



SMALL SPACE,
BIG DREAMS



GARDEN PARTIES

We challenged five garden-design teams to create scaled-down outdoor retreats—with ideas for any yard.

Low-water oasis

A DESERT-INSPIRED GARDEN

p. 38



If we've proved anything with our Small Space, Big Dreams column, it's that downsizing is not a downgrade. For our 17th annual Celebration Weekend open house in June, we took that theme outdoors. Five design teams transformed 25- by 25-foot plots into space-smart outdoor retreats where the only thing missing is a cold drink.



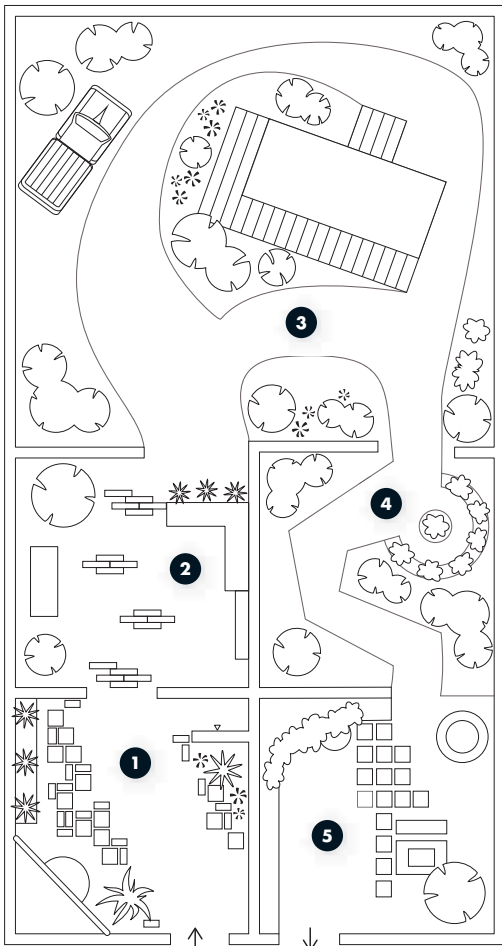
1. DESERT MODERN



2. URBAN CALM



3. WOODLAND RETREAT



4. EDIBLE BOUNTY



5. TROPICALI

By JOANNA LINBERG



GARDEN 1

DESERT MODERN

For gardeners across the West, the word “drought” can be a buzzkill—but not for Sunset editors Johanna Silver and Lauren Hoang. “A low-water garden doesn’t have to look stark and xeric,” Silver says. Their Palm Springs–inspired space proves it.



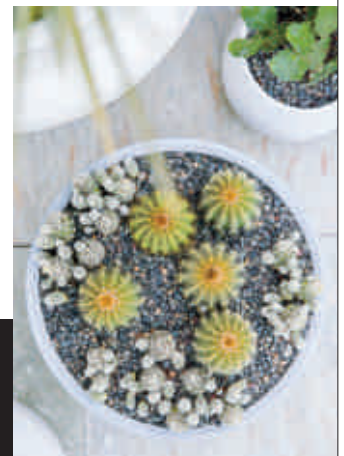
MEET THE DESIGNERS
Lauren Hoang, *Sunset* garden design assistant, and Johanna Silver, associate garden editor

SMALL-SPACE STRATEGY Section off portions of a tiny garden. “It can actually make it feel bigger and create more usable space,” Silver says. A large tiled wall separates the outdoor shower, right, from the seating area, above, giving each space the feeling of a distinct room.

DESIGNER SECRET Draw on color and water to make a hot spot seem cool. Hoang and Silver painted the low walls Kelly-Moore Ivory Mist (KM4926-1), chose

gray-green plants, and used frost-colored tiles for the shower. “The outdoor shower doesn’t need to be on to be refreshing—it’s the sense of water that’s essential,” Hoang says.

