



BY **NANCY RICHMAN MILLIGAN**

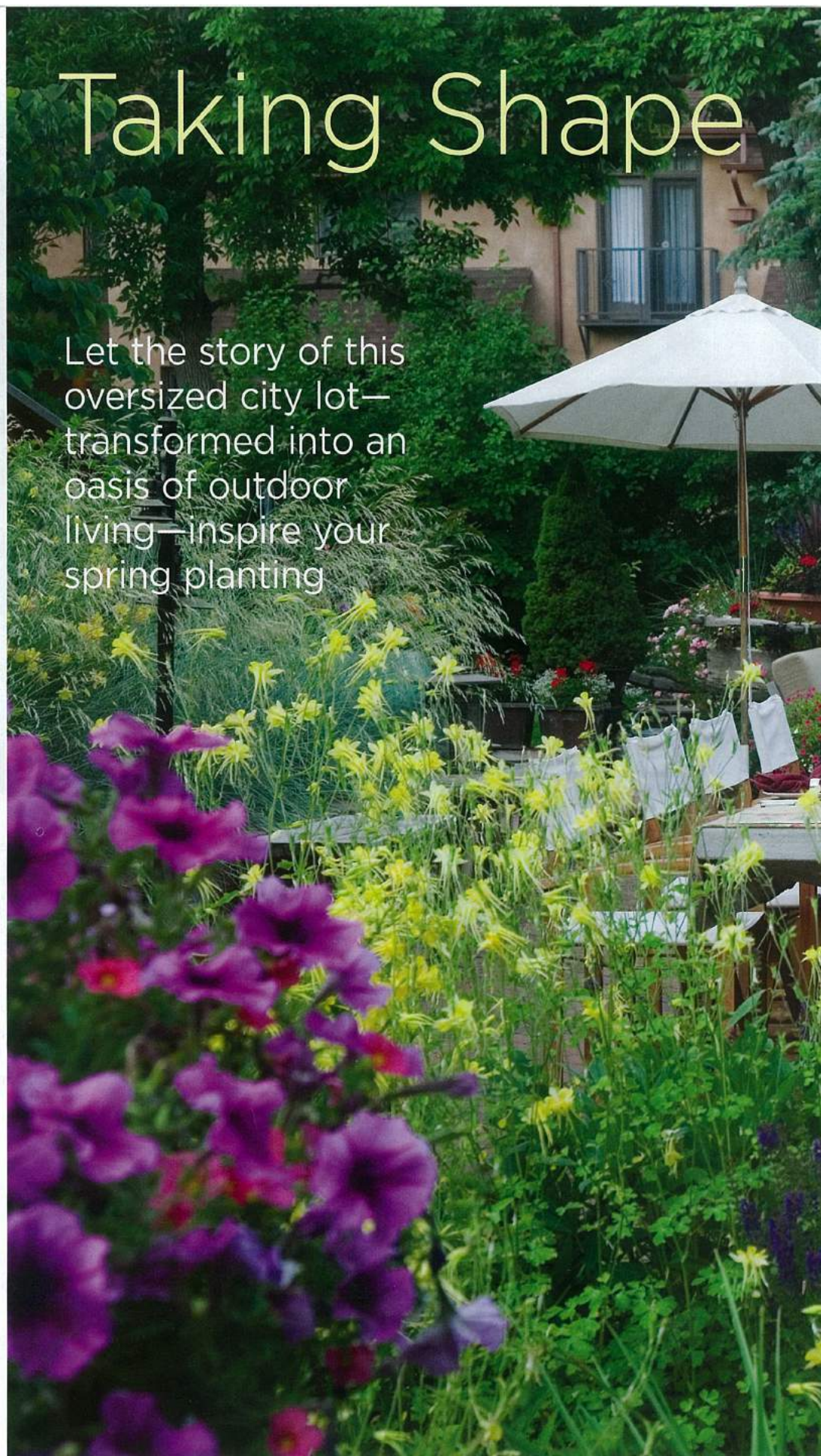
PHOTOGRAPHY BY  
**EMILY MINTON REDFIELD**

SHORTLY AFTER THE HAMLING family moved to their century-old Denver home, an act of nature determined the course of their renovations. "A microburst took down trees and destroyed the yard. That was the impetus for us to focus on the landscape before the house," says Scott Hamling. He and his wife, Kirsten, hired landscape architect Wendy Booth of Ivy Street Design to design the multi-purpose backyard they envisioned.

