

The owners of Hickory Ridge Farm in Howard County host a Preakness Day party every year, entertaining guests in wonderful gardens designed by Graham Landscape Architecture that adjoin their Federal-style home, outbuildings, and paddocks. The horse sculpture is by Chris Williams of Chris Williams Sculpture LLC. Plants include eupatorium, artemesia, coneflowers, and boxwoods.

Photograph by Erik Kvalsvik

PATH TO PREAKNESS

GARDENS AS GATEWAYS TO OUTDOOR ENTERTAINMENT SPACES

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It might be a simple walkway lined with perennials, an arbor draped with climbing roses, or a winding driveway shaded by mature trees. But the passageways from outside to inside rarely happen all at once. Typically there's a progression or order to how they take shape, especially if there are plantings to save

or new construction underway.

Landscape architects look for natural links from gardens to homes so there's a feeling that the flowers, trees, and shrubs have existed for years, designing garden avenues and allées to link outside settings with the homes they surround.



In front of the guest cottage and nestled amid greenery is a horse sculpture by Nic Fiddian-Green. The Hickory Ridge homeowners purchased it from Sladmore Gallery in London.





Cottage Garden Plants

- Artemesia
- Aster
- Black-eyed Susans
- Butterfly bush
- Catmint
- Clematis
- Coneflower
- Coral bells
- Dwarf purple osier
- Eupatorium
- Geranium
- Globe thistle
- Heartleaf
- Hellebore
- Honeysuckle
- Hosta
- Jacob's ladder
- Lamb's ears
- Larkspur
- Leadwort
- Peonies
- Purple sage
- Russian sage
- Speedwell

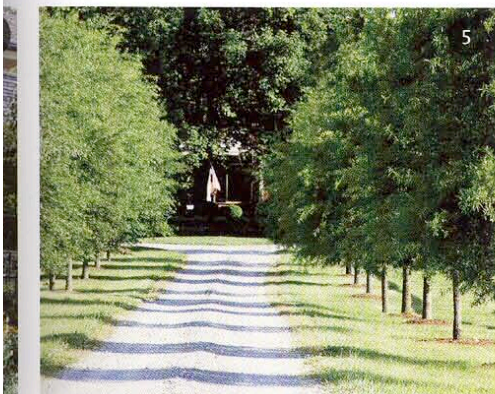
Preakness Party in Howard County

For the owners of Hickory Ridge Farm, one major concern was to preserve the 250-year-old boxwoods surrounding their historic home, as well as to establish gardens that enhance the outbuildings, stone walls, and now extended driveway on the property. "We wanted to balance our 1789 home with complementary gardens that attract wildlife and provide a place where we could relax," the owner says.

Working with Graham Landscape Architecture, they also created ideal settings for their annual Preakness Day party in May. To do this, the owners requested large outdoor areas for entertaining as well as private places for cozy gatherings. "We wanted gardens that we could see from inside the house so as to blend inside and outside," the owner adds.

With a farm like Hickory Ridge in Howard County, MD, there's a preservation of history that becomes an integral part of the master plan, says Jay Graham, president of Graham Landscape Architecture. To retain the character of the equestrian property and its rural feel, Graham and Kevin Champion, associate and project manager at Graham Landscape Architecture, reconnected the driveway in a more formal way with willow oaks, preserved prized plantings and boxwoods, and established new gardens including a spring garden for the Preakness Day party. Another garden was created around a Chris Williams horse sculpture.

"We understand the layers of history at Hickory Ridge," Champion says, "and work to preserve them. It seems like a place that's been here a long time and the gardens reflect that." Working with Quinn Craughwell, plant consultant, Graham and Champion created country gardens with heirloom and native plants. "It's definitely a relaxed rural garden," Champion adds.



FAR LEFT TO RIGHT: 1. The kitchen garden, which is on top of the former root cellar, now wine cellar, includes hosta, Siberian iris, and rosemary. 2. The sculpture garden features black-eyed Susans as well as switch grass, Scotch broom, and hay scented fern. 3. Eupatorium, also known as joe-pye weed, attracts butterflies in the sculpture garden. 4. Annual salvias are in front of black-eyed Susans in the conservatory garden, which also highlights daylilies, boxwoods, and plumbago as groundcover. 5. An allée of willow oaks lines the gravel driveway, part of the master plan.

Photographs by Erik Kvalsvik