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Garden Media Group Unveils 2012 Garden Trends Report: Cultivate the *New Good Life* with the Power of Plants

Philadelphia -- In today's world where news travels at the speed of *now*, people are searching for balance and purpose, and tapping into the power of plants to cultivate the 'new good life'.

"Plants are powerful," says Eric Liskey, deputy garden editor for *Better Homes and Gardens* magazine. "Whether it's enjoying garden-to-table meals or sharing great new plant finds, people are naturally drawn to plants."

Plants play a vital role in our lives. Besides beautifying our homes and gardens, they're vital to our health and well being. Plants elicit powerful positive emotions, revive neighborhoods, and influence everything from what we eat to life's milestones.

"Plants are no longer a luxury, but a necessity for our lives," says Susan McCoy, trendspotter and outdoor living expert. "Plants can live without us, but we can't live without plants."

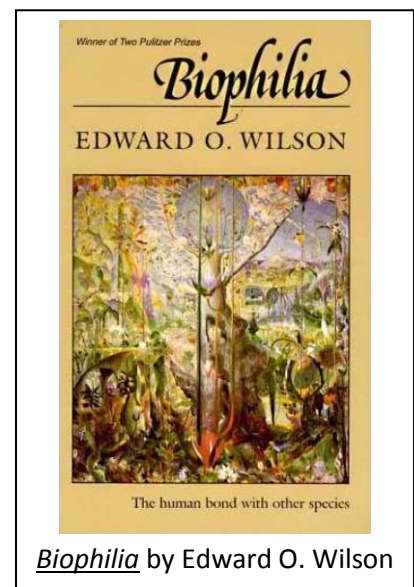
The power of plants. For a growing army of eco-conscious Gen X & Y's, re-cycling, re-purposing and upcycling is now a lifestyle.

Dr. Charlie Hall, professor of horticulture at Texas A & M, says, "Gen Y's are embracing a connection with plants based on economics, environmental impact, health and wellness."

These rural and urban curators are planting home and community gardens and renewing urban spaces with an eye toward functionality and artistic design.

Why nature? According to Harvard professor Edward O. Wilson, we have an innate bond with living things and nature he calls "biophilia."

McCoy agrees. "Studies prove that plants are more than just a pretty face. From the power of healing to restoring neighborhoods, plants are vital for healthy, balanced lives."



This pursuit of health and quality of life is the number one influence of the goods and services we choose, according to Trendwatching, a global trend research firm in Amsterdam.

Here's what McCoy and her team of Garden Media Group trend spotters see for gardening in 2012:

1. **Urban-Knights.** A growing army of 'urban knights' are creating oases wherever they can find a patch of earth. They're planting shrubs, flowers, edibles and pop-up gardens on balconies, in alley ways, and on street parklets – even in abandoned buildings and walk-in shipping containers.

At the recent Chelsea Flower Show in England, the "urban grit" influence to protect the earth's resources showcased gardens with wind turbines and reclaimed materials, water saving plants and vertical walls.

From yard sharing and raising chickens to 'step gardening' and harvesting rain water, urban knights are finding a 'new good life' by getting grounded with the earth.

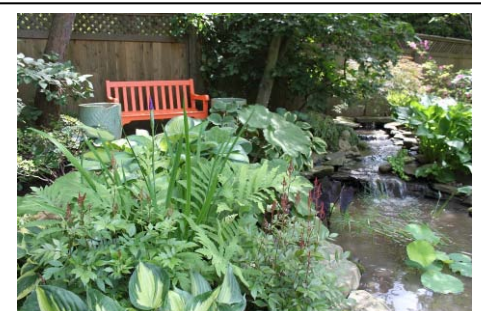
2. **Eco-scaping.** From rocks in the garden to rocks in the living room, nature's influence can be found both indoors and out.

"Borders are blurring between indoors and out as nature becomes more important in our lives," says Bobbie Schwartz, FAPLD, and president of the Association of Professional Landscape Designers, (www.apld.org). "Many people want their gardens and their homes to be sanctuaries of tranquility, reflecting their ideal concept of nature."

Beauty and sustainability are key. Liskey says that people want the "beauty and romance" of a garden with less work. "Gardeners want easy, low maintenance plants that give plenty of color."

The new Bloomtastic!™ dwarf butterfly bush, Buddleia Lavender Veil from Hines Growers

Urban Organic Gardener
Mike Lieberman



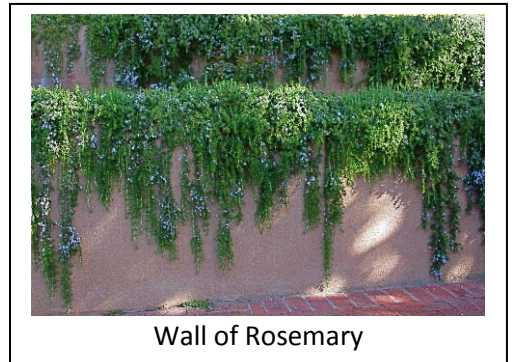
Example of Eco-scaping
by an APLD Member



Hines Growers Buddleia
Lavender Veil

(www.hineshort.com) is easy and low maintenance and attracts butterflies and hummingbirds with richly-colored abundant blooms.

“It’s easy to pot up herbs indoors and out for fresh ingredients year round,” says Briscoe White, head herb farmer at The Growers Exchange (www.thegrowers-exchange.com). He recommends planting containers of herbs de Provence for beauty and cooking or covering a wall with rosemary, as shown here.