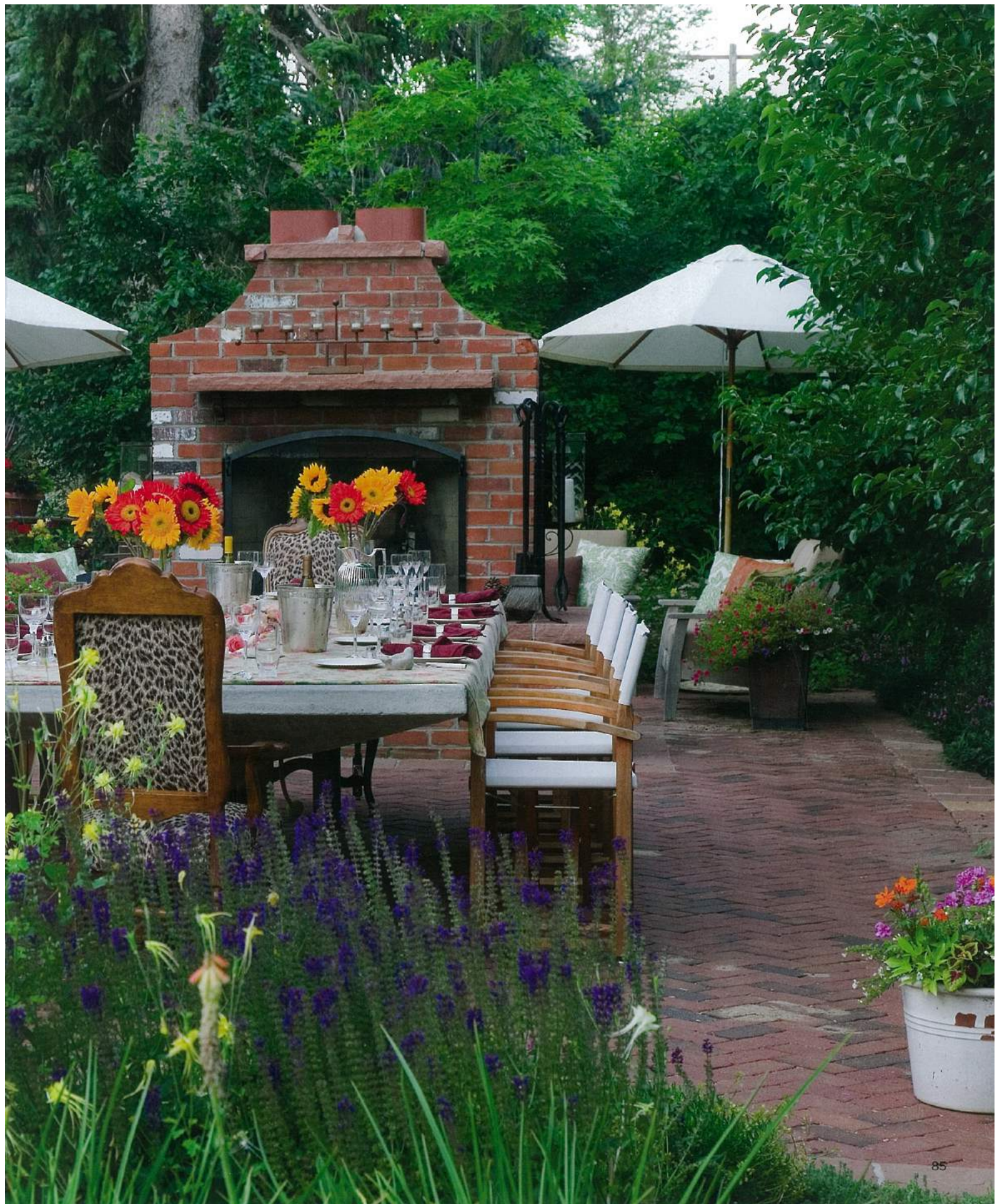
The salvaged brick fireplace is the focal point of the garden design. Open on two sides, it relates to both the living area and dining area. The custom poured-concrete dining table seats up to 16 for large family barbeques or elegant al fresco dinners. The table has a trough in the center to hold iced drinks, or to float candles and flowers. The patios are laid with durable and moisture-resistant clay pavers edged with flagstone.

