

last word / SPRING AHEAD

SET YOUR SIGHTS ON PERSONAL GROWTH THIS SEASON



A FRESH PERSPECTIVE

WE CHECK IN WITH **JOHN CARLSON**, PRESIDENT & OWNER OF HOMEFRONT FARMERS

Homefront Farmers designs, builds and maintains custom at-home organic gardens.

THE IMPACT OF COVID-19:

"With people spending more time at home, so many more are interested in growing their own food, and not just via vegetable gardens. People are realizing that fresh food from their yard is central to how they want to live—that became clear during lockdown! Our feeling is, let's help people homestead, as the possibilities are endless. We're helping clients with berries and fruit trees, growing gourmet mushrooms and beekeeping. In February, we boiled sap from clients' maple trees so they can have their own syrup. There's also been a surge of interest in converting lawn spaces to native pollinator gardens, which helps all of these activities."

CUSTOMIZATION: "We build every new garden to the client's wishes. Custom features can include seating areas or exterior 'window box' beds for flowers as well as built-in storage boxes for tools. Some gardens are built on sloped land and terraced with steps, which can be really beautiful. When maintaining gardens, we start with a custom



above: An all-cedar raised bed garden by Homefront Farmers planted with a mix of vegetables and flowers.

plan that ensures clients have the crops they want spaced and located so the garden flourishes. Each client receives our Homefront Crop Planner so they can pick and choose."

CHALLENGES: "We can handle almost any challenge except lack of sunlight. Most crops need six to eight hours of sun to thrive, and without it, they just can't produce much. As a result, we're very good at locating the best site on a client's property. We have an app that determines how much sun each spot gets on any day of the year, or which branches to remove to increase sunlight."

FUN PICKS: "Most people love trying new varieties, like 'Striped German' tomatoes or 'Purple Haze' carrots, but growing your

own also means you can try new things like ground cherries, which are a sweet-tart mini version of a tomatillo that grow with a beautiful little brown paper wrapper. If you're willing to wait a few years for them to grow fruit, you can try pawpaws, a native fruit that looks like a mango with a tropical, 'banana custard' flavor!"

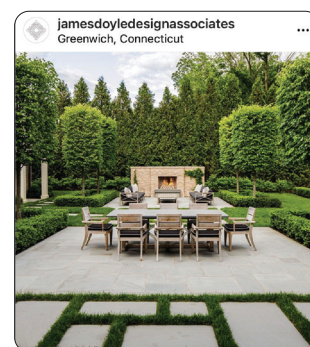
A MEMORABLE PROJECT:

"We have a corporate client who built a huge garden outside of their office building. We maintain it, and we run a weekly 'farmers market' where employees can pick up fresh-picked vegetables to take home. It's so fun to see how happy it makes people!"

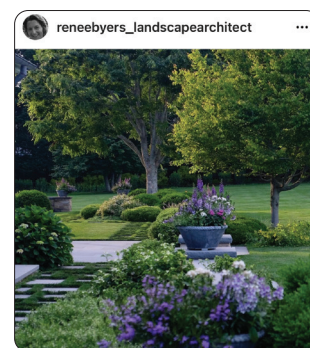
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