

SPRING 2018

# GARDEN DESIGN



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## WAYS TO ADD BEAUTY & WONDER

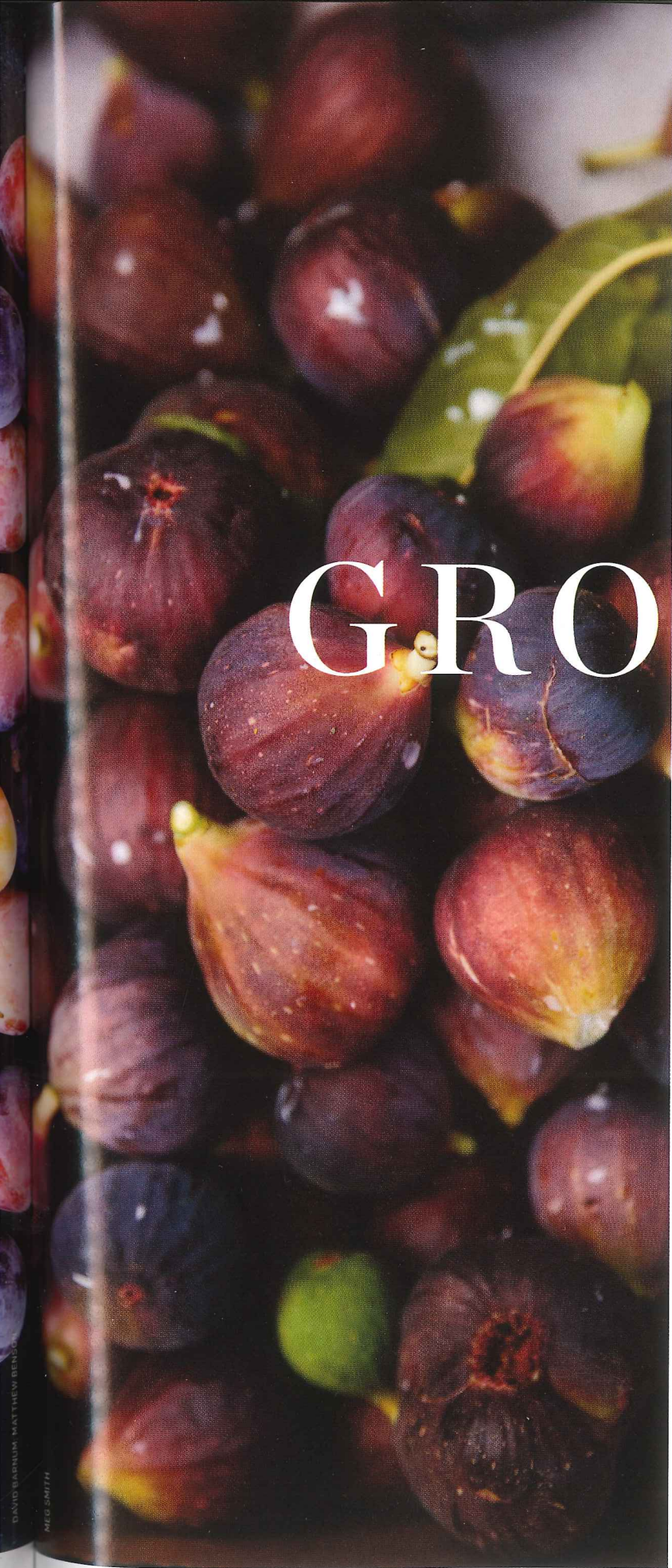
*Create spaces for refuge and rejuvenation. Attract butterflies. Grow fabulous food. Design with a painter's palette of rhododendrons. Plant fanciful passionflowers.*

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# GROWS UP

## THE KITCHEN GARDEN

No matter the size or state of your kitchen garden, these three backyard farmers will inspire you to take your food growing to the next level. Whether you're interested in starting an orchard filled with delicious fruit to eat right off the tree, planting your own ingredients for salads, or growing food you can't easily find at the grocery store, you'll discover ways to go beyond the raised bed.

BY THAD ORR & ELLEN ECKER OGDEN

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## SMALL SPACE, BIG HARVEST

In only 400 square feet, Ellen Ecker Ogden grows fresh ingredients to enjoy all year long.

