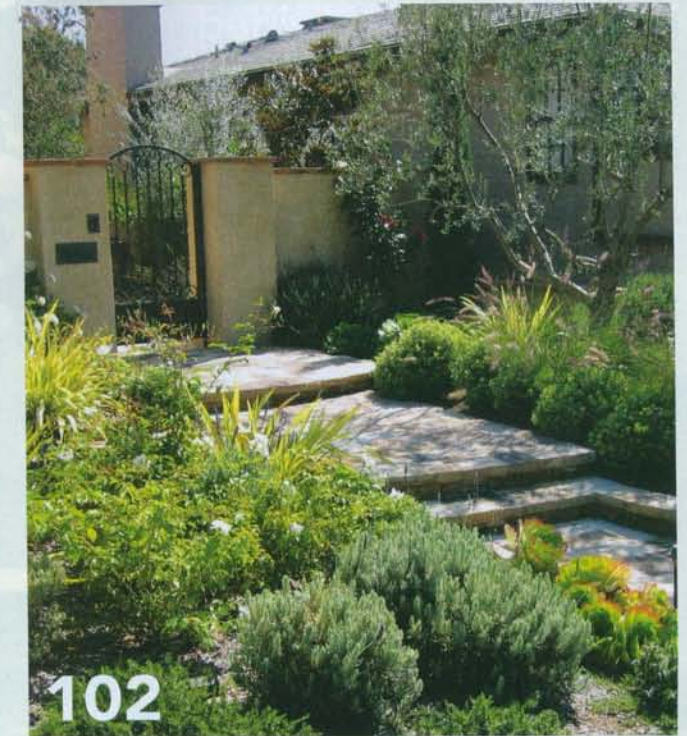


Tough Terrains

Challenges abound when planning a landscape, but there are ways around them



98



102

- **96 Outdoor** rooms set on multiple levels give each area a distinct purpose and its own sense of intimacy
- **98 Mature** plantings make a reworked yard look like it always belonged with its 1926 home
- **100 A ravine** and bluff made for great views but a landscape challenge
- **102 Maintaining** the home's Mediterranean style in the yard was a priority
- **104 Hard clay soil** was the problem in a small urban lot—and raised beds were the solution
- **106 Clever placement** allowed for a backyard pool, complete with waterfall
- **108 Tall hedges** cut a wooded property off from glorious mountain views



106

puzzle completed

The parts—a pool, two terraces and a pergola—fit together on a limited site

Problem: Client wanted a pool, but the location was restricted due to setbacks, existing ledge rock and septic system

Solution: Pool placed above grade, which permitted a bonus waterfall

Key plantings: *Hydrangea macrophylla* 'Bailmer' (Endless Summer Hydrangea); *Rosa* 'Radrazz' ('Knockout' Shrub Rose); *Rhododendron* 'Scintillation' (Pink Scintillation Rhododendron); *Juniperus chinensis* 'Hetzi Columnaris' (Green Column Juniper); *Picea abies* 'Pendula' (Weeping Norway Spruce); *Rudbeckia fulgida* 'Goldsturm' (Black-Eyed Susan); *Geranium* x 'Gerwat' (Rozanne Geranium)

Zone: 6

Landscape architect: Donna Christensen, APLD, Christensen Landscape Services, 325 Reeds Gap Road, Northford, CT 06472, 203-484-0424, christensenlandscape.com

A couple knew they could get more use from the backyard of their Connecticut shoreline home with some significant changes. To squeeze in a pool, terrace and pergola, they hired landscape designer Donna Christensen of Christensen Landscape Services. She developed a clever jigsaw puzzle-like solution that involved elevating the pool above the existing ledge rock so that mechanical equipment could be concealed underneath in a vault, which created a dramatic pool-length waterfall. An adjacent cedar pergola serves multiple functions—an entrance from the garage, a link between the pool and the house, and a shade cover for the upper terrace. To retain a casual look, Christensen selected a mix of rugged stones that she installed in irregular shapes. Plantings provide the sequential blooms the owners wanted.

