

LUXE WILDERNESS LODGE

Sunset

THE
MAKEOVER
ISSUE

PALM
SPRINGS
A-FRAME
REVEAL!

SMART HOME
SHOPPING GUIDE

BEFORE + AFTER

BUDGET-FRIENDLY
BACKYARD

+

HOW TO COOK A
STEAKHOUSE
DINNER

SEPTEMBER 2017

\$5.99US \$7.50CAN



VISIT US AT SUNSET.COM

Home & Garden

BEFORE & AFTER



EVERYDAY BEAUTY

*A horticulturist reveals his
secret passion for mass-
market plants.*

*By Johanna
Silver*

Nap zone

WORK HARD, REST HARD

2-43

Rare plants from Central America and Mexico surround Eric Schulz each day in his job as a horticulturist at the University of California Botanical Gardens.

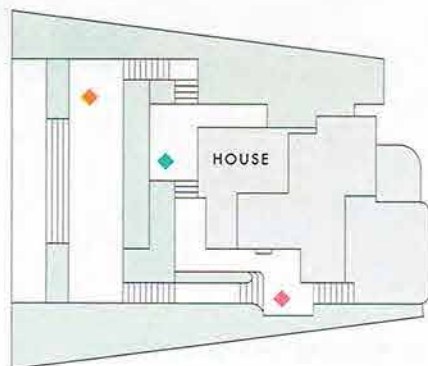
But his own backyard is a little less exotic. "I'm really into the plants you find at The Home Depot," he says. "They're common for a reason—they're workhorses."

His tiered garden along a steep slope in Oakland is a stunning endorsement of those workhorses: Bird of paradise, clivia, *Coprosma*, and 'Myers' asparagus ferns are packed densely for a lush, tranquil feel. "At work, I'm trying to create a wild ecosystem, but at home I'm creating a mood," says Schulz.

The plants surround several distinct landing pads, which provide space to socialize and create clean lines. "A good hardscape pulls everything together," he says. And he hasn't run out of ideas—or slope—just yet. Schulz's next plan is to develop a modern shade structure in place of an old shed on the property. "This yard," he says, "is absolutely limitless."

BEFORE

When Schulz and his partner bought the home in 2008, the yard was a mess of bare soil and failing retaining walls. Although it "scared other buyers off," says Schulz, he saw only potential.



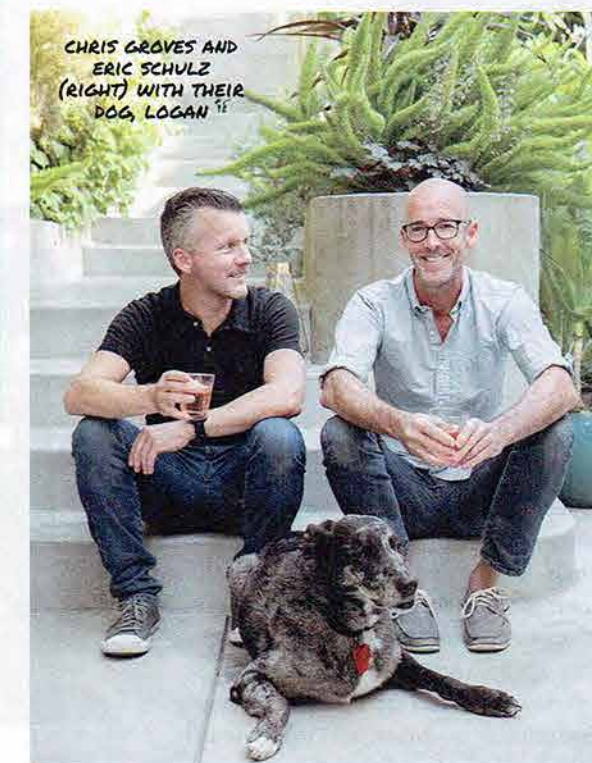
◆ **Nap zone**

Page 41: Carve out areas for different types of enjoyment. A daybed provides a respite under the canopy of an incense cedar. It's the well-deserved resting spot of Schulz's partner, Chris Groves. "I'm the labor when his back hurts and something suddenly needs to be moved," says Groves. Schulz went super-low-maintenance by using 2-foot-square concrete pavers, with artificial turf filling in the gaps and adding a touch of green.

DIGITAL BONUS Refresh your landscaping with these easy, eye-catching ideas: sunset.com/outdoormakeovers.

◆ **Entertaining headquarters**

Believing that stairs and retaining walls can be an integral part of the design rather than something to hide, Schulz envisioned a grand staircase as a backdrop to outdoor meals. San Francisco-based landscape architect Mary Barenfeld (barenfeld.com) helped him realize his dream, giving concrete walls, built-in planters, and stairs an art deco-esque treatment.



CHRIS GROVES AND ERIC SCHULZ (RIGHT) WITH THEIR DOG, LOGAN



◆ Oasis for one

Even the smallest areas can be put to work. The narrow spot outside of the sunroom could just as easily have been a “nothing space,” says Schulz. But the sheltered pocket with seating is now the most fought-over spot between Schulz and Groves, especially on chillier evenings when it’s protected from the wind. “It feels really private. I can still hear the music playing inside the house, but I’m very much surrounded by plants,” says Schulz.



RETAIL ROCK STARS

Don't overlook readily available plants. Here are some of Schulz's favorites.



'MYERS' ASPARAGUS FERN

“It has all the spring green freshness you could ever want, all year-round,” says Schulz. Except in coastal conditions, ‘Myers’ is happiest with a touch of shade.



'BLACKBIRD' SPURGE (EUPHORBIA 'BLACKBIRD')

He prizes this dark purple perennial for the pop of color that works so well with all the greens in his garden. “This can take abuse,” says Schulz, including dry soil, heat, and sun.



'LITTLE JOHN' DWARF BOTTLEBRUSH

Schulz uses this low-water, compact shrub as a low hedge, “with just the right touch of flowers without being flowery,” he says. For densest growth, Schulz recommends full sun. ☀