Today on Across the Fence a Vermont couple creates inspirational garden designs. We will learn a few simple steps to transform your yard into an elegant lasting landscape.

Good afternoon and thanks for joining us. I'm Judy Simpson. For over 50 years Across the Fence is proud to be an important source for farm, home and garden information. Today we continue that tradition with a look at a garden that is truly a home. Let's follow the garden path to Southern Vermont where we join University of Vermont's Extension Horticultural Specialist, Leonard Perry.

Hi, I'm Leonard Perry with University of Vermont Extension. Today I am in Southern Vermont in the town of Westminster and the gardens of Gordon and Mary Hayward. The Hayward's bought this property in 1983. Since then they have transformed a tumbled down farmhouse into a show place of landscape and gardening acumen. The landscape combines Gordon's New England roots with Mary's heritage. Creating a sense of place that is all of their own. Our tour begins in the crab apple orchard. A space crafted not by design but fashioned by faith.

Gordon Hayward: I had a client who ordered four three inch Caliper Adams Crab Apples, and then cancelled after they had been delivered. So Mary and I thought what will we do with them. That was the beginning of putting that first row of four crab apples in there. Over the years, we have added two other rows. When I am choosing crab apples, the first variable that I always look for is scab resistance. What we have got here is the Adams Crab Apple, Sugar Time, and Prairie Fire. Elsewhere in the garden we have got Donald Wyman. I have found that those are four of the best. Not only for scab resistance but also for fruit retention. That is that these fruits will hold well into March sometimes even into April. So we are looking out of the south facing windows of the house, all winter at red fruits against the white snow and the blue sky. It's a very appealing thing to look at. Then sometime in late April, about two hundred cedar wax wings will arrive to strip the trees. It's quite a circus.

Leonard Perry: I think that's the problem many people think. They think crab apples are messy. They drop their fruits. But obviously there are some that hold those.

Gordon Hayward: Yes, and so if you choose wisely they will hold their fruit and add measurably to the winter garden.

Leonard Perry: Next, Gordon led us down the garden path. Well Gordon this is an incredible design. Could you tell us a about the inspiration and in these posts that we are looking at.
Gordon Hayward: The first thing that I do when I am designing a garden is the path. I try to link the house to the garden. So, we started this design by looking at that door and seeing that there was a line that ran right to that apple tree down there. That was our first gesture in the garden in 1983, was to make that line clear. The other thing that I try to do is to show people how to walk through the garden by the way I lay out the paths. People will arrive up by the house, and see that break in the wall, see this path and these black locust posts are there to help us direct people down to this area through their drama. The other thing about these black locust posts is that they confirm a sense of place. That is black locust growing just up in the edges of the garden. We brought these black locust posts in the ground to echo that old Vermont use of black locust fencing. One old timer told me years ago that black locust in the ground will last one day longer than a rock.

Leonard Perry: (Laughs) That’s great.

Gordon Hayward: The design for this garden area to a large degree came from Mary's mother's cottage garden. She grew up near Chipping Camden in the Cotswold Hills of England. She had a beautiful farmhouse courtyard cottage garden. So you see the plants in this garden are daisies, heliopsis, peonies, hydrangeas, lilacs, and very traditional plants that would confirm the warm and welcome of an English cottage garden.

Leonard Perry: It definitely is beautiful. It looks like that path is so inviting us. Let’s go see where it leads and see what else you have to show us.

Gordon this is a beautiful old apple tree. Tell us about this.

Gordon Hayward: It was here when we got here. We think it is about 85 years old. This is just the kind of apple tree that I grew up pruning as a boy on the orchard in Connecticut. It's a wonderful echo of my childhood. The process I always follow to restore an apple tree is: number one, I cut all the dead wood out. Number two I cut all of the interior growth to show the trunking system of the tree, and number three I keep those upper suckers low.

Leonard Perry: Well, Gordon, this is a wonderful tunnel effect. How did you create this?

Gordon Hayward: The idea for this came from a tunnel that we saw in a garden in England. Right near where Mary grew up. We came back from that trip to England and thought wouldn't it be fun to put a tunnel in our own garden. Given that interest in different colors of foliage, we chose a purple-leafed beech. Then to lighten the area we put a path in under here of 3/8 inch pea stone. The steps as you can see are black locust.

Leonard Perry: At the far end of the garden flanked by hostas and picketed by granite fence posts, that looked like ancient standing stones, a gazebo establishes a boarder and a point of departure for the rest of the landscape.

Gordon, I notice the gazebo frames the beautiful view and continuation of this path into the meadow.

Gordon Hayward: We wanted very much to include the meadow as part of the garden. So by mowing the path into we were able to create that relationship.

Leonard Perry: These are wonderful borders. It reminds me something you would see in England.

