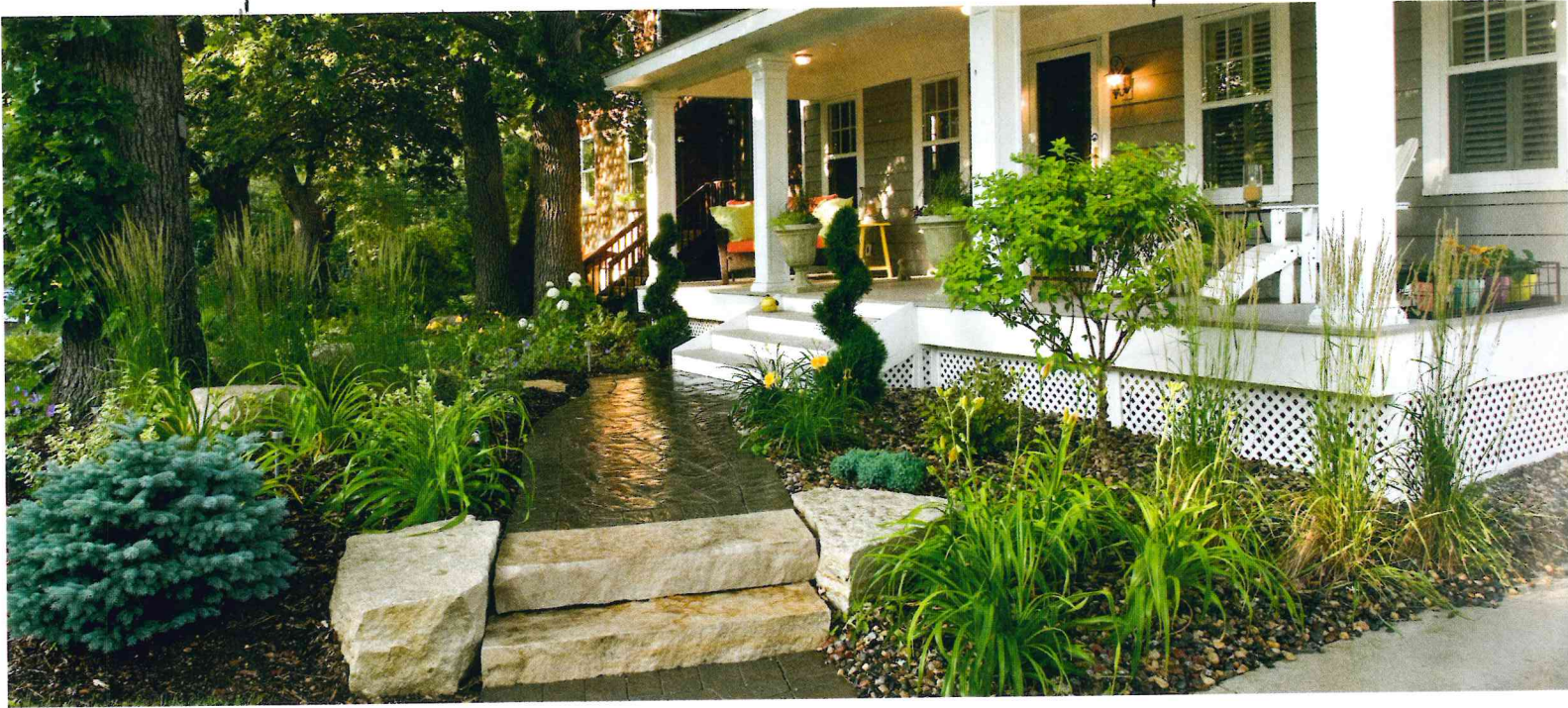


All Decked Out

Southview Design unearths the latest trends in landscaping.

BY LORI STORM



Award-winning yards, patios and pools. Inviting outdoor spaces, fabulous front porches and stunning fire features. St. Paul-based Southview Design is known for making memorable landscapes. So one might think that spring's hottest landscaping trend — deck gardening — would leave the company's creatives feeling a bit too contained.

"Exactly the opposite," decrees Karen Filloon, the company's director of marketing and business development. "Container gardening is accessorizing the landscape. It's sort of like getting ready to go out at night and putting on that last piece of jewelry that complements the whole outfit." It goes way beyond that potted plant by your welcome mat. Showy containers made of anything and everything are dotting decks, stairways and porches, and bringing beauty to rails, windows and walls.

Also trending? Combining flowers, vegetables and herbs in the same container. "When you peek inside to harvest, it's like finding a hidden treasure," says Southview Design Gardening Specialist Bobbie Sweeney, who has mixed herbs with ornamental flowers and tucked tomato and pepper plants alongside showstopping annuals. "It's nice to have that proximity right outside your kitchen door. And when plants start going out of season, you still have other flowers to easily fill in the gaps."

Another craze for spring is a natural choice. "It's all about less lawn, more natural space, bringing back a more natural-feeling environment with respect to plantings," says Filloon. That means creating landscapes with greater variation in flora — not just the traditional row of arborvitae outlining the yard.

To help that diversity thrive, Southview Design pairs plants with similar water, sun and soil needs. "We put plants that are all happy together in the same place," says landscape architect Meg Arnosti.

But a natural look doesn't mean you have to sacrifice good design. "What we don't want to have is just a hodgepodge of plants that looks messy and unkempt," Arnosti explains. "The trick is to balance beautiful design with ecological planting styles." You'll find both working with Southview Design. **AL**

