

PROJECT PORTFOLIO

A SCRAPBOOK OF DESIGN/BUILD OVERHAULS

Spatial awareness

THE MISSION

Create a colorful, turf-free environment in a very narrow space.

When called to this waterfront property, Dix Hills, NY-based Stephen Dubner Landscaping was asked to design a functional, low-maintenance and tranquil environment. Specifically, Dubner and his team were asked to design the plantings, screen the house mechanical systems and create spaces for outdoor enjoyment.

The clients did not mind the maintenance of flowering shrubs and perennials, but made it clear that they did not want turf — they thought it would be wasteful to cut the lawn every week.

The first part of the design process was to determine how guests should experience the garden. “The concept of having the walks meander between intimate spaces of the garden not only creates different experiences and views,” notes Dubner, “but it also creates the illusion of depth, making the narrow space feel much wider than it actually is.”

The team chose to use *Arctostaphylos uva-ursi* in lieu of turf, both for its durability and its bright red berries. “It thrives in the waterside environment, while giving us the spatial mass at the groundplane that a traditional turf would normally have occupied, all without the maintenance of grass,” Dubner points out.

“Careful examination of the planting and site design demonstrate a carefully molded relationship between lush plantings and intimate spaces,” he continues. “The natural look and mass of *Nipponanthemum nipponicum* proves the perfect balance to a detailed pergola.

“Now, whether the clients choose to cut flowers for a vase, walk the garden down to the beach or simply enjoy the view from the indoors, they are part of a great environment at this seaside retreat!”



PHOTOS COURTESY: STEPHANIE BARONE, STEVEN DUBNER LANDSCAPING

3



4

5



THE WORK

1 | Beauty beckons. The custom cedar arbor directs guests into the garden beyond. Lush plantings of *Hydrangea macrophylla* and *Spirea x bumalda* 'Goldflame' blur the lines of the built and the natural.

2 | A pop of color. Upon rounding the path, guests enjoy a foreground of *Nipponanthemum nipponicum* and *Imperata cylindrical* 'Red Baron' — whose bold red contrasts against the neutral pavers and the deep green needles of an existing *Pinus thunbergiana*.

3 | Hide and seek. A little nook set off the main patio provides a place where one could escape to enjoy the views or some quiet time. *Thymus serpyllum*, with the ability to withstand light foot traffic, was planted between boulders and flat stones. *Juniperus chinensis* 'Torulosa' and *Hydrangea macrophylla* envelop the space for an intimate feel.

4 | A swinging view. The classic bench hung from the *Campsis radicans*-covered cedar pergola makes a great space to relax. *Cryptomeria japonica* in the background give scale to the space, while *Buxus sempervirens* relate it to the plantings along the back of the garage. *Arctostaphylos uva-ursi* and *Miscanthus sinensis* 'Gracillimus' flank the tumbled paver walkway.

5 | Sea portal. The team chose to leave the stairs leading to the beach in place, to represent a departure from the "built" environment back to the simple beauty of the sea. The mass of *Nipponanthemum nipponicum* provides one last splash of color and texture before hitting the beach.

Steven Dubner Landscaping is Long Island's award-winning landscape development firm, creating landscapes and gunite pools for more than 40 years. SDL offers a full service from initial concept to completion: landscape development, site master plans, seasonal color and design, gunite pools and spas. With a separate division for premium commercial spaces, the firm has constructed some of the most prestigious commercial landscapes in the New York Metropolitan region. This project garnered a 41st Annual Environmental Improvement Grand Award from the Professional Landcare Network (PLANET). For more information, visit StevenDubnerLandscaping.com.