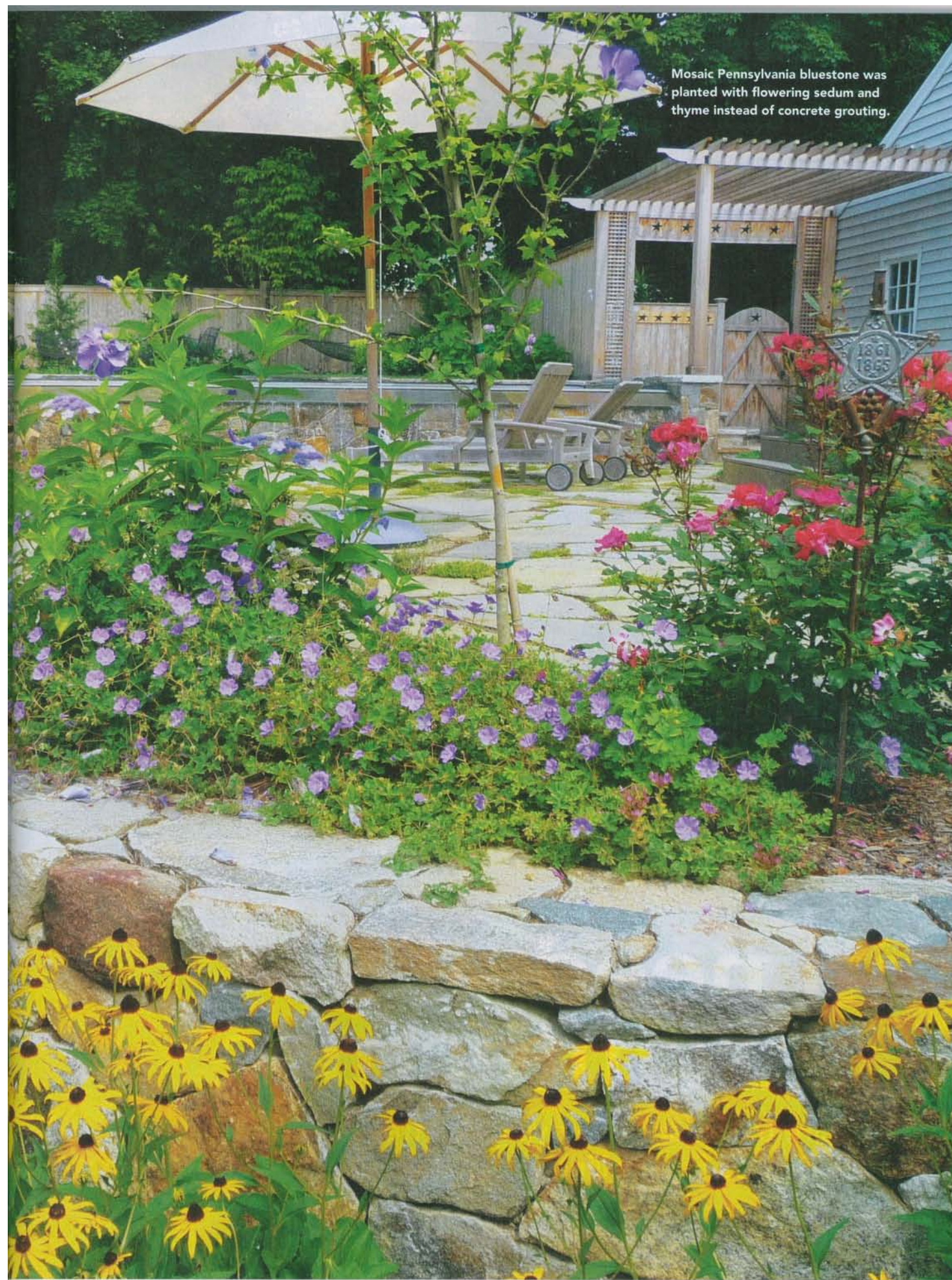
going for a natural look

Incorporating natural materials and plantings into a site with an eye toward keeping the setting natural-looking rather than manicured required a host of carefully conceived details.

- **Pool shelf** Within the pool, there's a ledge to sit or lie on, part of the trend toward more natural-looking pools, which sometimes even resemble a pond
- **Star detailing** Along the pergola's sides, the designer had stars worked in, a motif used in the couple's business logo
- **Varied plantings** The choices were picked according to the amount of sun and shade, with most in large clumps for impact and all veering toward casual "bouquets"



PHOTO: Donna Christensen



Mosaic Pennsylvania bluestone was planted with flowering sedum and thyme instead of concrete grouting.