GARDEN HACK Build a platform. “The act of taking a step up gives you the illusion of being in a different place,” Silver says. Their 12-inch-high platform laid with cut (read: less expensive) stone, above, sets apart the hanging chair and offers ad hoc seating for a crowd.



Yuccas in bowls mimic water fountains.



Hanging seating creates a casual vibe.



Inexpensive painted breeze-block adds a graphic touch.



GARDEN 2

URBAN CALM

Is it a garden if there aren't many plants? Yes, says landscape designer Beth Mullins, who turned her plot into a minimalist escape that's perfect for city living.



MEET THE DESIGNER
Beth Mullins, Growsgreen
Landscape Design;
growsgreen.com.

SMALL-SPACE STRATEGY
Use furniture to carve up space outdoors. Although the garden has a small footprint, Mullins packed it with multiple destinations: a table for eating alfresco, an over-size L-shaped bench for lounging, and a fire feature, left, with a heated bench for chilly nights.

HARDSCAPE M.O. "My obsession is contrasting different textures," Mullins says.

She blanketed the ground in crushed oyster shells for a bit of shine. That played off the rustic wood of the bench and planters, which in turn sets off the smooth concrete tabletop. The interplay of textures "emphasizes what's unique about each of them," Mullins says.

PLANTING APPROACH
Envisioning this space as a garden in a city, Mullins wanted to put something

green overhead. It's minimal—just two potted Swan Hill olive trees—but bringing the canopy closer to the scale of a human makes an urban space friendlier.

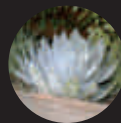
DESIGNER SECRET Pay attention to backgrounds. Mullins put a planter in the backside of the bench and filled it with *Pittosporum tenuifolium*, both to be a soft shield for anyone who sits there—and to add silver sheen to the space.



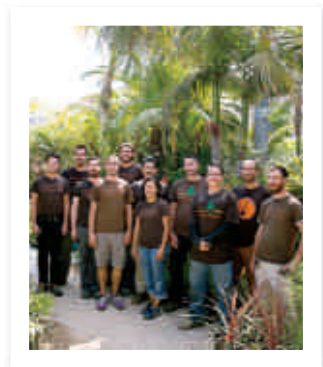
Stacked wood becomes quiet art.



An ombre paint job softens the lines of the olive trees' geometric planters.



Dudleya succulents pick up on the silver and gray colors in the furnishings.



MEET THE DESIGN TEAM
Kasorn Piamsukon with
Ground Cover Landscaping;
groundcoverlandscaping.com.

GARDEN 3

WOODLAND RETREAT

Any lone lawn can be transformed into a wild-around-the-edges woods. Landscape designer and contractor Kasorn Piamsukon shows how to fast-track a mature, natural look.

PLANTING APPROACH Grasslike *Carex*, conifers, ferns, and heucheras are exactly what you'd see in the Sierra Nevada. Here, they're dispersed to mimic the randomness of a forest floor. "It's also important to use a lot of small plants in a woodland garden," says Piamsukon. She filled in with tiny grasses.

HARDSCAPE M.O. Re-create the aged look of a grown-in woodland with salvaged wood, like what's used for the chairs and deck. Although the fence, right, isn't salvaged, Piamsukon's husband and business partner, Eksel Perez, built it using uneven boards that have the same texture as reclaimed wood.

GARDEN HACK For instant gratification, Piamsukon recommends purchasing a range of plants in the four sizes available at the nursery: 4-inch and 1-, 5-, and 15-gallon. The different elevations give the garden a head start to looking filled in. Still impatient? Add other old-age cues like boulders.



Stick to a leafy green color palette; only a few flowering plants were used here.



Plant *Teucrium cossonii majoricum* in low troughs to add foliage to seating areas.



Chickens provide a reason to get outside and enjoy the garden.



The Sunset Tiny House

We brought a 172-square-foot house to our campus for Celebration Weekend and gave it a big mission: Make us rethink how much space we really need. After opening all the drawers and marveling at the size of the closet, many of us were ready to move right in. But even if you're not, this Mica from Tumbleweed Tiny House Company still holds lessons in stretching space.

