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**SUMMER
DIVERSIONS
TO SOOTHE
OUR SOULS**

CURATED CHILL

SUMMER 2021
SEEKING THE SUBLIME
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Horticulture

TEXT **DEBORAH L. MARTIN**

GARTH ROBINSON

LOCATION: BEREÄ, KWAZULU-NATAL, SOUTH AFRICA

Passionate gardener and bush guide Garth Robinson created his own garden to blend with his tropical modern house using an abundance of oversized leafy plants. Wherever possible he used native flora, but as the climate in KwaZulu-Natal is subtropical, he was also able to incorporate some exotic plants too, including a smorgasbord of lilies, palms, ferns, stag horns and orchids. His dream garden? "My great great grandfather John Geekie was a cabinetmaker who came to South Africa from Scotland at the age of 20. He planted Benvie Arboretum in Howick, KwaZulu-Natal between 1882 to 1887. It is widely considered the largest exotic garden in the Southern Hemisphere."



Lin Photography / Frank Features

AN ESSAY: NIPPING IT IN THE BUD

Intuitively, we all know how good we feel around gardens. And it's easy to believe that the source of such pleasure is from such exquisite beauty unfurling into a rainbow of colors, textures and shapes.

But in fact, there is much science behind why flowers are therapeutic.

As *flowerpowerdaily.com* reported, there are now 16 million new gardeners as a result of the pandemic. Flowers are not only companions to help connect to loved ones and cheer up dreary days, but can be a remedy for COVID-19's enduring side effects.

As the Vanderbilt Taste and Smell Clinic and others reveal, 35% to 68% of patients with COVID lose a sense of smell temporarily. Furthermore, as the U.S. National Library of Medicine shared, loss of smell persisted for months in approximately 10% of those cases. The magnitude of this impairment on the health, safety and quality of life is truly unprecedented and makes post-COVID olfactory disorder a major public health concern.

To combat this problem, some experts reverted to ancient floral remedies of using roses among other essential oils in the floral, fruity, spicy and resinous family. Yes, roses, the national flower of the United States and go-to favorite of gardeners for their variety of blooms and long-lasting beauty.

Improving on a study by German doctor Thomas Hummel in 2009, some doctors are recommending a patient does three rounds of smelling essential oils for 20 seconds each, twice a day.

Roses have long been a part of Chinese and Native American medicine as an antimicrobial, antioxidant and anti-inflammatory treatment – as well as for menstrual cramps.

Scientists are discovering new connections with flowers and plants all the time. In some cases, they prove what ancient people already knew. The Egyptians would chew on poppy seeds for their pain-relieving alkaloids and its sap was later used for morphine.

New discoveries have also found wonder drugs unknown to the ancients. The common periwinkle, or vinca, can fight cancer. The alkaloids derived from the periwinkle are vinblastine and vincristine, powerful chemotherapy to fight small-cell lung cancer and two kinds of leukemia.

And let us not forget recent studies about what happens for any gardener to just dig their hands in the dirt. Antidepressant microbes in soil called *Mycobacterium vaccae* cause cytokine levels to rise, which produces higher levels of serotonin which makes us happier and more relaxed.

So, consider that summer garden a place of beauty and health. And when you are thinking of planting roses, consider Sweet Spirit, Brick House and Easy to Please. These roses won the 2021 American Garden Rose Selections™ Regional Choice Awards – which is like winning a gold medal at the Olympics.

As botanist Luther Burbank said, "Flowers make people better, happier, and more helpful; they are sunshine, food and medicine to the mind." **JILL BROOKE**



MABLEY HANDLER INTERIOR

Jennifer Mabley Handler and her mother, Cary Mabley, designed this garden together for Cary's home in Water Mill. Jennifer explains, "The property connected with ours and we created the house and extensive gardens from scratch. The black pine was one of the first selections to help ground the house and it became the watchful eye on all the flowering plants below. This garden was inspired by the late Jim van Sweden of the prestigious landscape architect firm Oehme van Sweden. The sweeping clusters of colorful and wild looking flowers and grasses made for a natural and theatrical garden. We also assisted on hardscape details like the walled garden facing the pool." Mabley shares that her dream garden would be beachfront, using native plants, or a desert garden, inspired by her childhood in the Southwest.

