

JULY/AUGUST 2018

# House Beautiful

## VACATION at HOME

RELAXING ROOMS,  
FEEL-GOOD  
GARDENS  
+  
SUMMER'S  
HOTTEST COLOR



#BXBCGBO \*\*\*\*\*ECPLOT 0145A\*\*C-638  
#HBU1414674737/8#  
STACY MCLAUGHLIN  
RM 609  
790 MADISON AVE  
NEW YORK NY 10065-6124  
JUN19  
5401  
W  
05401  
P770  
884  
317

Learn to unplug beautifully. *Everyday Monet* (Dey Street Books) is a wondrously creative new book of ideas (design room palettes! grow water lilies!) inspired by the Impressionist.



PHOTOGRAPH FROM EVERYDAY MONET BY AILEEN BORDMAN, PUBLISHED BY DEYSTREET BOOKS. © 2018 BY AILEEN BORDMAN, REPRINTED COURTESY OF HARPERCOLLINS PUBLISHERS

# Unplug

## Creating Balance by Stepping Outside

If your journey to healthful living has you running from supermarket to fitness studio to nutritionist and back again, here's an invitation to stay home. The most powerful decisions about well-being are made in your head—and around your house. Our four-part Whole Home Project is a primer on how your house can enhance the whole you: your energy, your peace, your happiness. In this third installment, we explore how disconnecting, even briefly—a quick walk with no phone!—helps you reconnect with yourself and others. Read on for a bounty of ways to start living better *now*. >

**I**t's been dubbed "nature deficit disorder." Americans spend 90 percent of their lives indoors, according to the Environmental Protection Agency—and nearly 11 hours a day in front of a screen, reports Nielsen. Luckily, the cure is right outside your door. No, it's not vitamin D (though that does help protect against cancer and depression), or even exercise. Research nowadays suggests emotional and physical health benefits from a slow meander, or just *being*. Numerous studies connect the Japanese practice of forest bathing—slowing down and communing with nature through scent, sight, and touch—with decreased blood pressure, reduced anxiety, and improvements in sleep. But even an exchange with a window box or the birds in a tree has its benefits. The longer you linger on beautiful details, the faster the big picture comes into focus.



### Art Overhead

It's high time for a kite-flying renaissance, say the folks at Little Cloud Kites—kites are "a simple yet profound tool for getting us outdoors and lifting spirits," and they help us enjoy "the quiet ritual of becoming attentive to the wind."

Quetzal Kite. \$159.  
littlecloudkites.com

*"When you have an intimate relationship with a plant, it becomes an important part of your world. It reminds you, 'when this plant bloomed, this or that happened.' It allows you to mark time and slow down."*

**ANDREA COCHRAN**  
LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT,  
SAN FRANCISCO

### Project Remote

More than 4 million miles of roads link communities across America, and it's this grid of asphalt that makes getting away from it all—*way* away—a feat. That's what inspired wildlife ecologists Rebecca and Ryan Means to map the country's most out-of-the-way locations. "We are bombarded with stimuli today," Rebecca says. "We need places where we can seek peace and quiet, to play and to reconnect." The most isolated spot Project Remote has documented to date is in Yellowstone National Park, Wyoming, some 21 miles from the nearest road. Even if you can't get quite that far off the grid, that might inspire an opportunity to step off the path a little bit farther than you've previously ventured. [remotefootprints.com](http://remotefootprints.com)



**EN ROUTE** This sleek two-wheeler from Dutch-inspired Public Bikes has an upright seat for comfy cruising and can be

outfitted with a detachable basket. Limited-Edition Public C7 Bicycle. \$598. Riviera Basket. \$98. [serenaandlily.com](http://serenaandlily.com)

### Trending: Growth Opportunities

**GARDENUITY** will send you the tools to plant your own one-square-foot veggie garden, tailored to your hometown's climate to ensure a successful harvest. "We started Gardenuity to help people grow plants," says cofounder Donna Letier. "But we quickly realized that we're part of this gratitude movement—which grows your

life in every way—and the prize just happens to be some peppers or kale." [gardenuity.com](http://gardenuity.com)

**THE SILL** sells houseplants sized mini to medium in its own line of ceramics, connecting future plant lovers with easy-to-care-for varieties. "Plants are just like people—they like it 72 degrees and sunny, with a little humidity," says founder Eliza Blank. [thesill.com](http://thesill.com)



AN ADORABLE SUCCULENT FROM THE SILL.



