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James Doyle's garden is full of curiosities to engage the visitor, such as this large mask of a man's face, by Rick Kirby, cast in steel.

ROOTED IN TRADITION, OPEN TO INVESTIGATION

As a landscape designer, **James Doyle** is known for his carefully structured yet naturalistic environments.

So, it is not surprising that when he and his wife purchased their own two-acre suburban spread in Stamford, Connecticut, a dozen years ago, the designer decided to rework the landscape entirely, and begin with a blank slate. The resulting West Hill Farm gardens are a reflection of James's nuanced personal style: rigorous yet unmannered, traditional yet experimental; an intersection of art and nature

Words & Photographs, James Doyle

Contrast, balance, and strategically deployed colour are what make a garden as pleasurable as it is striking, and in my own I have implemented a design that provides me and my family, and visitors, with a thoughtfully scaled series of experiences.

Each space is defined by hedges and configurations of hornbeam, yew, and boxwood. Massings of herbaceous plants and seasonal perennials are fixed in each section according to a defined colour scheme, and each variety has been carefully chosen not only to create a visually striking four-season garden but also to support the wildlife that passes freely through the area.

Part private, part public, there are sections of the garden that were conceived to pique the interest of first-time visitors and passers-by alike. Whimsical sculptures – including a large mask of a man's face, cast in steel by Rick Kirby, and a giant green apple by Lisa Pappon – are set into the landscape on the north side of the house, to serve as a visual bridge to elegant earthscapes and the natural backdrop that surrounds them.

As you turn into the gravel drive that runs between these formal spaces, and walk past the colourful, drought-tolerant perennials and double row of espaliered linden trees underplanted with golden Hakone grass, you enter what is intended to be →



JAMES DOYLE

founded James Doyle Design Associates in 1993, having previously worked as head horticulturalist at a Russell Page-designed garden in Ireland. His studio's projects are mostly residential, ranging from small urban spaces to large country estates, with what James's JDDA partner, landscape architect Justin Quinn, refers to as a 'clean and legible' style. jdda.com



THIS PAGE, CLOCKWISE FROM ABOVE: the purple beech hedge winds its way through the garden; a gravel drive runs between formal spaces, and past the colourful, drought-tolerant perennials; swaths of hyssop, Giant scabious and compass plant are all safe from deer; the stylish swimming pool, flanked by espaliered linden trees.



ABOVE: the planting in the organic edible garden is deliberately residential, to be abundant and sustainable.

BELOW: borders replete with herbaceous and floral plantings that change with the seasons, providing endless interest.



kitchen garden mirrors the shape of the hen house that stands in the meadow beyond. I also keep my beehives there so the meadow has been sown with a diverse selection of floral pollinators, including ox-eye daisies, common yarrow and Queen Anne's lace, to support healthy honey production.

In between the kitchen area and the meadow, and set against a backdrop of still more espaliered linden trees, there is an elegant swimming pool and bubbling water feature. Here, beauty and tranquillity combine while a unique collection of herbaceous and floral plantings reinforcing the seasonal theme is carried throughout all the sections.

Returning to the front of the house, a sinuous hedge of purple beech acts as the spine that connects huge swaths of herbaceous plantings. This area of the property remains unfenced and so experiments with deer-resistant perennials such as hyssop, coneflower, golden lace, Giant scabious and compass plant have been necessary and thus far proven successful. These small acts of surrender are a valuable contrast with my own perfectionism, and of how I prefer to live: indebted to tradition but open to investigation; and always in accordance with nature. ☉

Extracted from *Intersection of Nature and Art*, a monograph of works by James Doyle Design Associates, including full-colour photographs, diagrams and plans. jdda.com/book

PLANT LIST

James's plant list for his double herbaceous borders flanking the sheared beech hedge

- *Acanthus mollis* 'Rue Ledan'
- *Acanthus spinosus*
- *Actaea simplex* 'Pink Spike'
- *Actaea simplex* 'Brunette'
- *Althaea cannabina*
- *Anchusa azurea* 'Alkanet'
- *Angelica gigas*
- *Angelica stricta purpurea*
- *Angelica polymorpha*
- *Anthriscus sylvestris* 'Ravenswing'
- *Aruncus diocus*
- *Baptisia australis*
- *Ceanothus delileanus*
- *Cenolophium denudatum* 'Baltic Parsley'
- 'Gloire de Versailles'
- *Centaurea atropurpurea*
- *Centaurea macrocephala*
- *Echinops bannaticus* 'Star Frost'
- *Cimicifuga ramosa* 'James Compton'
- *Crocsmia* 'Lucifer'
- *Crocsmia* 'Mistral'
- *Crocsmia* 'Eastern Promise'
- *Echinacea purpurea* 'White Swan'
- *Echinops* 'Platinum'
- *Geum coccineum* 'Totally Tangerine'
- *Klasea bulgarica*
- *Knautia macedonica*
- *Kniphofia citrina*
- *Lavatera cashmeriana*
- *Onopordum acanthium*
- *Penstemon x mexicali* 'Pike's Peak Purple'
- *Persicaria polymorpha*
- *Phlomis cashmeriana*
- *Phlomis fruticosa*
- *Phlomis anatolica* 'Lloyd's Variety'
- *Salvia azurea* 'Nekan'
- *Salvia nem.* 'Caradonna'
- *Sanguisorba canadensis*
- *Sanguisorba tenuifolia* 'Alba'
- *Sanguisorba* 'Cangshan Cranberry'
- *Sanguisorba officinalis* 'Red Thunder'
- *Sanguisorba tenuifolia* 'Purpurea'
- *Selinum wallichianum*
- *Seseli gummiferum*
- *Thalictrum* 'Elin'
- *Thalictrum r.* 'Lavender Mist'
- *Thalictrum lucidum*
- *Verbascum phoeniceum* 'Violetta'
- *Verbascum species* 'Cotswold King'
- *Veronica longifolia*