

HC & G

Hamptons Cottages and Gardens

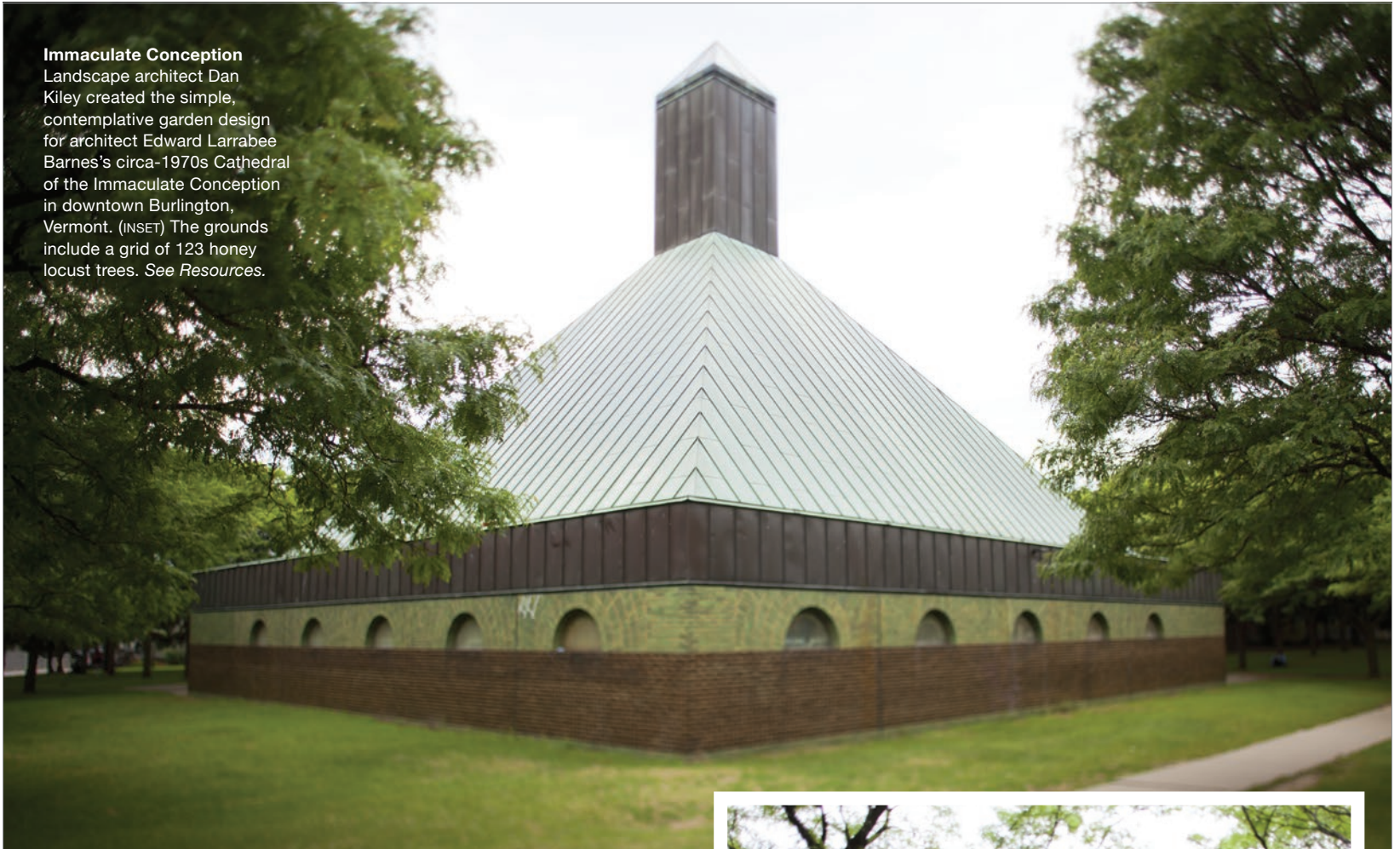
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THE ARCHITECTURE ISSUE

Divine Invention

A threatened Vermont garden piques the curiosity of Summerhill Landscapes

Immaculate Conception
Landscape architect Dan Kiley created the simple, contemplative garden design for architect Edward Larrabee Barnes's circa-1970s Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in downtown Burlington, Vermont. (INSET) The grounds include a grid of 123 honey locust trees. See *Resources*.



Editors' note: This season, *HC&G*'s gardening column explores the ideas and inspiration behind the work of our region's best-known landscape designers.

HC&G: You've said that you deeply admire landscape architect Dan Kiley's rectilinear garden design at the Cathedral of the Immaculate Conception in Burlington, Vermont.