### PERENNIAL BLOOMS

Botanic gardens and public green spaces host year-round activities to get you outdoors, no matter the season. The New York Botanical Garden, for one, offers more than 600 classes on everything from plein air painting to flower arranging—and is a critical educational resource on conservation and other issues. "We engage people in the beauty and mystery of nature," says NYBG's Todd Forrest. "It elevates the spirit and takes us away from the stresses of everyday life." [nybg.org](http://nybg.org)



### HOMEGROWN RETREAT

Can a beautiful space inspire healthful habits? Yes, says architect Kevin P. Clark of Historical Concepts, who created a “wellness barn” (above) for a multigenerational family. They can decamp to this 8,400-square-foot retreat not only for relaxation, but also to get their heart rates going. The barn’s layout reinforces its health objectives: The sauna and other restorative spaces are on the cocoon-like lower level, while the gym is at the top of an energizing set of stairs, naturally jump-starting a workout. The pool, meanwhile, basks in the sun under a ceiling of skylights, making it a welcoming year-round destination. For your own healthful environment, Clark recommends a counterpoint to your daily life: If your day is action-packed, you’ll want to evoke a calming, grounding energy, but if you’re mostly sitting at a desk, you’ll need opportunities for physical activity. “It’s about creating balance,” he says. [historicalconcepts.com](http://historicalconcepts.com)



### Family Time

Lightweight and compact, pint-size garden tools are the perfect way for your little tyke to plant and prune side-by-side with the big kids. 10 tools available. Children’s Shovel, \$24. [sneeboerusa.com](http://sneeboerusa.com)

### DOWN-HOME

It may not be *exercise*, but rocking can improve strength and flexibility—plus, it’s relaxing! The loungey seat on this vintage-inspired rocker brings it right into this century. Laurel Outdoor Rocking Chair, from \$2,400. [hollywoodathome.com](http://hollywoodathome.com)



### Natural Instincts

Every year, some 90 million pounds of chemicals are used on lawns and gardens across the country in the name of beauty—and, many would say, to the detriment of the environment, our bodies, and the plants themselves. By eschewing weed killers and chemical fertilizers for a natural approach, the Perfect Earth Project advocates for gardens that are as environmentally friendly as they are lovely. Founder and landscape designer Edwina von Gal shares her tips for creating a healthful oasis by “letting nature make decisions”—not by substituting products, but by changing the process.

#### The Pollinator Garden

“One of my favorite things is a garden of flowering plants,” von Gal says. “Adding a water feature—even just a basic dish you can fill with a watering can—gives the birds, butterflies, and bees a welcoming place to

drink.” And putting in a “bee hotel”—a container full of bamboo or hollow grasses, or a piece of wood with holes—will give these hard workers a home, ensuring that your blooms will be pollinated as well.

#### The Meadow Garden

“A meadow can be as simple as a part of your lawn that you’ve stopped mowing,” von Gal says. The longer grass offers a habitat for the insects on which our ecosystem depends, plus “it costs a lot less to maintain.” Even keeping your grass at four inches means a healthier lawn with fewer weeds.

#### The Do-Nothing Garden

Forget about trying to manage the environment and let nature take over! But “if any plants start to get out of control—or if you think they’re just plain ugly—you can remove them,” von Gal says. “It’s a kind of evolution.” [perfectearthproject.com](http://perfectearthproject.com)



Norris Organics maintains this garden without any chemicals.

