

# BEACH HOUSE

LANDSCAPES



TRUNK SHOW From left: A Landscape Details project in Bridgehampton; a serene pathway flanked by trees at a Sag Harbor home.

## BRANCHING OUT

For **Michael Derrig**, landscape architect and owner of **Landscape Details**, a love of trees—and the East End nursery in which he grows his own—runs deep. Here, he explains why.

Imagine the Hamptons as a dry, treeless desert—it's not an appealing thought. We're so lucky on the East End: Because of the moisture, heavy soil and climate here, it's a near-perfect environment for most plants.

Trees are living, breathing things. When you're deciding what to plant, there's biology to consider, in addition to environmental and weather conditions. It's important to research before you choose, but success comes from learning the hard way—years of practice and sometimes having to redo your mistakes.

A few years ago, I started a nursery so that I'd have a good stock of trees that are

specific to my design style—for instance, I love working with trees that create aerial hedges and canopies. It takes five to 10 years for each tree to grow to an acceptable size, and it's really a big investment, but I call it my savings bank. It will pay off later, when I see these trees all over the East End.

The beauty of the nursery is planting something, and watching it flourish and grow. It's a serene place. You see how things have grown and how great they look. And the best part is that trees don't talk back. You just have to love them, feed them and care for them, and they come through for you. [landscapedetails.com](http://landscapedetails.com)

### DERRIG'S TREE TIPS

- Planting bigger trees makes a large home look like it's been there for a long time, but there's risk involved: When you take a tree, cut 50 percent of its root system off, put it in a burlap sack and drive down the road to replant it, it won't push out and grow for four to five years. It still has leaves and it's full, but underground, its root system is still recovering.
- Some plants are easier to deal with than others, just like some people are easier than others. Trees that are easier to move include the London plane tree, the littleleaf linden, the silver linden and the red maple. The most difficult? Large oaks. I don't touch them.
- Trees are nature's air conditioner. A tree planted next to a house will keep it cool in the summer by absorbing the sun's heat. In the winter, when the leaves have fallen, more sun will reach the house, keeping it warm.
- People have a tendency to overwater. The tree may look dry, but it may actually be too wet. How do you know? Sometimes leaf size, or leaves getting yellow on the edges, can be an indication, but it's best to ask a pro about the optimal amount of water each variety requires.