

WHERE BEAUTY *Takes Root*

Bedworks Design remakes the garden on a property overlooking Oyster Pond into a warm, inviting and stately sanctuary surrounded by magnificent trees.

BY DEBRA LAWLESS

PHOTOGRAPHY BY BETTY WILEY



Beautiful blue mophead hydrangeas from the summer garden adorn the dining table beneath a pergola strung with lights.



his transformational garden project had to be completed in just 11 months to be ready for an outdoor wedding.

The charming 1.5-acre property overlooking Oyster Pond is the last on a narrow, winding, tree-lined street. Early in the morning, it's quiet here except for the sounds of birdsong and crickets. Back in 2012, when the garden's owner was looking for a house in Chatham, she fell in love with the canopy of trees—magnificent lindens and Siberian elms—shading a flat, park-like area in front of the Cape-style house.

“The old tree canopy seemed so special,” says the homeowner. She loves trees and often visits arboretums. In her world travels, she notes the trees surrounding her.

For many years, she and her husband enjoyed the landscaping as they found it. But during the summer of 2019, a tornado ripped down about 50 percent of the tree canopy. While it was “heartbreaking,” the couple planted three new trees—a katsura, a London planetree and a red horse-chestnut. “It was our opportunity to put our stamp on the property,” she says.



Flanked by Annabelle hydrangeas, a meandering bluestone path guides visitors from the street to the front door.

Two years later, when their son said he wanted to be married beneath that tree canopy, she hired Shayne Watson Sibley, owner and founder of Bedworks Design, Inc., of Chatham, to rework the entire landscape. “We needed someone to make it cohesive and bring the property together,” she says.

“The project took us a very fast-paced 11 months,” says Shayne, adding that the typical time frame for the project would be two years.

The homeowner gave Shayne “free design scope.” To begin the “massive redesign,” Shayne and her crew devoted five months



Pink lacecap hydrangeas add pops of color to the garden. **Below:** From the infinity pool, the view stretches across the rolling lawn to Oyster Pond.



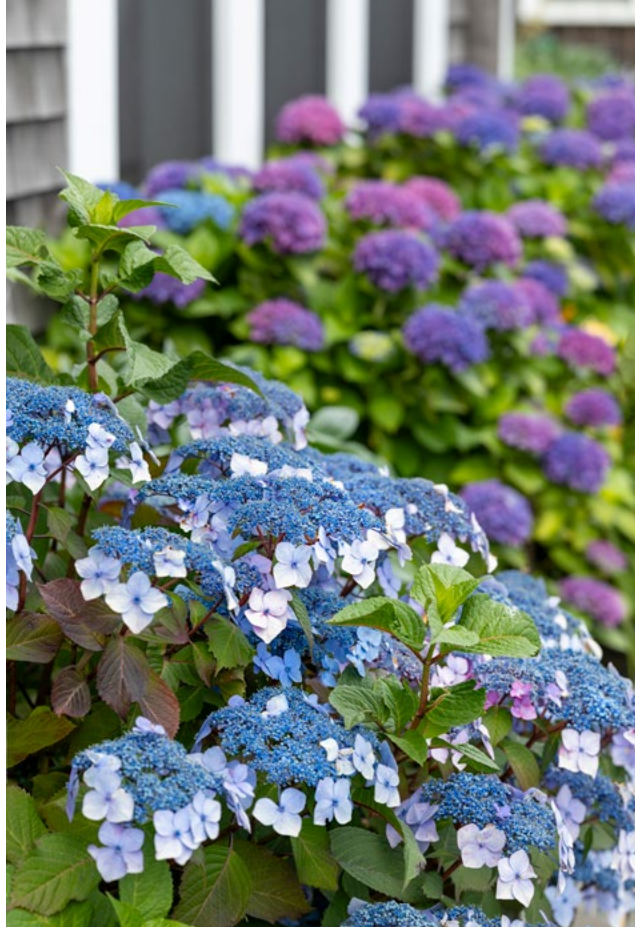
The yard features 15 to 20 separate gardens, each tailored to its own microclimate. These hydrangeas, grasses, daylilies and other perennials were chosen to withstand coastal winds.

to taking plants out, including rhododendrons and hydrangeas. (Many were reused elsewhere.) Shayne designed the landscape, including the gardens and stonework, to be “very inviting, warm and a little stately.” That winter was devoted to final excavations, creating the stonework, bringing in loam. The lawn was seeded the first week of April as the clock ticked down to two months before the June wedding.