“Dog owners who walk their pets the recommended 20 to 30 minutes twice a day increase their social interactions and improve their physical health.”

—DR. KURT VENATOR  
CHIEF VETERINARY OFFICER, PURINA



“YOU’RE WELCOME!”

### Instant Upgrade!

Turn any outdoor space into a flickering oasis. Lucid candles have the allure of a real flame but burn liquid paraffin, so they’ll never melt or drip. Pillar Candles, from \$55 each. [lucidcandle.com](http://lucidcandle.com). Pair them with Cambria Lanterns, indoors or out. From \$220 each. [rh.com](http://rh.com)





IT'S HEATED!

**WARM FRONT**

Would you pay \$6,000 to enjoy a longer outdoor-living season? This cast-stone bench, with

plug-in radiant heating, lets you do just that. Available in multiple colors and finishes. Evia Lounge. \$5,900. galanterandjones.com



*The Art of Play*

"Childhood is about being in trees, making mud pies, and hosing off," says Barbara Butler, a designer of ultra-imaginative tree houses and play structures. Her colorful creations, like the one above, are built to engage energetic young bodies and nurture their resourcefulness, with swings, slides, secret exits, and even stages to fuel acts of drama. Butler adds challenging ways to climb up—think rock walls, rather than just ladders—to encourage exercise. "An up-high clubhouse never gets old," she says. "Play offers a silly escape to try on new identities, and having a designated safe play place creates a common gathering point, and ultimately, neighborly connections. It's a kid's kingdom." [barbarabutler.com](http://barbarabutler.com)

*"My motto is, 'Create balance.' Every time you buy a new gadget, buy a plant or some flowers too. Any kind of nature in your space creates a sense of calm throughout the day."*

**KELLI ELLIS**  
INTERIOR DESIGNER,  
RANCHO SANTA MARGARITA, CA



**REQUIRED READING**

More than a decade ago, journalist Richard Louv noticed the impact our plugged-in society was having on children's health. His groundbreaking 2005 book, *Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder* (Algonquin), offers 100 ways to bring about change at the community level and has become a rallying cry for the importance of keeping kids connected to the natural world. In *Bringing Nature Home: How You Can Sustain Wildlife with Native Plants* (Timber Press), entomology professor Douglas W. Tallamy reveals the intricate web at play in our local ecosystems—from native plant species to birds and insects—and why biodiversity is key to our well-being. For a lighter read, *Houseplants for a Healthy Home: 50 Indoor Plants to Help You Breathe Better, Sleep Better, and Feel Better All Year Round* (Adams Media) is an illustrated encyclopedia of easy-to-grow houseplants, annotated with each plant's health benefits and detailed care instructions.

**Elements of Style**

For San Francisco landscape designer Monica Viarengo, a garden becomes pure poetry when it speaks to all five of your senses.

**TOUCH** "I always encourage people to be barefoot in the garden," says Viarengo, who notes that changes in the material underfoot—say, from concrete pavers to moss—are a great way to signal transitions between outdoor spaces. "Put your feet in the grass, and let your children run barefoot—it's one of the best cures for stress."

**TASTE** Nothing ever tastes as good as something you've grown yourself, which is why Viarengo is a strong advocate for "productive gardens" filled with fruit trees, vegetables, and herbs. "It helps ground you and makes you appreciate what nature can give," she says.

**HEAR** Gardens can delight the ears with more than just birdsong. "The sound of walking on gravel gives a more human scale to a space," Viarengo says.

"And a water feature will cancel out unwelcome noise, soothing the mind."

**SEE** "Plants are alive, so they give you a sense of life. I use them as a painter would—they're the colors of my toolbox," she says. "It's through beauty that harmony manifests, and it's through harmony that we actually feel better."

**SMELL** Viarengo recommends starting in the herb garden and moving your hands through the plants. Touching them releases their essential oils—it's free aromatherapy!



