BEAUTY by DESIGN
INSPIRED GARDENING IN THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST

BILL TERRY & ROSEMARY BATES
BEAUTY BY DESIGN
BEAUTY by DESIGN
INSPIRED GARDENING IN THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST

BILL TERRY & ROSEMARY BATES
For our children:
John, Daniel, Christina, Sarah, Hilary
The rough textures of fir bark and a concrete mask are softly entwined with ivy in Robin Hopper’s garden.
Contents

INTRODUCTION 1

ONE  A Garden for All Seasons  5
Kathy Leishman on Bowen Island

TWO  Windcliff  23
Dan Hinkley on the Kitsap Peninsula

THREE  The Landscape Is Within Me  45
Eva Diener on the Sunshine Coast

FOUR  Nature by Design  65
Robin Hopper on Vancouver Island

FIVE  Pacific Frost  85
Pam Frost in Vancouver

SIX  Making Pleasing Places  103
Robert and Birgit Bateman on Salt Spring Island

SEVEN  A Garden Is a Poem  121
Patrick Lane and Lorna Crozier on Vancouver Island

EIGHT  Still Dreaming of Paradise  135
George and David Lewis on Bainbridge Island

NINE  Brazen Beauty  149
Linda Cochran on Bainbridge Island

TEN  The Gift to Be Free  167
Des and Sandy Kennedy on Denman Island

ELEVEN  The Man Who Loves Conifers  181
Glen Patterson in Vancouver

ENDNOTES  199

PLANT INDEX  201

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS  206
Saturated blue: *Meconopsis 'Lingholm'* in Linda Cochran's garden.
Consult the genius of the place in all;
That tells the waters or to rise, or fall;
Or helps th’ ambitious hill the heav’ns to scale,
Or scoops in circling theatres the vale;
Calls in the country, catches opening glades,
Joins willing woods, and varies shades from shades,
Now breaks, or now directs, th’ intending lines;
Paints as you plant, and, as you work, designs.

—Alexander Pope¹
*Niellia thibetica* in Eva Diener’s garden.
Introduction

“CONSULT THE GENIUS OF THE place in all,” advised Alexander Pope, the eighteenth-century English poet and designer of gardens. He was using “genius” in a sense that would have been understood in those days to mean the natural spirit of the setting, its essential character. Consider, he urged, “in all,” the rise and fall of the terrain, the views beyond, the watery reflections in stream or pond, the rock, the trees, the transit of the sun across the sky.

Today, far less eloquently, we might be advised to “scope out the lay of the land” before laying a hand on axe or shovel.

From the many outstanding private gardens in the Pacific Northwest, we have chosen eleven. We have chosen them for their standing as (yes) works of art and also, in many cases, for their interplay with other arts—painting, pottery, photography, poetry, sculpture, even theatre. The gardens express different styles and different tastes but, in common, all have been created by gardeners who have consulted “the genius of the place in all,” who are therefore very much aware of the landscape within which they work, and who usually seek a unifying theme.

For these people, gardening is much, much more than a hobby. It’s a passionate pursuit of perfection. They also acknowledge that that perfection is, like the end of the rainbow, forever just beyond reach, and that a garden is, and always will be, a work in progress.

Their tastes and choices have been shaped and focused by experience and observation. None would refer to the garden as a “yard”—believing, as we do, that a yard is a place for chickens to run about in, or maybe for hanging out the laundry. There are farmyards, graveyards, schoolyards, churchyards, brickyards, scrapyards, shipyards, and prison yards. Usually, none of these is a garden.

_Courtyards_, however, as we discovered, may be gardens of enchantment.

These gardeners, indeed all gardeners, are alchemists of nature, art, and
artifice. As Des Kennedy said to us, “I think gardeners are a whole subset of the human race. They are primarily engaged in the creation of beauty, with a delighted sense of what’s important in life. Beauty is important and growth is important and creativity is important. Gardeners are like an artistic community and, by and large, a generous and unpretentious one as well, ever ready to say, ‘My garden isn’t what I’d like it to be right now, but your garden is wonderful.’”

During the two and a half years of bringing this book from proposal to print, we have found that the passion of these gardeners has rubbed off; our insights have been honed, our senses better tuned. We have sharpened our appreciation of shades of green: foliage in its variation of form, size, and colour in all seasons. We are more inclined to look beyond the flowers to include in our view the texture of bark, the curve of a bough, the wonder of a seed pod, the overall balance. We see, where we might not have seen before, the etched patterns of moss and lichen on granite. From the gardens we have had the privilege of visiting, and our immersion in the ideas of those who paint as they plant, we have also observed the value of letting nature take its course—within limits—and the resulting delight of welcoming serendipity, the happy accident, as a partner in the garden.

