

## LIVING IN CALIFORNIA

profile

## FOOD AS ART

There's a new sustainable landscaping trend in town, and in the Bay Area, designer Christian Douglas is leading the charge.

By Claire Harper // Photographed by Adam Potts



One of Douglas' food-forward designs in Kentfield, Calif.



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After leaving his design firm in the U.K., Marin County-based Christian Douglas began a four-year study of regenerative land use and systems design in drylands, much like those in our fair state. It was during this time that the creative witnessed the effects of environmental decline through poor natural resource management. "It was a paradigm shift," says Douglas. "I never saw design in the same way again."

Flash forward to now, and Douglas, the founder of CD Design ([christian-douglas.com](http://christian-douglas.com)), dedicates his firm to creating sustainable food-forward landscapes. "Food-forward is planning an emphasis on using our exterior spaces to produce rather than solely consume," says the designer. "The simple act of growing food in our communities is an act of environmentalism. It ticks every box on the sustainability checklist."

Keeping the designs high-end was nonnegotiable for Douglas—and also his biggest challenge. But it wasn't long before he figured out the best way to do so. "We simply moved edible elements further up the design hierarchy—we embraced and celebrated the inherent beauty in food species," says Douglas, whose father was a hobby gardener. "The autumn color of the persimmon, the delicate white flowers of the strawberry, the architectural beauty of a rusted forged sugar pea obelisk, the broad shade of a Mission fig tree, the repeating tapestry of succulent lime and crimson butter lettuce—we embraced and celebrated all of it," he adds.

With 2020 seeing a significant increase in demand, Douglas anticipates that this is one trend that could be forever etched in the design toolbox. "It's an exciting exploration to think outside of the creative box while we live inside our bubbles," says the creative. "Growing food is like learning a language. It's a tool that will stay with you forever."