**“I HAVE ALWAYS THOUGHT OF MYSELF** as more of a cook than a gardener,” says author and gardener Ellen Ecker Ogden. “My gardening begins and ends with how produce tastes.” Ogden started growing vegetables and fruits on a 10-acre farm in southern Vermont in the mid 1980s. She’s also run a seed business and authored five books on topics that range from how to cook with the food you grow to designing a beautiful kitchen garden. In 2003 she moved to a small lot in southern Vermont where she grows edibles that are not commonly found at grocery stores or farmers markets,

including a number of heirloom varieties that are both beautiful and great for cooking. Though the garden is only around 400 square feet, Ogden has managed to fit in a range of herbs, salad greens, strawberries, peppers, and flowers, as well as fruit trees and structural elements that enhance the beauty of the edible garden. We wanted to hear how Ogden thinks about gardening for culinary uses, find out how she fits so much in her space, and learn how she keeps it looking beautiful. Plus, we asked her to share a few favorite recipes she likes to make with produce from the garden.

**Above:** Ellen Ecker Ogden’s potager next to her house is proof that small can be beautiful *and* productive. The view from above shows off its classic foursquare design and tapestry of edible and ornamental greens. Two garden benches face each other, and an ornamental Korean lilac stands as a focal point in the middle.



**“ONCE YOU TASTE A CARROT FRESHLY PULLED FROM THE SOIL OR A PEPPER TWISTED OFF A GREEN STEM, THERE IS NO TURNING BACK.”**

**GD: What excites you most about growing food?**

**OGDEN:** I grow food because I love to eat. Once you taste a ‘Touchon’ carrot freshly pulled from the soil, a ‘Jimmy Nardello’ pepper twisted off a green stem, or a ‘Bosc’ pear dropped from a tree at the peak of ripeness, there is no turning back. Growing food expands your flavor options because some produce just isn’t available at a store or farmers market, or it just isn’t as flavorful. Plus growing food connects you to the life cycle of each plant, eliciting curiosity about its smell and feel as well as its taste. You can also learn how to use produce at different stages of its life cycle—like using squash blossoms, young baby squash, and mature squash. This makes cooking and eating more enjoyable experiences.

**Why is it important to grow food?**

Food is so easily bought, but supermarket options have homogenized our choices and dulled our palates. It seems like such a simple gesture to plant a seed, watch it grow, and then harvest it for a meal, yet it is something that many people either don’t know how to do or don’t think is important enough.

At a time when we are losing the genetic diversity of our food crops at an alarming rate, it’s vital we understand what we eat, grow it ourselves, know how to cook with it and preserve it, and then repeat the cycle. If everyone had their own micro farm that produced a greater percentage of the food they ate, then we’d have a

more sustainable food cycle. And the country as a whole would be a lot healthier.

**What’s your advice for first-time food gardeners?**

Think long term. Pay attention to the design, plot it on paper first, and consider a 5-year plan rather than a quick raised-bed garden. Integrate the edible garden into the entertaining area rather than pushing it away to the far edges of the yard. Surround it with berries or an orchard. Plant flowers and food together that will bring in pollinators. Gardens are at their best when they are extensions of our homes and reflect our personalities. Add color, a bit of whimsy, a garden shed to keep everything organized, and places to lounge and relax—turn the work into play.

**Why is design so important?**

Good gardeners make gardening seem easy because their gardens always look lovely and productive, yet it’s really the design and the structure that’s pleasing to the eye. When a garden is designed properly from the start, it is easier to maintain and becomes more efficient for successive planting. Choosing a design and the functional elements is as important as deciding what to grow, because those elements will make a difference in how much time you ultimately spend in your garden. Design also means being realistic about how big you need the garden. If you can’t really maintain 10 planting beds, then don’t put them in your plan.



One of Ogden's favorite spots to spend summer afternoons is on the front porch of her historic 1905 home in southern Vermont. Here she sits with her recent harvest of 'German Red' garlic and ripe 'Jimmy Nardello' sweet peppers.





When you start your design, begin with the basics. I like borrowing design elements that have been used by landscape architects for centuries: Wide paths, a focal point, and a good bench are essential in every garden. Adding accents such as vertical frames for runner beans and gates and fences to frame the garden make the space feel more intimate and personal.

**Who has most influenced your gardening style?**

My earliest inspiration was Rosalind Creasy, who took the art of gardening to the most extraordinary level through her visually stimulating

combinations of food and flowers and brilliant photography. Her books have always been favorites of mine, and her message to dig up the lawn and plant food continues to resonate with me. Barbara Damrosch is another early pioneer of planting food gardens with an artful style and culinary purpose.