We hope that readers will share our delight in visiting these gardens and meeting the people who create beauty by design.
The metallic sheen of a clay pot gleams through rattling seed heads in Kathy Leishman’s garden.
Southwest, across the Salish Sea.
“GARDENING IS AN ART. YES. It is an art, but it can be learned. We can’t all be opera singers because it’s not there. It’s a stretch for me to sing Christmas carols without making everyone cringe. But I feel that anyone who wants to garden and is determined to do it well can do the research, can learn the necessary science about soil conditions and so on, can explore and define how they want their garden to be—and then make it happen. I think it’s one of the most freeing of artistic expressions. I think it should be fun too.”

So says Kathy Leishman, an outstanding, creative gardener, respected throughout the Pacific Northwest for her knowledge of plants and her skill and innovation in choosing just the right bedmates for them. The art, she insists, is not innate but learned: learned from careful observation of other gardens, from paying close attention to the experience of expert plant people, and from books.

She refers to a typical eureka! moment: “A turning point for me as a gardener was when my mother and I went on one of David Tarrant’s trips to southern England and we went to Sissinghurst, the garden of Vita Sackville-West. Well, I can tell you right now, it was like having a whole garden education in one day. I was so blown away I could hardly stand it. I took tons of pictures and that’s when I said to myself, ‘Oh, I could have a yellow border, I could have a white garden.’ It was at the end of May and Sissinghurst opened my eyes to how to use perennials in an overall design, for repetition, for contrast, such as a delphinium with a peony, the spike and the round shape.”
We first saw Kathy’s waterfront garden on Bowen Island in mid-January. In front of the house, the sea reflected steel-grey clouds and a watery sun. In the foreground, rusty iron fish appeared to float lazily through the reeds. Beyond, tall plumes of grass waved at occasional passing tugs hauling barge-loads of sawdust. Relics that others might have consigned to the compost pile with the fall cleanup, such as the dried seed heads of sea holly (*Eryngium planum*) and Jerusalem sage (*Phlomis fruticosa*), were left to rattle in the wind, bearing witness to the idea that, in winter, there is still life and colour in these dead forms.

“In fall,” notes Kathy, “I skip the cleanup and leave the dead stems if the structures look good, like the dried sedum or the oregano. They’re part of the *volume*. It makes it all fit together. Besides, in the front, there’s often little birds scurrying about, and they love the seeds.”
There was movement too, especially in the soft shivering of the willowy grasses. Dead strands of oregano muted the hard edges of a gorgeous, blue-green stoneware pot. And to top it off, in contrast to all this subtlety, a majestic old-growth Douglas fir stands guard near the water’s edge—a favourite lookout for bald eagles. Like everything in the garden, it looked perfectly natural. In fact, this stately tree had been spirally pruned in order to maintain the essence of its architecture—straight trunk and heavy boughs—while letting in light and opening the view southwest across the Salish Sea to distant Vancouver Island.

Behind the house, it was quieter. The first snowdrop was in bloom. A trace of snow had fallen overnight. Most of it had melted away, leaving soft, white brush strokes on the variegated leaves of a New Zealand pittosporum and the flower buds of Skimmia japonica. A whiff of witch hazel (Hamamelis mollis) was in the air. The royal grevillea (Grevillea victoriae) was hanging out its orange-red tresses. It is the only species of this evergreen Australian native that is reliably hardy in the Pacific Northwest.

Seldom is so much attention given to the appearance of a garden in winter.
“I DON’T THINK it’s possible to have a perfect garden in all seasons. If I did, what would be the point of carrying on? I guess if I had a perfect spot in my garden, in whatever season it happened to be, if there were seven plants, all of them would be happy and four of them would be performing, doing their thing.

“Looking out the window right now, in midwinter, it’s not perfect, but I like looking at the variegated boxwood and the camellia ‘Yuletide’ because it has that big boss of golden stamens which picks up the yellow on the boxwood. Then, a bit to the right, I like the background of red witch hazel and olearia,
and the phormium in the foreground, with its broad, arching, evergreen leaves. It’s not perfect, but if I keep my vision really narrow, there’s good structure and enough of the elements I like to make it seasonally appealing.”

In April, taking the reverse angle—from outside looking in—Kathy again saw something approaching perfection.