SMALL-SPACE STRATEGY

Use color to define each room. It might seem counterintuitive, but painting each room a different hue gives your eyes a reason to travel through the space, tricking you into thinking there's more to see. For the largest area, use a quiet neutral such as Kelly-Moore San Francisco Fog, KM5822.

DESIGNER SECRET

Large-scale landscape photographs look like another window. We divided this blown-up photo by *Sunset* staff photographer Thomas J. Story into fifteen 8½-by-11-inch pieces, framed each one, and hung them all in a close grid to mimic looking through windowpanes. A mirror on the opposite wall doubles the effect.

ROOM HACK

Take everything to the ceiling. The shelves and curtain rod (hung with Sunbrella panels) reach the ceiling to make the best use of the space and add height.





MEET THE DESIGNERS
Leslie Bennett, Stefani Bittner, and Christian Cobbs, Star Apple Edible Gardens; starappleediblegardens.com.



GARDEN 4

EDIBLE BOUNTY

This garden has a secret: Virtually every plant in it can be put on your plate or in a vase. It doesn't look like a typical edible garden, which is exactly the point.

SMALL-SPACE STRATEGY "We wanted to introduce curves to make the garden loose," Bennett says. "You walk through and don't know what's at the other end."

WATER-WISE TIPS Swap annuals for less-thirsty perennial edibles, even if it means finding unusual varieties like evergreen

huckleberries—"blueberries' low-water cousin," says Bittner. Other picks are edible bamboo, (which they used to form a hedge), pomegranates, and evergreen pineapple guavas.

PLANTING APPROACH Stave off a chaotic look by sticking to a color palette. The team kept their plants in shades of purple,

silver, and green, with a touch of orange and red. Even the chairs, above, fit the scheme.

HARDSCAPE M.O. Exercise restraint. "You can have almost anything in a garden that has crisp, clean hardscaping," Cobbs says. They took a cue from the *Sunset Tiny House* and created 24-inch-high planting

beds out of food-safe Cor-ten steel. Decomposed granite forms the paths.

GARDEN HACK Your arm's reach is a handy measuring tool. Any bed you'll harvest from should be narrow enough to reach what's planted in the middle. Another tip: Divide beds by use, like salad or tea.



Plant something fragrant like purple magic basil where you'll brush against it.



Don't overlook edible flowers, such as bee balm.



Plant edibles in food-safe materials: wood, stone, inert metal.



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GARDEN 5

TROPICALI

This isn't Bali; this is your backyard—or it could be if you follow garden designers Davis Dalbok and Brandon Pruett's method for creating a lush setting.

SMALL-SPACE STRATEGY Evoke a sense of mystery. Mexican weeping bamboo arches over the entrance to the garden, above, slowly revealing the view as you walk in.

PLANTING APPROACH Mix saturated colors and big plants with a lot of foliage. "We didn't use any-

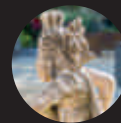
thing muddled in color," Pruett says of their palette. Giant philodendron and *Buddleja* (butterfly bush) gave the team a lot of texture and foliage per plant—a smart money-saving idea.

GARDEN HACK Build a living wall. Dalbok and Pruett constructed a metal frame and wove vertical grow

strips from Plants On Walls in and out of the grid before filling them with more than 600 plants, including shade-loving coleus, heuchera, and calibrachoa. "The 'Million Bells' variety fills in so fast and gives you great color," Dalbok says. The cantilevered top mimics a cliff face and adds depth to the garden. 🌿



Turn cobbles on their tall side (rather than lengthwise) for a toothy edge.



A Bali-inspired guardian sculpture is an easy hit of style.



MEET THE DESIGNERS
 Davis Dalbok and Brandon
 Pruett, Living Green Design;
livinggreen.com.



Cannas bring a tropical look to temperate climates.