**TOOLS OF THE TRADE**

Haul around garden tools, ground cover, flowers—anything the horticulturist in you desires. This cart holds up to 400 pounds and is designed to move with

equal ease across grass and gravel. Bonus: The back slides open to quickly dump a load of mulch! Available in three colors. Medium Gardener's Supply Cart. \$299. [gardeners.com](http://gardeners.com)

**LET THERE BE LIGHT**

Imagine a home with no windows. Impossible, right? Light is a key element in determining how comfortable you feel, drastically affecting your mood and energy level. "Windows allow us to connect with the outdoors: sunrises and sunsets, nature or cityscapes," says Christine Marvin of Marvin Windows and Doors. "Several studies have shown the positive impact that sunlight and natural air have on well-being and productivity." Fred Maxik, founder of the Lighting Science Group—which offers specially tuned bulbs that work in conjunction with the body's innate cycles—puts it this way: "If you've been shut in a dark room for several hours, go outside and get a dose of sunlight. You'll see what a powerful stimulant that is, and you'll understand instantly why natural light has such a profound effect."



A home with scenic doors by Marvin Windows and Doors.



**Flower Child**

Curated seeds! Yes, it's a thing. Folks from the Floral Society selected the 12 flowering seed varieties that they say make the most bountiful bouquets. Not sure how to create Insta-worthy bundles on your own? Check out their online tutorials.

Seed Packets. \$5 each.  
thefloralsociety.com

*Digital Detox*

Looking to curb your finger-tapping addiction? Turns out there's an app for that.



**FOREST**

This one helps you focus by turning productivity into a game. Set a timer to stay off your phone, and virtual trees will flourish if you meet your goal. Get on your phone too soon, and your garden withers. Forest partners with Trees for the Future to plant real trees sponsored by users. [forestapp.cc](http://forestapp.cc)



**FREEDOM**

Block websites from your computer, phone, or tablet to break bad habits—say, spending too much time on social media—and you might find that you don't miss them one iota. [freedom.to](http://freedom.to)



**MOMENTUM**

We all know we're more likely to stick with something if we do it regularly. This app tracks a habit like exercise, meditation, or even gratitude to set you up for success. [momentum.cc](http://momentum.cc)

*"My clients who don't consider themselves gardeners really enjoy a raised garden bed. You can pick tomatoes or grab some parsley in minutes—and when you garden, you won't get your hands and knees too dirty. It's a wonderful way for families to share a hobby."*

**PHILLIP THOMAS, INTERIOR DESIGNER, NEW YORK CITY**

PHOTOGRAPHERS SEEDS: PAMELA COOK/STUDIO D; SERENBE: J. ASHLEY PHOTOGRAPHY



**Heaven on Earth**

*This Georgia community is creating a healthy future by looking to the past.*

Remember the way life used to be? When neighbors knew one another, kids roamed free till

dinner, and walking was a way of life? That's all more relevant than ever for the Nygren family, who founded Serenbe, a groundbreaking planned community near Atlanta, based on those tenets. The homes, which will eventually number 1,200, are nestled into villages on 700 acres of protected green space. "We hear from people over and over again, whether they're living here or visiting, that at Serenbe, their blood pressure immediately drops—that arriving here is like taking a deep breath," says Garnie Nygren, the eldest daughter of

founders Steve and Marie Nygren. The community is proof that modern stresses can be solved through good design. For example, the villages are roughly a 10-minute walk apart via trails, encouraging both



exercise and camaraderie—rather than cars. "When you walk, you are plugged in to your community," Garnie says. "You'll feel better and be more in tune with the people and environment around you. So many of the principles of unplugging, destressing, and lowering anxiety are directly related to spending 30 to 45 minutes a day in nature," she says. Try this: Plant something edible, like blueberry bushes, in your front yard, so you can pick a handful of berries on your way in the door—even if you're just walking from your car.