HELP & HOPE IN HAITI | TEACHER OF THE YEAR: TONY MULLEN

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ELEGANT GARDENS
OF A GRAND ESTATE

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The flower garden's boxwood hedge adds a bit of formality to the country-looking blooms.

mom and a baby leaping around the yard. There's also a hawk that likes to swoop down and watch us."

At night, the garden is particularly enchanting. Lucy says; "We have illuminated it with soft light that brings the moonlight down so it looks magical."

But the Glasebrooks don't have to do more than step out their backdoor to take in the beauty of their gardens. The parterre, which is enclosed by a white-picket fence, is off the open-air back porch. "We designed this so it's like another room," Kate Reid says. "The house is L-shaped, and we wanted it to work with the shape of the house."

A pair of Green Mound boxwoods and an antique limestone fountain supported by grinning gargoyles form a backdrop for the subtle shades of pinks, blues, whites and yellows that Lucy so loves.

The blossoms of the hybrid musk 'ballerina' and climbing 'New Dawn' roses, as well as the Lythrum, lavender, Miss Lingard phlox, sweet autumn clematis and the butterfly bush are magnets for the hummingbirds that flutter in at dusk for a sip of nectar. A family of wrens also has taken up residence at Highlands Farm, making its nest in one of the straw-hat birdhouses that hang on the back porch.

The Glasebrooks' love of gardens stems from their interest in restoring homes. The grounds, in fact, were one of the main attractions that led them to purchase Highlands Farm a dozen years ago. "I had always loved this house," Lucy says. "For years and years, I had driven past it and thought it was a fabulous grande dame."

Although the couple has restored five houses, Highlands Farm, also known as the Lyon-Howe House, was the first that gave them an opportunity to create magnificent gardens. "Our previous house had a lot of wetlands with woods and streams, so we had only a rock garden with a lot of naturalized plants like jack in the pulpits, herbs and moss," she says.

They saved the best part of the restoration—the gardens—for last. "Gardens are the icing you put on the cake," Lucy says. "I'm not one for loving foundation plantings, just putting in requisite plants around

the base of the house so it looks like it attaches itself to the yard. I love the finishing touch the garden creates."

To everyone's surprise, including his own, so does Richard. "He spends a lot of time in the garden," Lucy says. "Creating the gardens has turned this into a mini-farm, which was its original purpose, and he loves to ride around on his little tractor."

Lucy and Richard start and end every day in the gardens. "I'm up early, 6, 6:30 or 7, with my cup of coffee, walking around, and almost every evening after dinner the two of us stroll and take stock of what's growing in the potager garden, what needs to be picked and who's going to do it. I'll check out a new bloom or look to see what the deer have eaten."

Lucy and Richard take their roles as caretakers of Highlands Farm seriously. They are only the fourth owners of the estate and want to preserve as much of its history as possible. "We had considered putting in a swimming pool, but we dropped the idea when we were told we would have to remove some of the century-old trees," Lucy says.

Lucy, her morning constitutional concluding, gazes at the grounds and is reminded that it wasn't too long ago that there was nothing but grass as far as her deep-brown eyes can see. Yes, the bees will be a good thing. She can almost taste the sweetness of the honey now.

Highlands Farm, an 1865 center-hall colonial that has been landmarked, never had planned gardens until the Glasebrooks bought the property.

Top: Ivy and wisteria cover the back of the house, which is planted with hydrangeas and ornamental grass.

ELEGANCE IN FULL BLOOM

Stroll through this grand estate's wonderland of gardens

by NANCY A. BUHLING
photographs by STACY BASS

UP THE FIELDSTONE PATH AT HIGHLANDS FARM COMES Lucy Glasebrook with a Southern-gal smile on her face. She's headed toward the potager garden to pick the greens for the day's fare.

It's been raining a lot, and the garden, encased by a red brick wall, is ripe for her plucking. The asparagus has gone to seed, but with the three kinds of lettuce, heirloom tomatoes, eggplant, Swiss chard, sugar snap peas, beets, zucchini, summer squash, Kentucky Wonder pole beans and scallions, there's more than enough to toss a dinner salad.

"Home-grown vegetables taste so much better," she says, her rich accent speaking to her Memphis roots. "I love to grill and steam them."

The garden, which was featured on the 2009 Garden Education Center's Garden Tour, looks as though it has been growing here since right after the Civil War, when the Greenwich estate was a working farm. This pleases Lucy, as she and her husband, Richard, went to great lengths to take it back in time just as they did the 1865 center-hall colonial, which has been landmarked by the Historical Society of the Town of Greenwich. They didn't have much to go on because the property, at least as far as they know, never had any defined gardens. »

An arched arbor of 'New Dawn' roses leads to the formal parterre that is close to the main house.

Opposite: A table whose base is made from a pair of antique faux boix strawberry pots invites guests to relax under the gazebo.

Right: In the herb garden, an antique sundial is centered in a bed filled with various varieties of thyme, including woolly thyme, 'Purple Carpet,' 'Ruby Glow' and 'Golden Edge.'

Below: A 19th-century barn, which the Glasebrooks found in Albany and had reassembled on their property, is used as a guest house. The Amish wagon is antique.

To create a look reminiscent of Colonial Williamsburg, the walls and pathways were built with vintage, weathered brick, and heirloom vegetables are grown in this kitchen garden. "You usually don't think of vegetable gardens and great design in the same sentence," Lucy says. "The vegetables usually are just planted in long lines."

The arrangement of the edibles takes the garden from down-home country to sophisticated-city classic. The lettuces, for example, are planted in rows by color, with the reds artistically separating the greens. They are bolstered in back by a sentinel of tall scallions topped with green-white flower heads and are fronted by the low-lying curly chives whose cute little pink flowers act like flying flags to announce them. The architecture of the garden is accentuated by the Kentucky Wonders that are winding around English obelisks whose acorn finials are the size of croquet balls.

The herb garden is centered around an antique sundial, which is underplanted with several types of thyme, including woolly, 'Purple Carpet', 'Ruby Glow' and 'Golden Edge'. Lucy laughs; she never thought of the time/thyme significance when she planned them. "I do a lot with herbs," she says, adding that she's always searching for new recipes; her latest quest is one for Swiss chard.

The stepped-walls, designed by architect Doug VanderHorn of Greenwich based Hilton-VanderHorn Architects, follow the lay of the land. "We wanted the look of an English garden," he says. "The best thing is that as formal and as lovely as it is, the plants are used in the kitchen."

Landscape designer Kate Reid of Greenwich says the vegetable

A Georgian-style potting shed, whose architecture complements that of the main house, is a central attraction of the walled vegetable garden.

Lucy Glasebrook on her way to the vegetable garden.

Top: The classic white-picket fence is abloom with 'Ballerina' roses that lead to a vintage birdhouse.

garden looks as good as it tastes because "the formal paths and architecture of the walls hold everything together. They allow the plants to go wild."

Of course, keeping such symmetry requires restraint. "We have to pick them strategically so we don't spoil the look," Lucy says, adding that she's planning on planting another edible garden for gangly plants like pumpkins and harvest corn that need a lot more elbow room. "The new garden won't have such a cultivated look," she says.

This is only the second year for the vegetable garden, and the results have delighted Lucy. "I'm fascinated by the local food movement and all its aspects," she says. "I'd have goats out there making cheese if the town would let me. And we're seriously considering putting beehives in the field so we can get even closer to eating foods that are grown locally."

The potager garden paved the way for the vintage nineteenth-century barn, which Hilton-VanderHorn found and transported, piece-by-piece, from Albany, and the Georgian-style potting shed, which was custom-made to complement the architecture of the main house. "There originally was a barn on this site," Lucy says, "and we chose this one because it was built around 1860, around the same time as our house." Once reassembled, the architects designed and renovated the structure from the inside out.

The barn, also used as a guest house, opens to an English

conservatory that overlooks the second garden, a newly planted apple orchard that has ten trees. A stone wall, including a rustic-looking faux bois gate, separates the orchard from the manicured backyard that is centered around a fountain. "Sometimes when Richard and I want to get away from it all, we spend the weekend in the barn," Lucy says. "It's as if you're on another planet. And our kids love to stay here."

The vegetable garden's palette of whites and pinks also includes a row of peonies, an old-fashioned favorite. They set the stage for the wisteria vines that when fully grown will cover the pergola with a canopy of perfumed pale purple blossoms.

When the Glasebrooks entertain, guests get the pleasure of gazing at the garden as they eat the produce grown there. The table itself is a conversation piece: Its base is made from English faux bois strawberry pots, and its top is a slab of honed limestone.

"We'll stroll the garden before dinner," Lucy says. "There's always something new to see. The deer are everywhere, and the other day when we had a party we saw a

'Carefree Wonder' roses and a white-picket fence turn the parking court into a pretty place.

Bottom left to right: A 'Green Mound' boxwood, one of a pair, centers a flower garden. An antique limestone, gargoyles and all, was transformed into a fountain.