DECLAN BLACKMORE, founder, Summerhill Landscapes: The church was designed in the early 1970s, and Kiley completed the planting in 1977. It's essentially a bosque of 123 uniformly spaced honey locust trees, and it is so effective. We tend to overcomplicate nature in horticulture, but the beauty in this instance is the simplicity of the honey locusts and the grass, which create a moment of contemplation. Unfortunately, the site is currently under threat because of an adjacent development, but the Cultural Landscape Foundation is fighting to protect it.

TOM VOLK, director of landscape management, Summerhill Landscapes: This garden is situated between a bus depot and a mall.

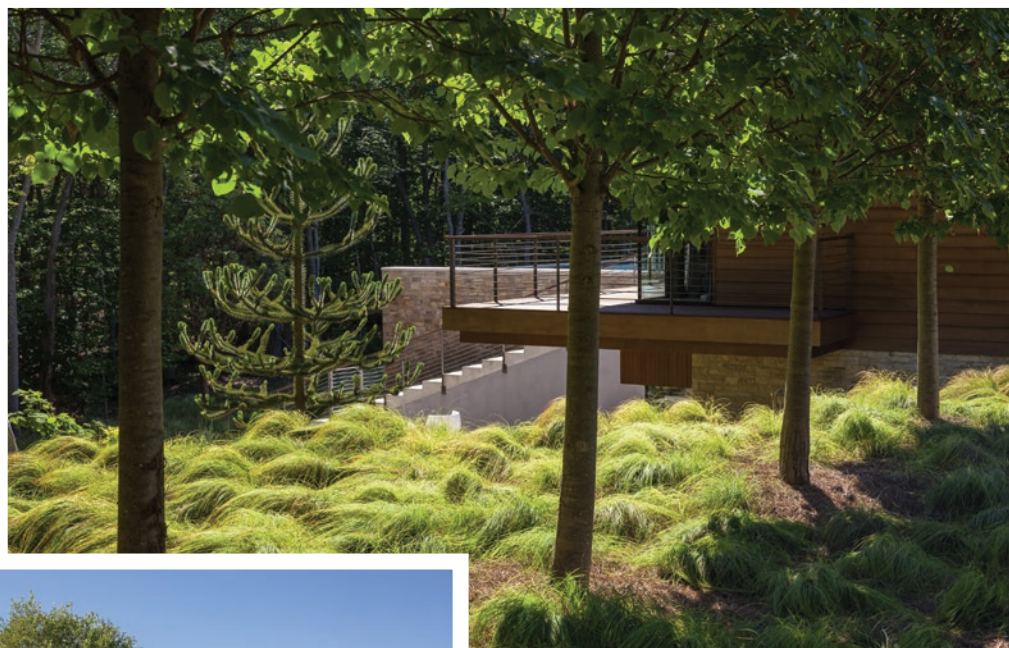


Plain Truths

Streamlined projects by Summerhill Landscapes feature (CLOCKWISE FROM TOP) honey locusts shading a pool terrace in Wainscott, an allée of lindens and a groundcover of carex in Amagansett, stone walls anchoring meadow plantings in Montauk, and a Sagaponack meadow where a single honey locust stands sentry. See *Resources*.



"I was drawn to the property's calm and the well-thought-out tree placement"



I first came across it when I was a student in Burlington, and I was immediately drawn to it—the calm and the well-thought-out tree placement—even before I started studying landscape architecture. Later, when I discovered the work of Jacques Wirtz, who credited Kiley as an inspiration, I could see the similarities. This project is Kiley's only preserved design in his home state. Whenever I visit Burlington, I'm still captivated by it.

How does one update a strict landscape plan like this one for today's gardens?

DB: We're working on a project that has a grid of fruit-bearing trees, but it's not so straightforward. Rather, it features concentric circles, which seems fresher. We love laying out fruit trees. The fastest-growing segments of our business are fruit and vegetable gardens. Bit by bit, homeowners or their chefs have been telling us to make their vegetable plots bigger, once they've learned what might be available each week for cooking.

Name some trees that work best for providing structure or privacy.

TV: Well, as with the Kiley garden, honey locusts are great because the



canopy doesn't grow too thick and you get a beautiful dappled light. And pleached London plane trees work well, particularly in more formal designs. A grove of crape myrtles with skinny single trunks or an allée of pleached lindens underplanted with carex creates a powerful entrance to a home. Groundcovers in general—whether carex, liriope, or *Pennisetum*, among others—can really vary the look of your garden while establishing a sense of formality.

How can a historic landscape be taken care of?

TV: The lawn at the Kiley project might not seem ideal to some. When I look at it, I see a lawn that has compaction, but I also see a lawn that's been used. It's not supposed to be a museum piece.

DB: We come across older landscapes on historic properties often. Rather than imposing our views on an established landscape, we let nature take care of itself. When you work with what you have, your landscape will be healthier. —Alejandro Saralegui