“Right now, I like this arrangement, with the boxwood and the ferns, the hellebores and the variegated hakonechloa grass below, and the decrepit little trough, which started out as an alpine trough and is now overflowing with whatever will grow there. That’s what I like. I like the fact that the boxwood is a substantial round, forming a point around which everything else can orbit. The fern is very large, but it’s soft, so it works with the harder lines of the boxwood. And I like the fact that the boxwood is variegated, which helps to brighten up this dark corner. I like the yellows, in the baby’s tears spilling out of the trough and the variegated grass beneath the boxwood. I like the whole effect, because it seems controlled, without being uptight.”
Meconopsis 'Mrs Jebb', 200
Millium effusum 'Aureum', 18
Mimulus, 117
monkey-flower, 117
mullein, 151
Musa
basjoo, 159
ensete, 159
sikkimensis 'Red Tiger', 159, 159

N
nasturtium, 117
Niellia thibetica, x
Nolina 'La siberica', 151
Nothofagus antarctica, 49
dombeiyi, 49
obliqua, 48

O
oak, Garry, 66
Olearia, 8, 14
orach, purple, 97
orchid, lady's slipper, 161
oregano, 3, 7, 15, 60
Oregon grape, 105
Oregon oxalis, 161
Osteospermum, 14
Oxalis oregana, 18, 107
Ozothamnus, 15

P
Paeonia mlokosewitschii, 19, 19, 93
Papaver
nudicaule, 158
somniferum 'Lauren's Grape', 98
pawpaw, 50
peony, 3
Molly the witch, 19
Persicaria, 161
Petunia, 118, 183
Phellodendron amurense, 51
Phlomis fruticosa, 6
Phormium, 9
Picea glauca 'Laurin', 196
Pieris japonica, 127
pine, 16, 181–2
black, 192
bristlecone, 197, 197
mountain, 113
shore, 107
Pinus
longaeva, 197, 197
mugo, 113
parviflorus, 193, 193
thunbergii, 192, 192
pitcher plant, 187
Pittosporum, 7, 14
poached egg plant, 100, 100
Podophyllum, 161
pomegranate, 136, 146
poppy
Himalayan blue, 161
Iceland, 158, 159
opium, 98, 151
potato, 125
'Ozette', 25
Potentilla, 15
primrose, 86
privet, 98
Prostanthera, 54

R
Restio rhodocoma capensis, 150, 152
Rhododendron, 10–11, 14, 19, 39, 57–8, 67, 69, 69, 77, 80, 87, 184, 195
fortunei, 11
fortunei discolor, 47
lapponicum, 194
litiense, 47, 58
pachysanthum, 56, 59
quinquefolium, 190, 196
roxicanum, 56
'Sir Charles Lemon', 67
sutchuenense, 47, 59
Robinia pseudoacacia, 88–9, 89
Rosa 'Kiftsgate', 177
rose, 13, 117, 177, 179, 183–5
‘Albertine’, 176
‘Madame Grégoire Staechelin’, 176
rugosa, 74
rose campion, 118
rosemary, 15, 60
rowan, 51
rue, 98–9

S
sage, 15
salal, 83, 107
Salvia, 60
Santolina, 15, 99
Sarracenia, 187
Sassafras tzumu, 42, 42
scabious, 60
Schefflera, 28, 31, 155
alpina, 30
Scilla, 10
Scots thistle, 150, 151
sea holly, 6, 97
Senecio greyii, 99
shooting star, 67
silk tree, Persian, 50
Skimmia japonica, 7
skunk cabbage, 168
snowdrop, 7
Sorbus, 51
speedwell, 142
spiderwort, 178
Stewartia pseudocamellia, 49, 49
strawberry, wild, 18
Styrax, 36
japonica, 49
obassia, 49, 49
sunflower, 18

T
tamarisk, 175
taro, 136, 143
Tetrapanax papyrifer, 144, 146, 161, 164
Teucrium, 15
Thalictrum aquilegifolium, 179
thyme, 60

Trachycarpus fortunei, 32, 33, 156, 156
trillium, 11
tsuga mertensiana ‘Elizabeth’, 197, 197
tulip, 20
Tulipa
‘Ballerina’, 18, 18
batalinii, 18, 19
sprengeri, 18
sylvestris, 62

V
Viburnum, 80
violet, Labrador, 18
Vitis coignetiae, 156

W
wallflower, 18
water lily, 74, 77
‘Ultra Violet’, 141
Weigela florida ‘Foliis Purpureis’, 60
witch hazel, 7–8, 80, 81
woodruff, sweet, 18

Y
yew, 128
Yucca, 12, 151

Z
Zantedeschia aethiopica, 156, 157