# Taking Shape

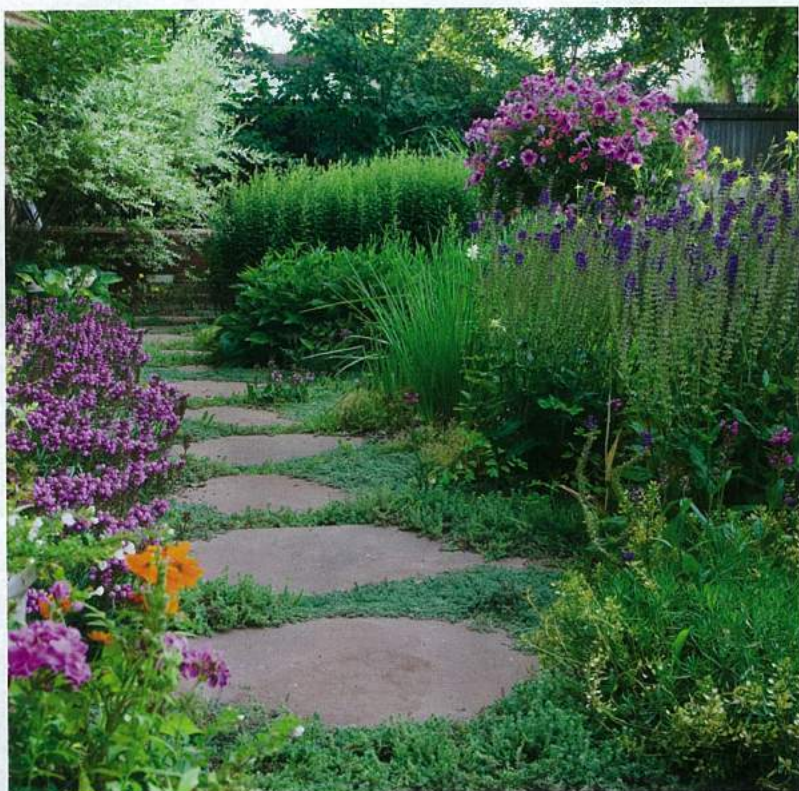
Let the story of this oversized city lot—transformed into an oasis of outdoor living—inspire your spring planting











"The key role of the design was to create meaningful spaces," says Booth, whose clients wanted areas for entertaining, gardening, playing and relaxing. Booth began with the structure: hardscape elements and trees to delineate the open-air spaces. A two-sided brick fireplace is the focal point of the landscape—it also serves to separate the spacious living and dining areas. Double paths lead to the far end of the garden, passing through a charming perennial garden and ending at a waterfall and reflecting pool.