Gordon Hayward: Well this is a little quote, it’s our attempt at a pair of perennial borders and it's a little of a quote from the Hidcote Gardens, certainly not in the scale of that garden or in the refinement of that garden, but none-the-less, Mary grew up right across the fields from the Hidcote Manor Garden, so we thought we would give it a try to have a pair of borders.
Leonard Perry: The borders are not the only design element that the Hayward’s have adopted to honor Mary's English heritage.

Mary Hayward: The area of England that I come from has many villages with three trees in the center. They tend to be meeting places. "I will meet you at the three oaks." We decided to recreate that in the field here. We choose pin oaks and planted them a sort of triangle. Then we put a bench underneath. The other part of the story is that when we are just worn out from working in the garden, we go and sit out there and just stare at the hills. With our backs to the garden.

Leonard Perry: One of the keys to the Hayward’s design philosophy is to construct a sense of place that is both conspiring and inviting.

One of the things that I noticed coming in was the space we are in now, that looks like an herb, but the sense of enclosure was just so inviting I just felt I had to walk in.

Mary Hayward: The shed that we use as a garden shed was an old tobacco drying shed. We were told it was probably brought up from the Connecticut River Valley in Westminster where they use to grow tobacco about 100 years ago. What we did was to use the lines of the shed to create this small garden. For instance the four quadrants of the herb garden here are roughly the dimensions of the door of shed. We put a grape arbor coming off the shed, using the black locust posts that we have used throughout the garden. The black locust posts are in the hedge rows around us.

Leonard Perry: As the black locust posts pay respect to the surrounding Vermont countryside, other items in the garden have personal connections to the couple's past.

Mary Hayward: For instance this is the head of Jason and the Argonauts. Gordon and I spent time in Greece. That reminds of us of our time there. We have rhubarb here and terra cotta here that would be typical of herb/vegetable garden in England. In herb gardens you usually have a central piece that shows the passage of time. A sun dial, or in this case a non millery sphere. They are all to show the passage of time. They can be simple or complex. Behind me is the old wooden wheel barrow that is horribly heavy to use, but it's great to look at. Again it's to do with gardening and the whole ways of gardening. Those kinds of things in a way that you can bring objects into your garden so they connect with you and connect with the place.

Leonard Perry: So the sense I get from looking at this garden, but also the bigger landscape here that we have been walking through is that this is a work in progress, it isn't static. You have changed many times, you have made some errors and you learn from those.

Mary Hayward: Yes, definitely. Neither of us have formal horticultural training and we both come from farms, both use to things being grown around us and so on. So we have that background. We are rural people in that sense. But this is being very much a trial and error garden. We are zone four here, that means you have a limited number of plants available to you. So we try zone 5. I would say that we have lost far more zone 5 plants than we have ever managed to have survived here. So it is a question of trying things out, things that appeal to you, see if it works. If it doesn't you move on and go onto the next thing and you try that.

Leonard Perry: Twenty five years after the Hayward’s transformed this space they are finding that the more things change the more things stay the same.

Gordon, I see some wonderful looking sheep frames here. But I don't see any sheep in the field. What's the story?

Gordon Hayward: There used to be sheep in this part of Vermont. In fact our neighbor David Major is making Vermont cheese from their milk. But the story behind these is that Mary grew up on a sheep
farm in the Cotswolds. We were visiting her brother who is still running the farm. He had a sketch book of sheep that Henry Moore the sculptor had done. That gave us the idea to find a topiary frame maker to make these three frames. We contacted Jeff Breeze on the internet and he made these three for us. Based on those sketches. We put them in this quiet little paddock that is the end of our garden tour.

Leonard Perry: It's such a different area from the others. Why isn't this all planted up like the rest of the nice rows.

Gordon Hayward: We wanted to create one final, simple, space in the garden. So we had Dan Snow, a wall builder around here build the stone walls to make a paddock for the sheep to keep them in.

Leonard Perry: But I understand there were cows on this property as well as the neighbor's property? I just saw some earlier today.

Gordon Hayward: There were, the Ranney family who built this house in the 1760s also built the house just up the road. They have been raising Jersey cows on this land since 1760.

Leonard Perry: Behind us was the farm I understand, a barn?

Gordon Hayward: Yes this was all the barn. The little pool was a where the silo was. Then this area of the garden was where a lengthy barn was. There was about 140 feet of barn here years ago. It was all gone when we bought the place in 1983.

Leonard Perry: I think it is a wonderful example of how one can take an old farmstead like this, there are so many in Vermont, and reclaim it and turn it in and preserve some of that heritage and history behind. Yet turn it into a beautiful space.

Gordon Hayward: Yes. That is something that we have tried to do. Is to honor the past of the place.

Leonard Perry: To find out more about Mary and Gordon's garden, visit their website: www.haywardgardens.com. There you will find garden and landscape tips as well as books and information about Gordon's upcoming lecture schedule.

Thanks a lot Gordon for having us here today. And thank you for watching today on Across the Fence, for the University of Vermont Extension, I'm Leonard Perry.

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