**Who has most influenced your cooking style?**

I'm curious and I'll try growing just about anything. The problem is I'm not always sure how to cook it, so I depend on classic cookbooks that cover everything. When I first cooked with produce I grew at home, I was stumped

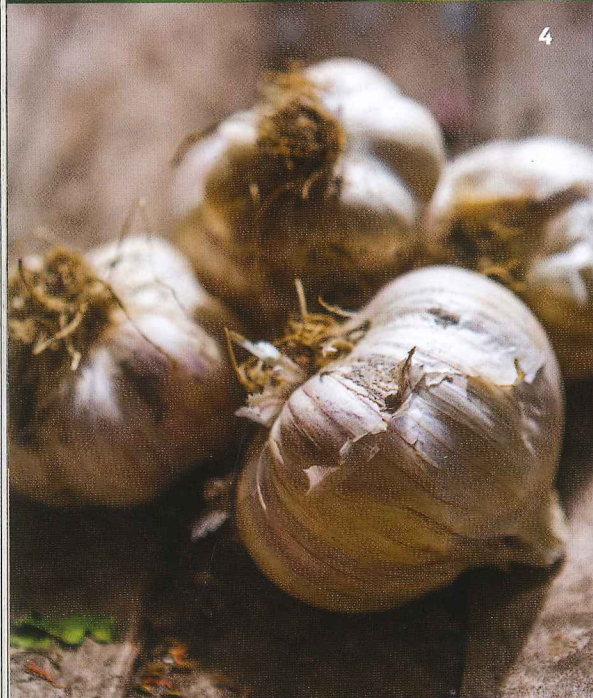
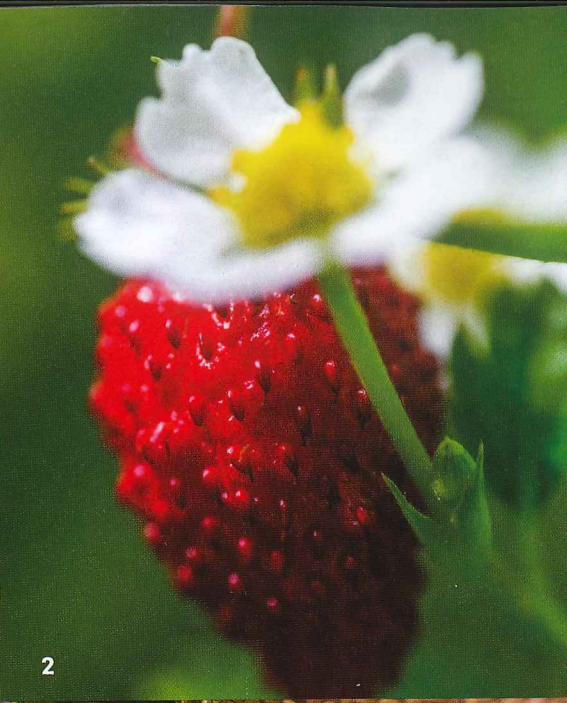
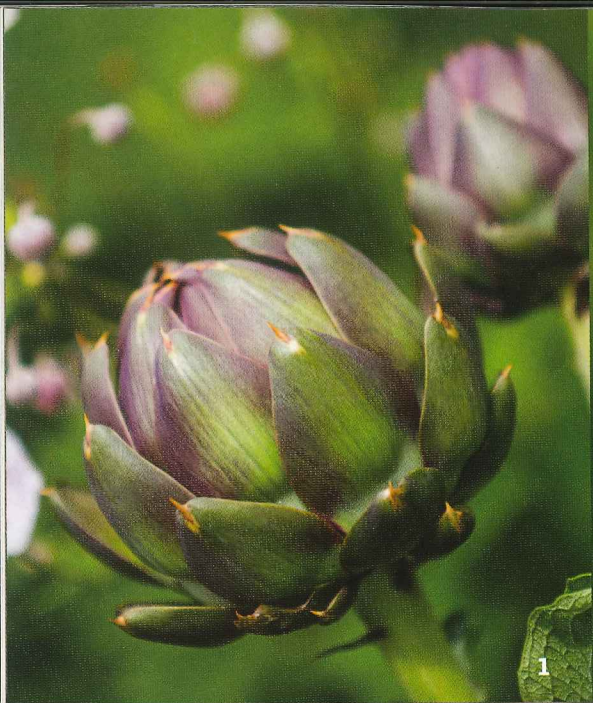
**Above:** Elderberries thrive in a swampy corner of Ogden's garden (left). She harvests just enough to make cordial (right) and leaves the rest for the birds.

**Opposite:** A washed river stone path diverts the water away from the beds after heavy rains. Ogden's red-trimmed garden shed is located right next to the garden, making it easy to grab tools and supplies.











## OGDEN'S ENTICING EDIBLES

**1.** The purple Italian heirloom '**Violetto artichoke**' is a stunning ornamental for borders. "I started planting only a few in my garden, but now they are all over the flower borders as well," Ogden says.