Wall of Rosemary

- Occupy Local.** People are “occupying” local farmers markets and joining CSA’s (Community Supported Agriculture) for fresh produce, plants and products.

“Farmers markets are our new backyard veggie gardens and are becoming our local grocery store,” says McCoy.

According to the U.S. Dept of Agriculture, sales of “locally produced food” reached \$4.8 billion in 2008. They project that locally grown foods will generate \$7 billion in sales dominated by fruit and veggies this year.

- Conscious Consumption.** According to the 2010 Cone Survey, 83% of consumers still want to see more brands, products, and companies that support worthy causes.

“We’ve finally moved from “me” to “we” and consider our earth and each other when we purchase,” says McCoy.

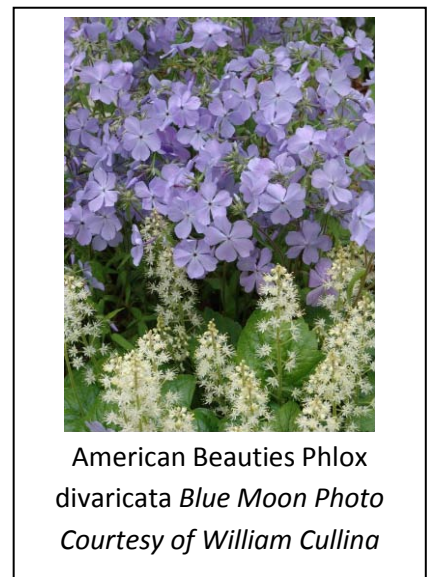
American Beauties Native Plants®

(www.abnativeplants.com) partnership with the National Wildlife Federation is a great example of this mind shift. When you buy an American Beauties’ native plant like the new groundcover, ‘Blue Moon’ woodland phlox, for example, a donation is made to NWF’s Certified Wildlife Habitat Program.

- Water-Watchers.** “There is no single issue greater than water,” says Dr. Hall. Recent drought and regional water restrictions are causing us to grow plants, flowers and vegetables with less water.



Costa Farms Plant for the Cure benefits Susan G. Komen



American Beauties Phlox divaricata *Blue Moon* Photo Courtesy of William Cullina

Beneficial soil amendments like the new Soil Reef biochar (www.soilbiochar.com) are considered by many scientists to be the "black gold" for gardening. Its high carbon content and porous nature help soil retain water and nutrients, saving gardeners time and money.

Look for EcoCover organic mulch discs in all Bloomtastic! plant containers from Hines Growers to help save water and reduce weeds.

Hydroponic gardening is hot, allowing plants to grow year-round in nutrient rich solutions that actually use less water.

- In Living Color.** Neon colors, pop art and color blocking are influencing fashion on the runways to fashion in the garden. From Tangerine Tango, the new Pantone color of the year, to deep purples and soothing greens, colors are all over the landscape.

With rich, gem like colors you can create your own personal piece of paradise. Tropic Escape Hibiscus from Costa Farms produces huge flowers that last twice as long as regular hibiscus and are perfect for decorating patios and landscapes.

Create a technicolor summer with new Bloomtastic! Bambino Bougainvillea and multi-colored bougainvillea Patio Trees. Hines' new Patio Tropics Desert Rose, Adenium Kissable Pink™, is carefree and adds intense tropical color to patios, balconies and poolside.

- Inner Gardening.** Decorating our inner gardens with houseplants for better, healthier lives is now the new norm. These natural oxygen machines clean indoor air while bringing life to any room.

Whether you want ferns, peace lilies or palms, bring nature in and green up your spaces for a better, healthier you. To learn more about the benefits of indoor houseplants check out www.O2forYou.org.



Soil Reef Biochar soil amendment



Water –Watchers: EcoCover in Bloomtastic! pots



Hines Growers Bahama Bay™
Hibiscus *Amazon Queen*



Costa Farms Sago Palm

8. **Techno-Gardening.** With the rise of smart phone technology, QR-codes, apps and Groupon, social living is bringing power to the people and consumers into the buying experience, and making it easy for consumers to “get in on everything from flash sales to secret finds.” According to TrendWatching, ‘dealer chic’ is on the rise where securing the best deal is not just accepted- it’s admired.

Gardening is going digital with free e-zines. Costa Farms’ [GrowingStyle](http://www.growingstylemag.com) (www.growingstylemag.com) digital magazine brings designer tips and the latest plant info from growers and designers in this free app.



Costa Farms Growing Style digital magazine

Garden products are going high-tech, too. Now’s there’s a cutting edge way to rid your yard of pesky critters. The new motion activated sprinkler repellents from Havahart® (www.havahart.com) provide caring control solutions that safely rid animals from your yard. Models are available with remote control and smartphone interfacing.

9. **Seedlings.** From the White House to the neighborhood schools, kids are learning how to grow their own food and take care of the planet.

McCoy says we’ve ignored two generations of gardeners and need to get kids back to having fun growing things. She says the popularity of miniature gardens is ideal for kids and the young at heart to share the whimsical world of plants and appreciate the joy of gardening.

For a complete look at the Garden Media Group 2012 Garden Trends, visit: www.gardenmediagroup.com

Resources:

American Beauties, LLC www.abnativeplants.com
Association of Professional Landscape Designers www.apld.org
Costa Farms www.costafarms.com
The Growers Exchange www.thegrowers-exchange.com
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