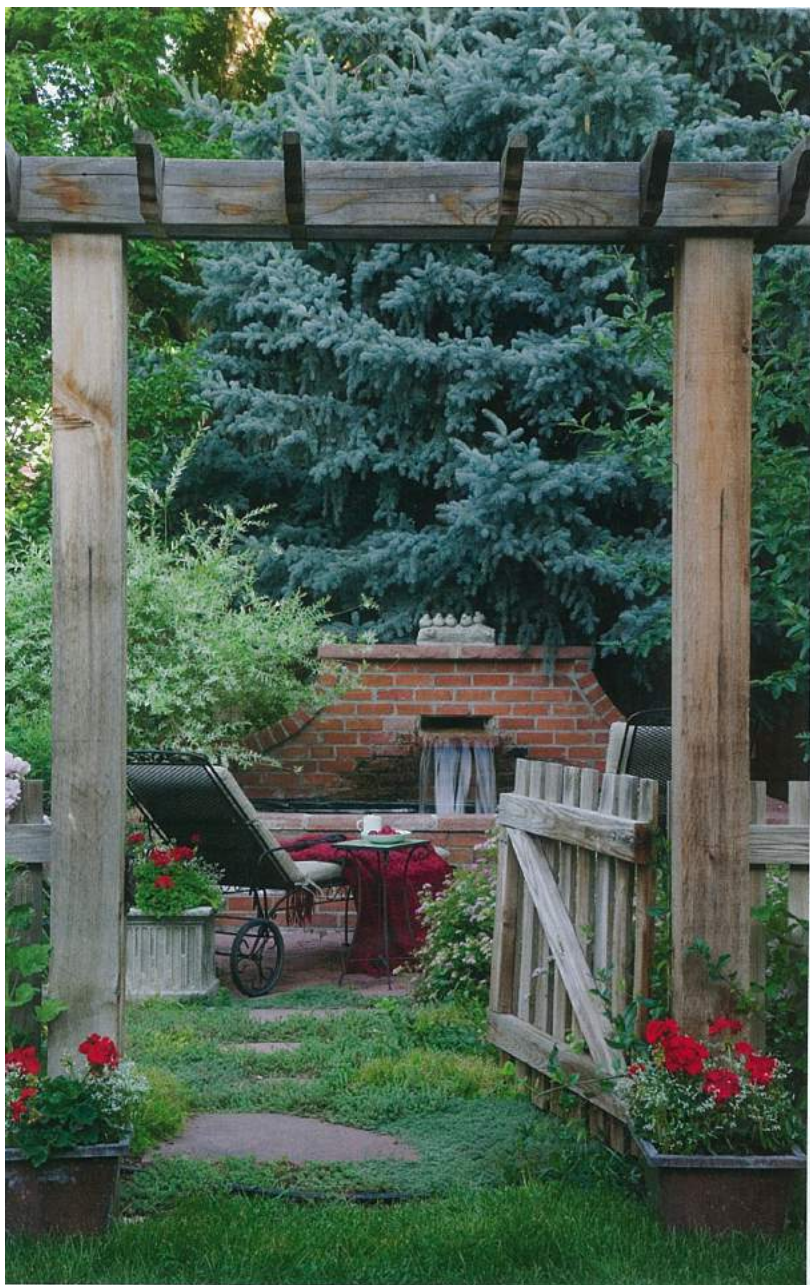




*(left, above)* The garden path is laid with flagstone pavers, softened around the edges by woolly thyme. A variety of annuals and perennials fills the space with vibrant color, and different plants relate to one another in both form and color.

*(above)* A large basket of petunias crowns a garden fountain and matches the purple self-heal flowers in the foreground. Foliage adds texture and shape, and the pleasing shape of the fountain provides an element of interest in the garden.





(left) The pergola and gate lead to a private retreat at the north end of the garden, where a waterfall fountain pours into a reflecting pool graced with water lilies.

(right, top) A pale pink shrub rose, spiky penstemon and yellow Missouri primrose bloom together to create a tapestry of color in one section of the garden.

(right) Upholstered sofas bring comfort and style to the outdoor living room; umbrellas add a playful touch. Behind the sofa, graceful yellow columbine brightens up the garden. (Booth says the yellow variety is a better choice for lower elevations in the Rocky Mountain West because it is more drought-tolerant than the traditional blue variety.) The wood-burning fireplace extends the use of the garden throughout the year.

Booth then brought in flowers and plants to introduce color and soften the hardscape. She selected a wide-ranging color palette of blue, purple, yellow and gold for the sun-filled space and chose bold-sized perennials to give presence. "The form and texture of plants are as important as the color," she says.

The homeowners enjoy the garden from the first burst of color in the spring to the turning leaves in the fall, and even into the winter around the fireplace. "We're happy we did the garden first because we plan to be here a long time," Scott Hamling says. "We can enjoy it now and watch it become more beautiful over time." □







## ➤ Planning Ahead

With spring just around the corner, our winter-weary thoughts turn to gardening—and while a garden may appear natural and spontaneous, it takes a lot of planning and execution. Now's the time to start. In many ways, growing a garden is like building a house, from the foundation to the utilities to the decoration. "Everything—the flowers, trees, hardscaping, water features—has a very specific job to do," says landscape architect Wendy Booth, who outlines these steps:

**START BY CONSIDERING HOW YOU WILL USE THE EXTERIOR SPACE.** Do you want to entertain? Have room to play sports? Simply enjoy flowering plants? Also consider the climate of your yard—the amount of sun, wind and moisture it receives. These factors drive the design.

**BUILDING THE FOUNDATION:** Hardscaping and trees define the landscape spatially and provide 90 percent of the structure—the walls, floors and ceilings of a garden. In most cases, this is a job for professionals who understand construction techniques, materials, safety and code requirements.

**ADDING THE UTILITIES:** If you opt for automatic irrigation, be aware that drip or spray elements should be designed specifically for your plants.

**WATER FEATURES:** Water is a classic element in the garden, a veritable jewel in our dry climate. Consider its placement in the garden (can you see and hear it?); the sound it makes (is it pleasing to you, or will it drown out conversation?); how much water surface is exposed to the air (the bigger the surface, the greater the evaporation factor). And be sure to understand how to maintain a water feature before you have one installed.

**PAINTING WITH PLANTS:** It takes more than choosing your favorite flowers to make a successful garden. An expert will consider the height, form, texture and color of a plant; when and how long it blooms; watering and light needs; scent; how well it thrives in your climate and which plants work together. It pays to hire a pro.

**FURNISHINGS:** If you're going to create a space you love, add furnishings that allow you to lounge in your garden. Outdoor furniture has taken a giant leap forward with weather-resistant, high-fashion sofas, tables and chairs.

**THE PERSONAL TOUCH:** While Booth advises getting expert help in designing and building your landscape, she says that nothing adds more personality and charm than the personal touches and accessories chosen by the people who use and love the garden.

### DESIGN DETAILS

Landscape Design  
**WENDY BOOTH**  
 IVY STREET DESIGN  
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