**2.** Ogden planted a dozen ***Fragaria vesca* (alpine strawberry)** on a whim 15 years ago, and they still produce reliably each year. "They're just as charming and delicious as ever," she says.

**3.** Ogden grows '**Jimmy Nardello**' peppers because she's found them to be sweet and abundant. "Plus, I love the shape of the fruits," she says, "and it's the only pepper that grows easily in my garden."

**4.** Since it's planted in fall and harvested the following summer, garlic takes up precious space in a small garden. But Ogden says that the more pungent varieties such as '**German Red**' garlic are worth the space—they're far superior to anything she can buy.

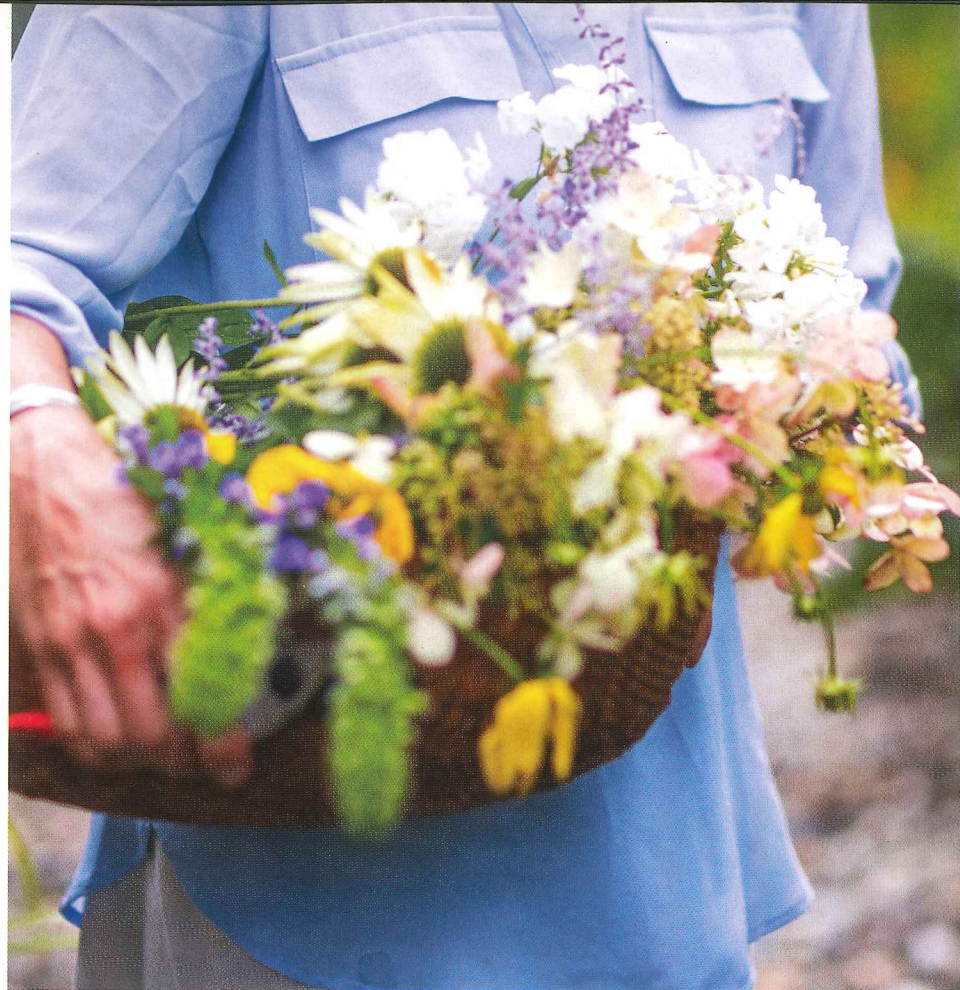
**5.** The apple tree in Ogden's garden was planted before her time. "I wish I knew what to call these tart, **green apples** that have been growing in my backyard for more than 100 years," she says. "But I'm glad I can give them a place of honor inside my great grandmother's harvest basket."

**6.** "Seed saving 101 starts by growing runner beans," Ogden says. "Heirloom '**Scarlet Runner**' beans produce not only adorable blossoms but also beautiful beans."

**7.** Ogden has several different basil in her garden and says '**Dark Opal**' basil makes a stunning pesto or purple cider vinegar.

**8.** '**Genovese**' basil, an heirloom, hails from the Genoa region of Italy and is the basil that made pesto famous.

**9.** The wrinkled dark green leaves of '**Lacinato**' kale are tender enough to be used for salad or soup. Plants get large by the end of the season and sweeten up after frost.



by bitter chicories and some of the lesser-known Italian vegetables. I was fortunate to study in Venice, Italy, with Marcella Hazan, who taught me how to embrace the bitterness of the chicory and use it in ways I'd never thought of before. The following year I attended the Ballymaloe Cookery School in Shanagarry, Ireland, with Darina Allen, who introduced me to the art of growing food through her European-style potager. I was able to see how a productive and beautiful kitchen garden could open up all the senses and expand cooking possibilities.

### What do you see as the next big trend in growing food?

Seed saving. I see more people saving seeds and getting involved in the complete life cycle of growing plants. I sense a growing movement to support local seed companies that offer regional open-pollinated and heirloom seeds, expanding the scope of

Ogden gathers a late-fall harvest of *Hydrangea paniculata* Quick Fire, *Echinacea* 'White Swan', and Russian sage—all planted as much as for pollinators as for bouquets. She likes to arrange bouquets loosely, imagining butterflies might flutter through them at any moment.





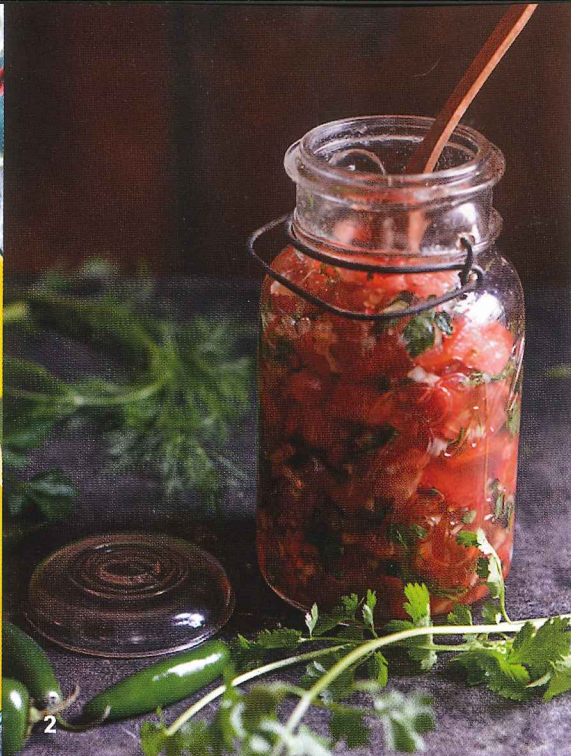
"When the harvest season yields an abundance, turn up the oven and roast a medley of vegetables," Ogden says. Here, a variety of Italian peppers, asparagus, potatoes, radicchio, and summer squash are grilled to perfection.

Get Ogden's recipes at  
[gardendesign.com/ogden](http://gardendesign.com/ogden)

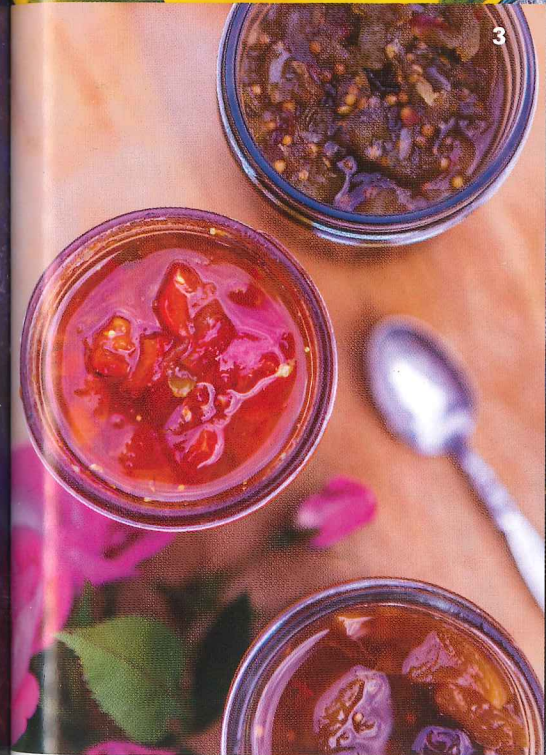




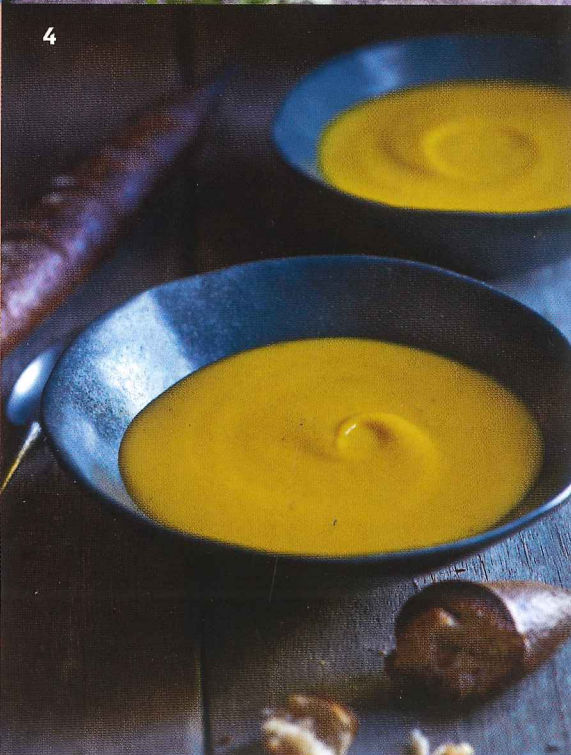
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4

**1.** Ogden bakes this Pear-Apple Tarte Tatin with Cranberry Glaze upside-down, with its piecrust on top, keeping the fruit filling moist during cooking. When it's ready, she flips the hot tart onto a plate and then glazes it with a cranberry jelly. **2.** Ogden says that cayenne pepper provides a nice counterpoint to the sweet maple syrup and tangy cilantro and cumin in this Vermont Maple Tomato Salsa. **3.** According to Ogden, Rosehip and Citrus Marmalade (middle) gets its spreadable consistency—plus an extra boost of vitamin C—from natural pectins in oranges, lemons, apples, and their peels. "It takes a bit of time to prepare the rose hips, but the result is worth it," Ogden says. **4.** When she makes this Roasted Carrot and Butternut Squash Soup, Ogden roasts the vegetables before adding them to the soup, resulting in deeper flavors and a shorter cooking time.

MATTHEW BENSON (3); DAVID BARNUM, OPPOSITE; MATTHEW BENSON

what we grow to include more lesser-known varieties, and to encourage local seed libraries and community seed swaps as a necessary part of making sure we can always grow our own food.

**What are some of your favorite edibles to grow?**

I am a dedicated salad lover, and since my garden is small, it is easy to keep it full of a succession of salad greens that grow quickly and easily in our cool Vermont summers. There is always mâche, chervil, claytonia, golden purslane, cress, fennel, dill, arugula, and frilly mustards, as well as a dozen looseleaf lettuces that I sow in separate rows to harvest as ready. Taking a tip from Thomas Jefferson, I plant a thimbleful of seeds every Monday morning to keep salad greens growing from early April through October.

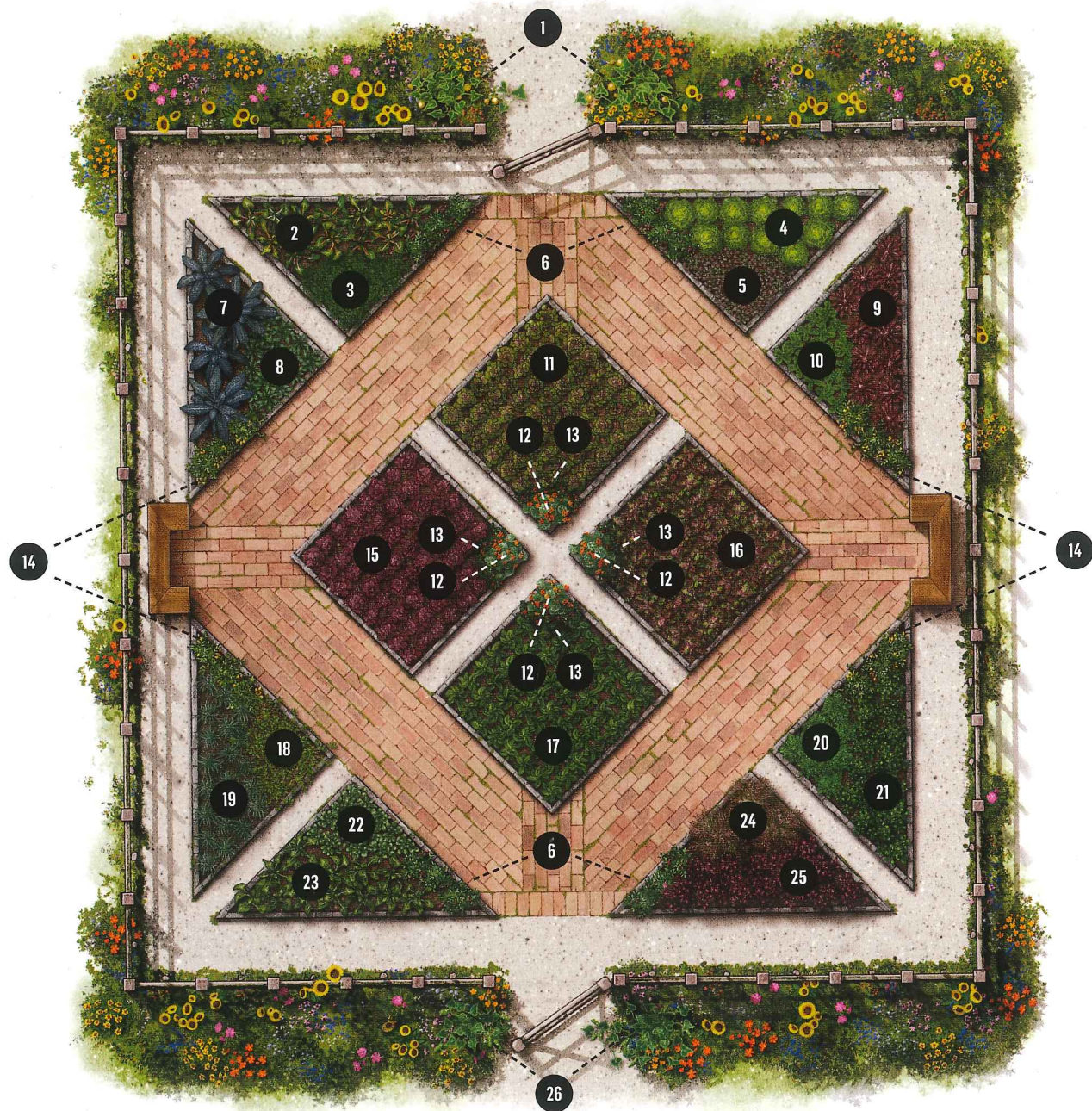
**The local garden-to-table and farm-to-table movements continue to have a major impact on how the public thinks about its food. What role do you see public gardens playing in this effort?**

I love visiting gardens, both private and public. When vegetables are grown as equal partners with flowers, a new awareness opens for the gardener: Ferny tops of carrots and the iridescent glow in the leaves of rainbow chard bring color, texture, variety, and a new type of beauty. An attractive kitchen garden in a public garden setting inspires all gardeners to go beyond the typical marigolds and roses, and when people see chard and kale and even artichokes as ornamental edibles in places they might not expect, they'll take home ideas. The trend to plant more edible gardens in public areas is brilliant, and I hope to see more great examples.



# GARDENS THAT LOOK GOOD ENOUGH TO EAT

Ellen Ecker Ogden designed these two beautiful edible gardens for *Garden Design* readers. These plans don't need to be followed exactly—they are meant to inspire.



## SALAD GARDEN 30 FEET BY 30 FEET

1. CUCUMBER 'LEMON'
2. CHARD 'FIVE COLOR SILVERBEET'
3. CRESS 'WRINKLED CRINKLED'
4. ENDIVE 'TRÈS FINE MARAÎCHÈRE'
5. MUSTARD 'OSAKA PURPLE'
6. TOMATO 'BLACK CHERRY'
7. KALE 'LACINATO'
8. ARUGULA *RUCOLA SELVATICA*
9. CHICORY 'ROSSA DI TREVISO'

10. MUSTARD 'SOUTHERN GIANT CURLED'
11. LETTUCE 'FORELLENSCHLUSS'
12. NASTURTIUM 'ALASKA'
13. ALPINE STRAWBERRY
14. TOMATO 'YELLOW PEAR'
15. LETTUCE 'MERLOT'
16. LETTUCE 'DEER TONGUE'
17. LETTUCE 'FLASHY BUTTER OAK'

18. PURSLANE 'GOLDGELBER'
19. ONION 'SUMMER BUNCHING'
20. CHERVIL
21. BASIL 'MRS. BURNS' LEMON'
22. MÂCHE 'VIT'
23. SPINACH BEET 'PERPETUAL'
24. FENNEL 'BRONZE'
25. BASIL 'DARK OPAL'
26. CUCUMBER 'EARLY FORTUNE'



**CLASSIC POTAGER**  
18 FEET BY 28 FEET

**1. HARDY KIWI VINES\***

*ACTINIDIA ARGUTA* 'ANANASNAJA'  
& 'HARDY MALE'

**2. KALE**

'LACINATO'

**3. SWEET PEPPERS**

'JIMMY NARDELLO' & 'CORNO DI TORO'

**4. CARROT**

'SCARLET NANTES'

**5. BROCCOLI**

'ROMANESCO'

**6. POLE BEAN**

'TRIONFO VIOLETTO'

**7. ITALIAN MESCLUN**

MISTICANZA

**8. FRENCH MESCLUN**

NICOISE

**9. NASTURTIUMS**

'PEACH MELBA' & 'EMPRESS OF INDIA'

