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## GEDDY GARDEN NEWS

*"The great mistake made by most novices is that they study  
gardens too much and nature too little."*

Andrew Jackson Downing  
19<sup>th</sup>-century Landscape Gardener

We are all aware of trends. There are trends and changes in style in all parts of our lives. The most obvious and visible trends are in clothing and hairstyles. But fads come and go in music, food, architecture, and also in gardening. In fact, when we review the development movement of English landscape we find that style is exactly what it was all about.

The 17<sup>th</sup>-century English gardens consisted of Baroque, formal parterres with allées depicting the control of man imposing his will on nature. Those garden plans were based on and influenced by the gardens of France and Italy.

In the 18<sup>th</sup>-century enormous changes took place and gardens were transformed from the formal design to the naturalistic landscape garden. That was a sharp contrast to the rigid formal design formally found in English gardens. That change was influenced by writers like Alexander Pope and painters of the time.

Capability Brown is credited with playing a major role in revolutionizing the English garden. Lancelot Brown was nicknamed Capability Brown because of his fondness of saying a country estate had great capability for improvement. He was a practicing architect and sometimes designed the house as well as the park around it on the estate. He was appointed the Master Gardener at Hampton Court in 1764. The cost of his landscape jobs were extremely high because he made enormous changes in the scenery. Some times those changes included damming up streams to create lakes and transporting trees and soil to establish the natural pastoral look he wanted. His work was challenged by several of his countrymen. Sir Uredale Price and Richard Payne Knight published arguments against his methods. They found his type too stylized and artificial and they fiercely criticized his work.

In the 19<sup>th</sup> century we see a return somewhat to ornamental designs with Humphry Repton. His designs were considered the transition style. It answered the social demands and tastes of his clients, the wealthy estate owners. He placed flower gardens near the houses while still including the natural parklands in the distance on the property. He considered the relationship of the house and its surroundings as one landscape. There was no damming up of streams to create a look of nature.



Quite a few garden magazines began to be published in the 19<sup>th</sup> century in England, which helped the suburban gardeners design their own gardens. Other writers were also contributing books, which promoted trends and ideas in gardening which shaped landscape design.

Today, of course, we have more gardening advice than ever. Not only do we take advice from books and magazines on the subject, but also the internet and even gardening gurus on television. If you are one who likes to be in the know and keep up with the latest trends, then I offer these gardening tips for you. Some fashionable trends for today's gardeners in 2003 according to a recent survey include the following.

The purpose of gardening today is not for self gratification, but for self awareness, relaxation, and therapy. I believe that must have a lot to do with September 11<sup>th</sup> and the condition of the world today.

As for colors in the garden, this year the popular trend is to combine flowers of the same colors in lighter and darker shades.

Pastel flower gardens are out of vogue and bold, bright colors are in. Even the color orange is popular with lots of colorful foliage.

The most popular color is blue. All shades of blue are in favor. Blue is a peaceful color and tense times call for soothing colors.

Container gardens are popular, but not the terra cotta containers of the past. Brightly painted containers are replacing the dull terra cotta look. Even garden structures such as trellises are painted bold colors.

Organic gardening is in due to the concerns about ecology. The public is using packaged soil mixes and even packaged compost tea mixes.

Water gardens are in probably due to the ability of the sound of water contributing to the desired peaceful affect.

The popular flowers being chosen by gardeners are roses and long blooming perennials.

So there you have the latest survey for those of you who like to be trendy.

I personally believe one's garden should reflect the personality and taste of the grower. In other words, I choose to grow the flowers and plants of my own choice. Even though I am aware of the current trends and styles, I feel no compulsion to follow them.

*Janet Guthrie*