

Tomorrow's landscape trends are on the way now



Ron Hall

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Dr. Gary Knox, at a recent conference, offered some trends he sees influencing the landscape industry. His comments echoed what my wife increasingly talks about. Knox is an associate professor in the Department of Environmental Horticulture at the North Florida Research & Education center. My lovely wife of 28 years, Vicky, is a gardener.

She subscribes to several slick (and costly) garden magazines; her favorite cable network is the Home and Garden cable television channel; and,

she spends hours each week tending her garden.

Perennials. Roses. Ornamental grasses. Vines. She collects, plants and fusses over them all.

She's creating "an English cottage garden." To that end, a few years ago, she acquired four wooden pillars that a neighbor discarded after rebuilding his porch. I used the pillars, under her careful eye, to construct a huge columned entrance to her gardens which I refer to as the Colossus of Rose Ar-

bors—but that's another story.

One Sunday in April, while Vicky was away for the day, I got itchy to do something. My attention wandered to the garden, *her* garden. I started splitting sedum and replanting them. A few here. Uhm, a few over there looks nice.

This was not a good idea. When she'd discovered what I had done, she offered convincing reasons why it wasn't a good idea. I promised never to garden without her supervision again.

Knox says during the 1980s the public:

- ▶ began demanding more color in its landscapes. He uses the term "Disneyfication."
- ▶ became aware of native plants.
- ▶ discovered the concept of low maintenance.

These trends continue, especially the use of perennials in our landscapes. But our lifestyles are

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changing. For instance, many of us seem to have less free time. Larger numbers of us are live in downsized homesteads like condos and townhouses. And, trend watchers use the word "cocoon" to describe our growing desire to stay at home to recreate and entertain.

These changes are, generally, good for the landscape industry, believes Knox.

What does Knox see as hot for the landscape industry for the remainder of the 1990s?

- ▶ Landscaped areas as "outdoor rooms".
- ▶ Speciality gardens. Wildlife gardens. Water gardens.
- ▶ Native plants, those looking more like domesticated plants. He calls them "refined" natives.
- ▶ Heirloom plants. "Good things from grandmother's garden," explains Knox.
- ▶ Trellises and vines. Maybe even bamboo.
- ▶ Garden furnishings. Statues. Terraces. Fountains.

These are things my wife and all of her friends now talk about. Most of her friends don't have the time to garden. They will hire the landscape professional that talks their language. **LM**

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