LOCATION: WATER MILL, NY

Conrad Prockter

DAVID SCOTT INTERIORS LOCATION: WATER MILL, NY



Antoine Bozot

For his own home, David Scott collaborated with Chris LaGuardia and his colleagues at LaGuardia Design in Water Mill. The blue garden gates in the privet hedges echo the front door color and are inspired by the most beautiful mature blue hydrangeas that greet you at the entrance to the property and surround the house.

GRACE DESIGN ASSOCIATES



Holly Lepore

LOCATION: SANTA BARBARA, CA

This hillside property, designed by Margie Grace, was burned in the Montecito Tea Fire of 2008. Grace explains, "With the exception of the native oaks, every stick of vegetation was burned down to the ground, and the fire burned right up to the exterior walls of the building, then moved on." *The owner wanted a "spool"—a water feature that Grace describes as "Larger than a spa, smaller than a pool."* The spool is cozy and warm in the cooler months and provides a place to cool down in the warmer months. But perhaps its most important function? It stores 3,600 gallons of water for fighting fire and is equipped with a gas-powered pump and a 2-inch fire hose.

WORTHYdomes

Reagan Rodriguez is the founder of WORTHYdomes: modular, sustainable dome-shaped homes that are made from recycled plastic and are both bulletproof and fireproof. The homes are perfect for installing a green roof, as Rodriguez created here for an Airbnb in Monterrey, Mexico. Rodriguez shares, "A green roof absorbs rainwater, providing insulation. Most of Mexico gets cold in the winter and Monterrey can be colder than Canada sometimes. The garden on the roof can decrease stress by providing a more aesthetically pleasing landscape. And since Monterrey is very industrial there is a great deal of pollution. A green roof can help filter both air and water. The lush green walls are attractive to look at, they reduce ambient temperature and noise, and they boost productivity. Exposure to greenery can enhance learning and improve decision-making skills."



Courtesy of WORTHYdomes

LOCATION: MONTERREY NUEVO LEÓN, MEXICO

DWB BOTANICAL DESIGNS



LOCATION: ROXBURY, CT

Client Michael Leva and designer David Bergman worked hand in hand to design a special and original garden. Bergman says that he prefers a mix of wild plantings but within a contained environment. "The combination of wild and wonderful needs some borders, otherwise it looks too haphazard and sloppy." When it comes to famous garden designers that inspire him, he shares, "I am inspired by almost all of them. There's something to learn from everyone throughout history. It's the combination of ideas that propels us forward."

LOCATION: EAST HAMPTON, NY

David Scott collaborated with Michael Derrig of Landscape Details in East Hampton for this vast modernist garden for clients. The garden has many native trees, bushes and grasses mixed with various hydrangea, boxwood and moss. Scott says, "This is a highly designed garden with several areas for contemplation and resort style living." He shares, "I have been so fortunate to work with gifted landscape architects on gardens throughout the United States from the lushness of the Hamptons to the Arizona desert, but I would love to work on a garden in Europe; perhaps one that was established and then neglected just waiting to be re-imagined and brought back to life in a new modern way."



DAVID SCOTT INTERIORS



LOCATION: THE HAMPTONS, LONG ISLAND, NY

KAA DESIGN GROUP

This garden was designed for a private client concurrent with the design of the home. Michael McGowan explains, "The site is rather steep, with different levels of the home opening out to different levels of the site. *Garden spaces were used to mitigate the transition between levels.*" A garden stair, located partially in the shade and partially in full sun, connects the indoor/outdoor room, with a play lawn beyond. McGowan continues, "The challenge was to design a plant palette that could thrive on each side of the space respectively but could also work together as one unified expression. This was achieved by matching the scale, texture and color of plants on each side of the space, while allowing lower plantings that can survive in both light conditions to hold the sides together. The result is a verdant stairway that beckons residents and guests to explore the mystery beyond."



LOCATION: MANHATTAN BEACH, CA

This house puts a contemporary twist on traditional seaside architecture, removing embellishments and stripping down the materials to a much simpler form. The landscape design responds in a similar way. Edmund Hollander shares, "The plant and materials palette are restrained and simple, frequently relying on the play of texture and concentrations of color. In the gravel garden, stone slabs create a rhythm that connect it to the house, while fragrant herbs planted into the gravel keep it from feeling too formal. A garden feels part of a home when it responds to the home's architecture and the site – its location, topography and relationship to the adjacent residence."

HOLLANDER DESIGN LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS