

"A compelling read, aimed at both beginners and those gardeners who are already in the soup and want more."

—Mary-Kate Mackey,  
garden author, editor, writing educator

"A Dargan garden is considered to be a timeless work of landscape design. This book conveys the essence of their craft in an easily accessible form, rich with inspiration and instruction."

—James Cothran, FASLA, garden author,  
educator, landscape architect



Mary Palmer Dargan is a nationally known principal in the Atlanta-based firm of Dargan Landscape Architects, a business she shares with her husband, landscape architect Hugh Graham Dargan.

The Dargans' gardens have appeared in hundreds of style magazines and in more than forty books. Their gardens also appear regularly on television, such as *Ground Breakers* on HGTV. Numerous awards include those from The Garden Club of America and American Society of Landscape Architects.

Mary Palmer's best-selling design book, *Timeless Landscape Design: The Four-Part Master Plan*, is considered to be essential for any homeowner or landscape designer.

She lives with her husband at Highcote, at High Hampton in Cashiers, North Carolina. Dargan Landscape Architects is located in the Buckhead area of Atlanta, Georgia.

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## Landscape Your Life

Gardening

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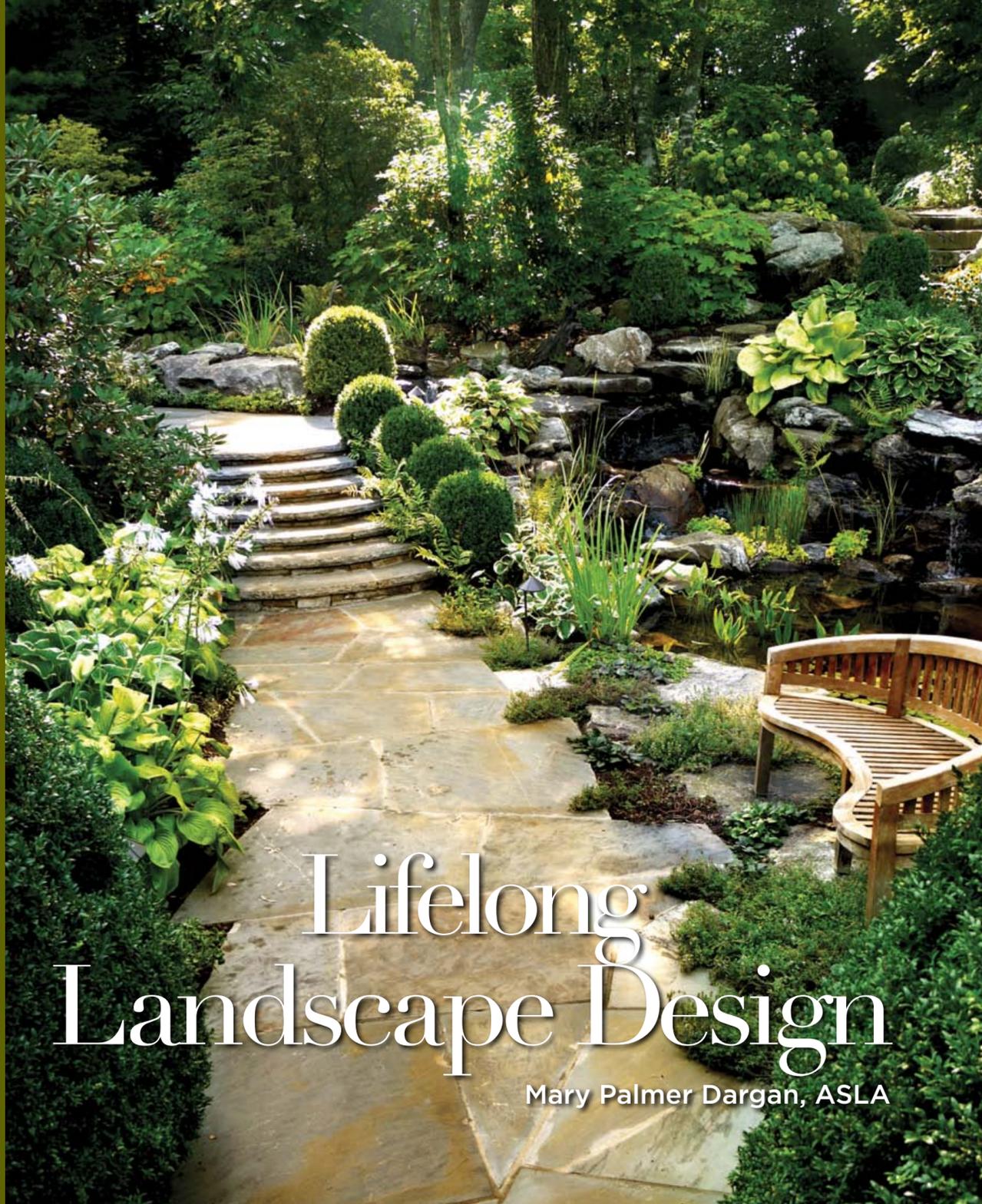
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Lifelong Landscape Design

Mary Palmer Dargan, ASLA



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## Lifelong Landscape Design

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No one is born knowing how to garden; we experiment with ways to design outdoor places to meet our changing needs. Landscape patterns, the physical elements, and arrangements of outdoor space designed to accommodate activities are preferences slowly acquired over time.

The patterns and activities of our home environments shape us as much as we shape them. Your home landscape is an evolution of personal experiences from every stage of life: child, adult or elder. As you accumulate a personal language of landscape preferences, these skills enhance the quality of your life.

Lifelong landscape designs create environments that connect with nature, encompass a home, and promote healthy living by providing mobility, social interaction, and places to sustain the body and soul. Learn easy steps to design your own lifelong landscape through more than 200 landscape patterns and activities that illustrate components of healthy living. Enhance the quality of your life at any stage with practical advice from this inspirational landscape architect with more than thirty years experience.

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This broad, grassy walk is easy on the feet and knees in a garden at the Chattooga Club in Cashiers, North Carolina.

## CHAPTER 5

# Freedom of Access and Choice

2 Access to, from and around your landscape is vital for use, delight and health. Both access and enclosure systems are integral parts of lifelong landscapes. These systems are dynamic patterns and include nodes, pot ears, gates, fences, walls, steps, solid or soft walks. Pathways, shaped by plant materials such as an allee, loosely hedged path, Zen walk or shrub node, make access to the garden healthy, fun and serviceable.

Functional access systems are critical to all users. A circular path around the property that takes in the front and back is a classic design with no dead ends and is convenient for service. Many children on tricycles love to go around and around a circular pathway through small beds of plantings and alongside grass or a terrace. Elders, especially those living in apartments or restricted spaces, relish the opportunity to walk where they wish with assistance or under their own power. If freedom of access is controlled by gates such as in town homes, gardens with pets, or advanced medical facilities, inner loops are a must for motility within the system.



# Lighting: Delight in the Night



**NIGHT LIGHTING** for accent is a specialty in our garden at Highcote. We've experimented with every manner of lighting fixture, from coffee cans with holes punched into the sides to frosted milk bottles. Virtually anything can be wired with low-voltage wire and a small bulb. A specialist can provide an enormous amount of input for long-term and short-term fixture locations, wiring plan, transformers and timers.

We tend to use lighting high in trees very

sparingly due to preference for source illumination. In hard-to-light areas, ceilings of structures such as pavilions, or arbors, bullet lights fixed with pink filters cast soft, natural light. We always use the lowest wattage possible, such as a 9- or 12-volt bulb, and once your eyes are accustomed to being outside, little light is needed to highlight paths. For a realistic effect of candlelight in an old miner's lantern or glass globe, use theater frost spray or candle wax smoke and let it be misty.