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Mid-19th-century colonial on
West Main Street in Mendham,
our Top Town for 2013

GARDEN
ESCAPE

BY BARBARA LANDY

PHOTOGRAPHY BY KEVIN LEIN

When designers Frederick Root and Anthony Feo of Houndstooth in Mendham bought their eighteenth-century farmhouse in Morristown, they saved it from the wrecking ball. It stood alone and forlorn on three and a half acres of field and forest without a flower, vine, or shrub in site. Daunting to most buyers, this was a selling point for Root and Feo; the blank canvas allowed them to start from scratch. With help from landscape architect Anthony Sblendorio of Back to Nature in Basking Ridge, they created plans for front, back, and side yards that incorporated elements from eighteenth-century garden designs. The results are lovingly landscaped areas that look like they were laid out when the house was first built. White picket fences, antiqued-brick walkways and terraces, boxwood borders, and perennial beds define little outdoor "rooms" nestled around the house, welcoming all who enter to explore.



Top left: At a back corner of the house, a slightly worn Chippendale bench temporarily serves as a potting table.

Above: Old-fashioned and romantic, the spindle-top arbor covered with wisteria opens into the backyard's perennial garden.



Above: The front of the house is punctuated by a low, white picket fence. From the gated entry, a tiered boxwood garden runs along the walkway of antiqued brick set in a herringbone pattern. Pie-shaped wedges of cut bluestone form a circular turnabout opposite the front door.

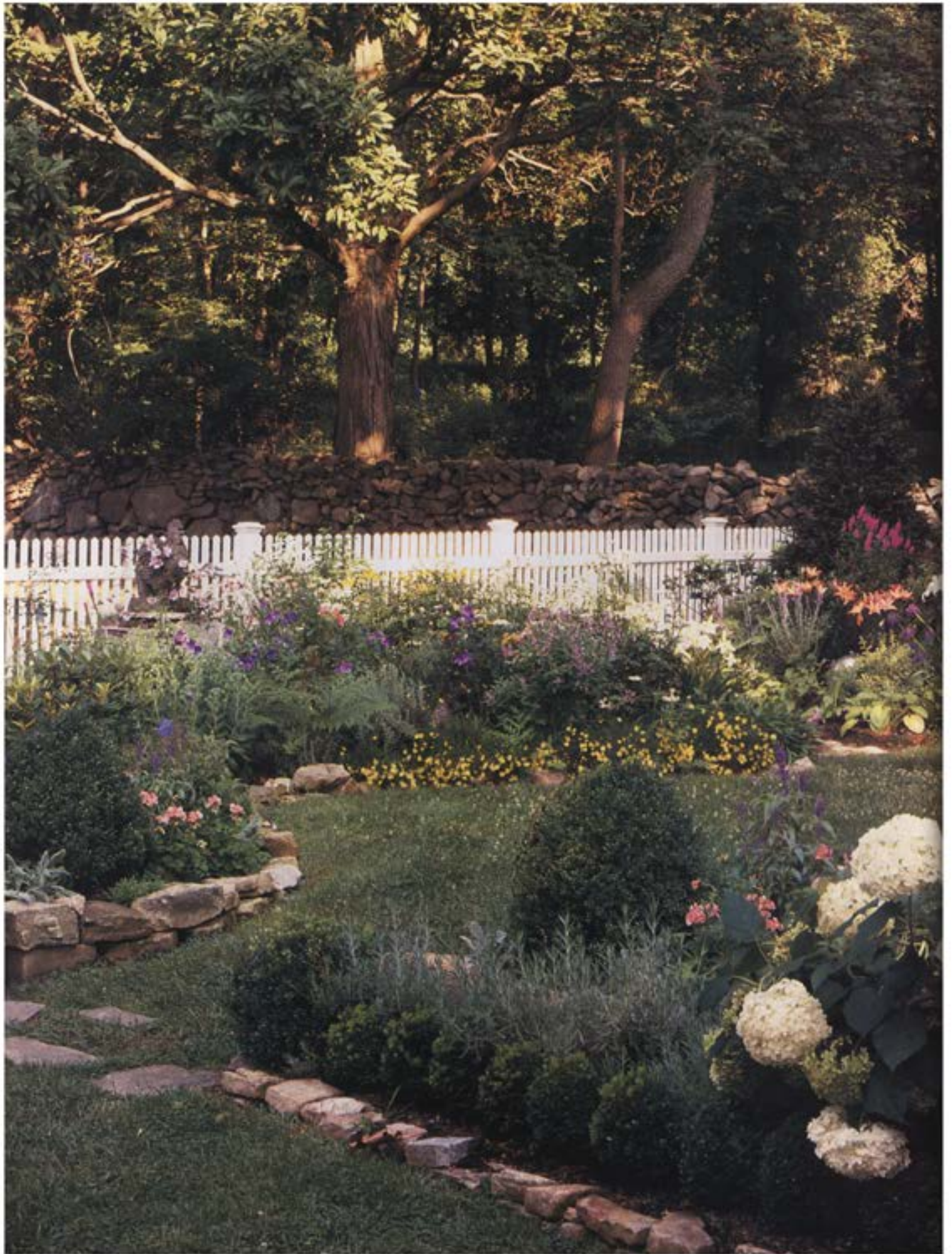


Opposite: Nantucket fencing intersects a 200-year-old stone wall, five feet thick at its base, that once ran throughout the original 200-acre parcel. Root and Feo gathered stones from a fallen section of the wall to form borders in the perennial garden that boasts three seasons of blooms.

Left: A hand-carved stone rooster from Mexico rules a colorful corner of the garden.

Below: The landscape design for the backyard was based on a typical English garden, and includes wonderful standbys like lady's mantle, sedum, yarrow, bee balm, astilbe, foxgloves, hollyhocks, lavender, lamb's ears, and, of course, roses. An outhouse bought at an antique shop in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, functions as a garden shed.









Above: An antique statue of St. Francis presides over the pool's terrace.

Right: The swimming pool, tinted gray to resemble a reflecting pool, sits behind the renovated 200-year-old barn complete with hand-hewn beams. The crumbling foundation wall, the handiwork of Root's son David, was created to simulate the ruins of a bigger barn that once might have graced the property. The use of antiqued bricks and simple, clean lines give the pool and its surroundings a feeling of calm and timelessness.



RESOURCES: Landscape design and execution by Back to Nature, Basking Ridge; brickwork on walks and terraces by Stonetown Construction Corporation, Oakland.



Above: The front of the house is punctuated by a low, white picket fence. From the gated entry, a tiered boxwood garden runs along the walkway of antiqued brick set in a herringbone pattern. Pie-shaped wedges of cut bluestone form a circular turnabout opposite the front door.