This dedication to transforming outdoor spaces is rooted in Shayne’s lifelong connection to gardening, a passion that began during her formative years in Eastham.

In a family of seven, Shayne enjoyed caring for her father’s gardens, including roses and a





Blue lacecap hydrangeas are among the many varieties planted here. The bluestone path draws the eye to the vibrant colors of the garden.



substantial vegetable garden. Shayne's father gave her an appreciation for roses and shared his love for their timeless beauty and captivating fragrance.

After college, about a decade later, when she was a single young mother of twin boys, she wondered, "What could I do for my profession that would combine my passions with the schedule challenges of being a single mom?" Remembering her love of gardening, she founded Bedworks Design. "I wasn't sure of the demand for fine gardening at the time and whether I could stick with it," she says. But she did, and along the way she studied at the Landscape Institute of Arnold Arboretum at Harvard University. This summer marks Bedworks Design's 24th year in business. Today, Shayne operates her business with John, her husband and business partner.

Stepping into summer and winter

At the street, Annabelle hydrangeas flank the entrance to the meandering bluestone path that leads to the front door. On the left is the lawn surrounded by those beautiful trees. Underneath the towering trees are clusters of shorter "understory" trees, umbrella pine, magnolia, summer snowflake viburnum and a variety of hydrangeas in deep border gardens that create a privacy barrier.

The owners are in residence from roughly Memorial Day to Labor Day. In the summer, the front of the house is awash in color. Here are pink City Line hydrangeas. A tree hydrangea blooms with blush-colored flowers along with a pink kousa dogwood and pink Japanese snowbell tree. Pink and white impatiens lead up to the front door. In this area, Shayne included a garden to attract hummingbirds with plants such as phlox, calycanthus and abelia. Interspersed are hostas and evergreens that balance the colors.

Because the owners often spend Christmas here, this is a winter garden, too, with, for example, red twig dogwoods, aucuba and a variety of ornamental evergreens. In the holiday season, the owners light a beautiful large cedar tree in the backyard for all the neighbors to enjoy, even from across Oyster Pond.

Step around to the side of the house, and a dining table is set on a patio beneath a pergola strung with lights. Hedges of varying heights shield this area from the neighbor's yard. On one side of the table is a serviceberry hedge, "a unique addition to the patio," says Shayne. "It's one of the most beautiful flowering

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Top left: A classic white gate opens to a grassy front yard shaded by the tree canopy that the owner fell in love with.
Left: At night, subtle lighting adds to the enchanting atmosphere.

natives in the Northeast. Birds love the fruit, and the hedge has vibrant fall foliage.” Here, too, are blushing bride hydrangeas. Nearby are vegetable and cutting gardens in raised containers and a sweet “cottage garden” with low roses, more hydrangeas and grasses.

Scenes of serenity

Oyster Pond beckons from the end of the manicured lawn. This is a more formal spot, open to the sky. Shayne repointed a terrace alongside the house and added stable walkways. Flowering plants here include caryopteris, abelia, deutzia, crepe myrtle, vitex, lavender, bee balm and many varieties of hydrangeas.

One challenge is the wind from the water that carries salt spray. Rabbits and deer offer another. And within the yard are microclimates, says Shayne.

“You want to be creative but work with the soil and the light,” she says. Picking the right plant for the space is key. In the end, Shayne designed between 15 and 20 separate gardens.

At the edge of the yard, past the infinity pool, is a stand of lavender with “simple, clean lines.” Here, too, is a weeping crab apple tree. On the right is a white gate and a row of espaliered pear trees. Pass through

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the gate, under a trellis of David Austin roses, and you are back in the front yard, contemplating the tree canopy.

‘A living work of art’

Everything worked out beautifully for the magical June wedding, with the couple exchanging vows under one of the three big Siberian elms. Roses were wrapped up its venerable trunk and onto a branch.

Since then, Shayne continues to maintain the landscape as the gardens evolve each year with new projects.

“It’s a living work of art,” says Shayne.

The canopy of trees is thriving. At night, these trees are uplit with low, diffuse lights, creating a stunning effect. In the morning, the homeowners enjoy coffee here in their shade.

“This is such a happy place,” the homeowner says. “We want to take care of it.” 🌱

The sinuous forms of the hardscape enhance the soft beauty and colors of the perennial and hydrangea gardens. **Below:** Draped in roses, the Siberian elm provided an idyllic setting for the owners’ son and his bride to exchange their wedding vows.



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