SPONSORS

Kelly-Moore Paints, kellymoore.com; Sunbrella, sunbrella.com.

BUILD TEAM

C Ramos Landscaping; Lyngso Garden Materials, lyngsogarden.com; o'donnell lane, odonnell-lane.com.

PLANTS & TREES

Cactus/succulents Cactus Jungle, cactusjungle.com; Succulent Gardens, sgplants.com.

Herbs Morningsun Herb Farm, morningsunherbfarm.com.

Plants Bamboo Pipeline, bamboopipeline.com; Flora Grubb Gardens, floragrubb.com; Lisa Arnold Nursery Sales, lisaarnoldnurseries.com; Living Green Design, livinggreen.com; Orchard Nursery, orchardnursery.com; Pacific Nurseries, pacificnurseries.com.

Trees Pacific Nurseries, pacificnurseries.com; Tree Movers, treemovers.com.

DESERT MODERN

Breezeblock Calstone, calstone.com; Central Home Supply, centralhomesupply.com.

Furniture Potted, pottedstore.com.

Glass mulch Building Resources, buildingresources.org.

Hanging chair Anthropologie, anthropologie.com.

Paint Kelly-Moore Paints, kellymoore.com.

Pots Pottery Merchant, potterymerchant.com.

Shade sail Sunbrella, sunbrella.com.

Tile Heath Ceramics, heathceramics.com.

Tile installer Wishart Tile, wishart-tile.com.

Towels Coyuchi, coyuchi.com.

URBAN CALM

Accessories Jen Kuroki, etsy.com/shop/lovebugkiko; Owl Creek Ceramics, etsy.com/shop/owlcreekceramics.

Breezeblock Calstone, calstone.com; Central Home Supply, centralhomesupply.com.

Concrete tables Growsgreen Landscape Design, growsgreen.com.

Cushion fabric Sunbrella, sunbrella.com.

Firepit Modfire, modfire.com.

Geometric planters Growsgreen Landscape Design, growsgreen.com.

Heated bench Galanter & Jones, galanterandjones.com.

Paint Kelly-Moore Paints, kellymoore.com.

Pavers Peninsula Building Materials Co., pbm1923.com.

Pillows Chanee Vijay Textiles, etsy.com/shop/chaneevijaytextiles; Outra, etsy.com/shop/outra.

Reclaimed wood furniture Growsgreen Landscape Design, growsgreen.com.

Stone planters Sevenstone, etsy.com/shop/sevenstone.

Upholsterer Thomas Story, (415) 420-7079.

WOODLAND RETREAT

Edging & lumber Broadmoor Landscape Supply, broadmoorlandscape.com.

Furnishings Flora Grubb Gardens, floragrubb.com.

THE SUNSET TINY HOUSE

Awning fabric Sunbrella, sunbrella.com.

Chair Serena & Lily, serenaandlily.com.

Curtain fabric Sunbrella, sunbrella.com.

Deck Ground Cover Landscaping, groundcoverlandscaping.com.

Floor Shaw Floors, shawfloors.com.

Floor installer Slaughterbeck Floors, slaughterbeckfloors.com.

Hardware Rocky Mountain Hardware, rockymountainhardware.com.

Linens Coyuchi, coyuchi.com.

Paint Kelly-Moore Paints, kellymoore.com.

Photo display Sunset.

EDIBLE BOUNTY

Builder McCutcheon Construction, mcbuild.com.

Furniture Flowerland Nursery & Store, flowerlandshop.com.

Steel fabricator IronGrain, irongrain.com.

TROPICALI

Accessories & artifacts Living Green Design, livinggreen.com; Richard Gervais Collection, richardgervaiscollection.com.

Balinese furnishings Living Green Design, livinggreen.com.

Benches & firepit Ore, ore containers.com.

Stone sculpture Christiansen-Arner Stone & Water Sculpture, christiansenarnersculpture.com.

Tumbled glass Building Resources, buildingresources.org.

Vertical garden Plants On Walls, plantsonwalls.com.

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