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Connecticut Cottages and Gardens

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*Inviting
Spaces*



Beauty In Nature

JAMES DOYLE'S OWN WEST HILL
GARDEN EMANATES
TRANQUILITY AND HAPPINESS

BY JAMES DOYLE
PHOTOGRAPHY BY NEIL LANDINO, JR. AND JAMES DOYLE

AS SEEN IN
CTC&G
Contemporary Cottages and Gardens

I have been lucky

to have had the opportunity, along with my business partner Kathryn Herms, to create wonderful landscapes across the US and beyond. Leaving an artistic footprint for others is extremely fulfilling, but all paths lead me back to my own garden. Mary Oliver asks in her poem "The Summer Day," "Tell me, what is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?" Perhaps my garden, and the creation of it, allows me to find the answers. Tending this landscape is where I am most at peace, and creating an environment of flora and fauna and sustainability gives me a connection with the natural world. This site habitat supports an extreme abundance of local insects, pollinators and wildlife.

My wife, Olive, and I share this garden together. I am digging in the dirt, the keeper of my bees and the caret of our flock of hens, while she is reaping the rewards of a large organic edible garden. Her cooking and baking mastery is enjoyed by many, and we share the spoils from the vegetable garden and our numerous free-range, organic eggs with friends and neighbors. As importantly, we both enjoy the tranquility and beauty that this landscape brings.

Simply described, the garden reflects the intersection of nature and art, the juxtaposition of designed and natural, and the marriage of aesthetics and productivity. This design is also very personal and experimental with bold, contemporary, dynamic geometries in the form of structural plant material and an infusion of landscape art. Hedges and forms of hornbeam, beech, yew and boxwood, and masses of herbaceous plants are used to structure these garden spaces. All are designed to emphasize seasonality, color and light, with these qualities changing from one space to the next. The mixture and diversity of plant life not only creates a visually striking four-season garden, but also serves to support my colonies of honeybees and all other creatures that pass through this suburban garden.

This garden is part private, part public. It is a space onto which others can look, creep, examine or judge as they pass by in the neighborhood. A glimpse of a whimsical sculpture and a passing garden view of this cultured landscape may instill interest or a connection to nature. I believe that garden making remains a potentially powerful way of making a statement and educating as we move forward in this world.

As a gardener, I understand the curious powers of digging in the dirt. I understand that everything we make comes out of the ground, and everything we eat and everything that brings us joy and happiness to others. Landscape art and design brings us joy and happiness to others. Landscape art has the power to become our sanctuaries to be uplifting and relaxing and thought provoking with an appreciation for nature. My goal is to continue to create sculpted landscapes with natural elements and help people find beauty in nature. 🍀

In Full Bloom (Photo: Neil Landino, Jr.) Sink the property entrance, and terra-cotta pots, planted with *Agave americana*, draw the eye through a gravel driveway. The driveway, with central blocks of lawn, is bordered with drought-tolerant perennials making this a colorful welcome upon arrival. See Resources.



Unusually, however, the greenhouse is made of glass and metal, which is a very modern and practical choice. The structure adds an element of architectural beauty, and will provide an excellent environment for growing a wide range of plants, including vegetables, herbs, and flowers. The greenhouse is made of glass and metal, which is a very modern and practical choice. The structure adds an element of architectural beauty, and will provide an excellent environment for growing a wide range of plants, including vegetables, herbs, and flowers.





Artful Design (clockwise from top left) The garden reflects a singular vision—the intersection of nature and art—and provides a healthy habitat for a wide variety of plants and wildlife. Serpentine and curved hedges of *Thuja occidentalis* and *Fagus sylvatica* “Palmyra” provide a framework for a four-season garden and large swaths of herbaceous borders. Most swaths of land sculpting allow swaths of art to sit in a slightly exaggerated space. By incorporating sculpture, the overall design connects to the artwork, and the experiential quality of the space is advanced. Beyond the circular hedge is the modern structure that is the chicken coop. The pathway, another avenue garden, leads to Green Space by Lisa Pappano. Please Note: Please do Not Pick, unless you are the space formed by a circular *Thuja* hedge. See Resources.

Birds & Bees (clockwise) The garden is a subtle model of regenerative horticulture and green connection with the natural world. James Stock keeps bees in the sanctuary of the garden and understands the important role that bees play. Bees are regularly inspected, fed, and cared for during the warm months to ensure that the colonies are staying healthy and growing. The flock of hens and a happy rooster (shown) roam the garden. See Resources.