**10. LETTUICES**

'DEER TONGUE' & 'LITTLE GEM'

**11. ARTICHOKE**

'PURPLE ITALIAN GLOBE'

**12. BROCCOLI RAAB/RAPINI**

'SPRING RAAB'

**13. FRENCH MESCLUN**

PROVENCAL

**14. BRUSSELS SPROUTS**

'RUBINE'

**15. TOMATO**

'BLACK KRIM'

**16. BASIL**

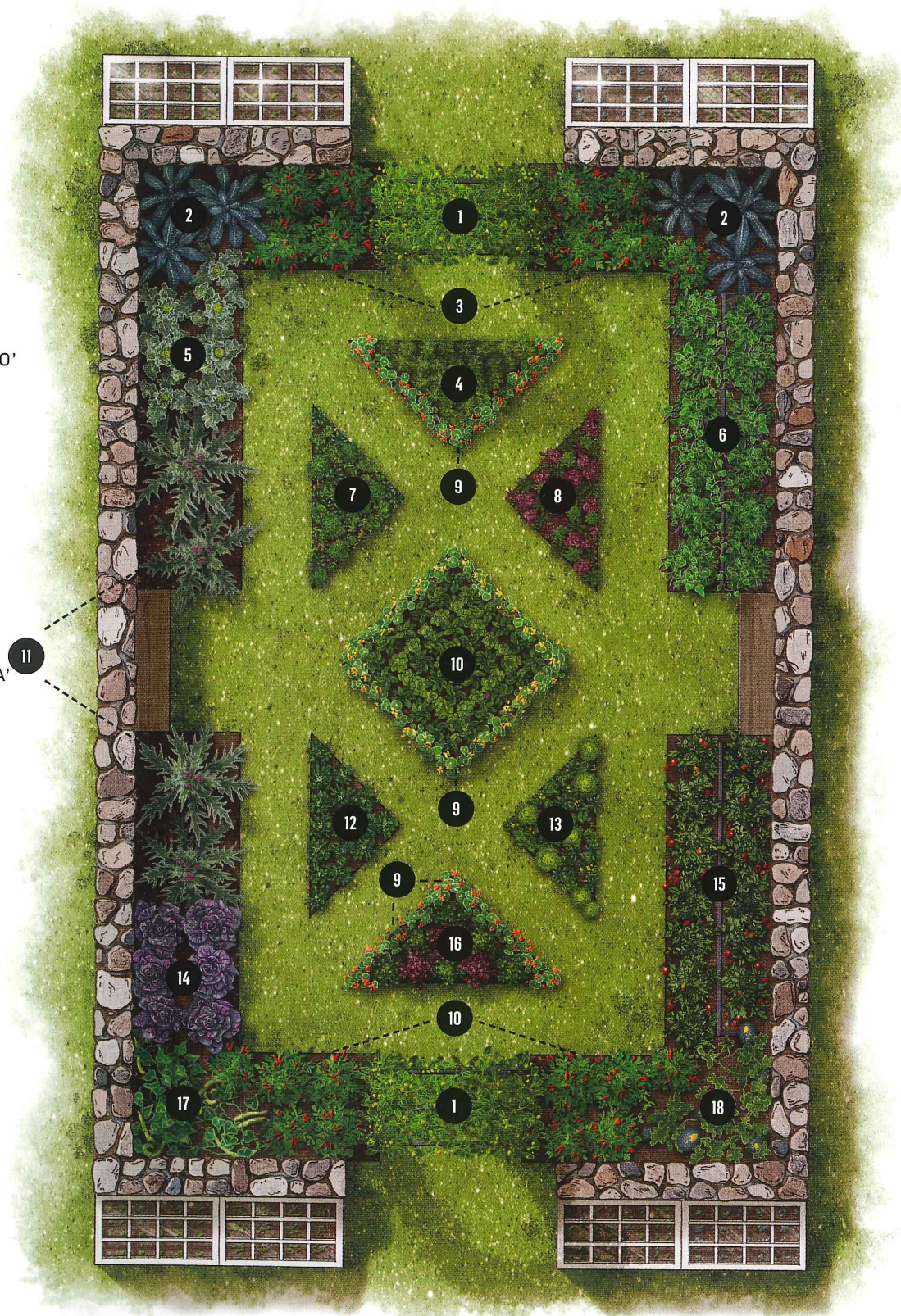
'GENOVESE' & 'DARK OPAL'

**17. CUCUMBER**

'ARMENIAN'

**18. MELONS**

'MOON AND STARS' WATERMELON  
& 'JENNY LIND' MUSK MELON



\*Both female and male plants must be present for fruit.