

A Fanciful Collection of Porch Landscaping Tips

Welcome!

Nothing dresses up a front porch like tasteful landscaping or a whimsical garden. We hope our collection of fanciful tips gives you inspiration for your own porch.

We are honored to share a mix of ideas from several well-known gardeners—from a North Carolina flower gardener to a succulent-loving photo journalist—to two North California vertical gardening experts.

With our sincere appreciation to Anna Looper, Debra Lee Baldwin, Rebecca Sweet and Susan Morrison—for sharing their porch landscaping tips with us!



Photo courtesy of Anna Looper



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Anna's Garden and Wonderful Craftsman-Style Porch

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Time to Visit Anna's Garden and Wonderful Craftsman-Style Porch



Photo by Flowergardengirl

Anna Looper, known as **Flowergardengirl** on the Internet, is an organic flower gardener extraordinaire! Her organic North Carolina garden (zone 7a) includes heirloom plant varieties among new cultivars.

Anna blogs about gardening at [Flowergardengirl](#) and she is currently authoring two books.

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Photo courtesy of Flowergardengirl

Anna is a talented gal who designed her own Craftsman-style home. And to top that off, her Southern hospitality is evident everywhere — but no more than on her gracious porch and in her joyful gardens.

Anna and her husband created a **rock border** on the front of their garden. The rust-color stones echo the cedar in her Craftsman-style porch columns and beams.

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Photo courtesy of Flowergardengirl

Anna's garden is an explosion of delightful textures, varying heights and dazzling colors—pinks, purples, blues and yellows. Yes, you'll even find bright orange Mexican sunflowers.

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She cultivates a variety of hardy perennials and annuals that show off spectacular color throughout the year.

Plus Anna cultivates new cultures of plants for garden companies—testing their hardiness and temperament before they are released to the general public.

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Photo by Flowergarden girl

### Anna's flower garden is joyful and colorful!

Just look how she combines tall and short plants to make a "magical chaos". She says that the cleome and vinca reseed themselves.

The only plants that need reseeding are the blue salvia and "Summer Solstice" narrow leaf zinnia.

Anna notes that this variety of zinnia *blooms all summer* and resists diseases. One of the nice benefits of a garden like Anna's is that the weeds are camouflaged.

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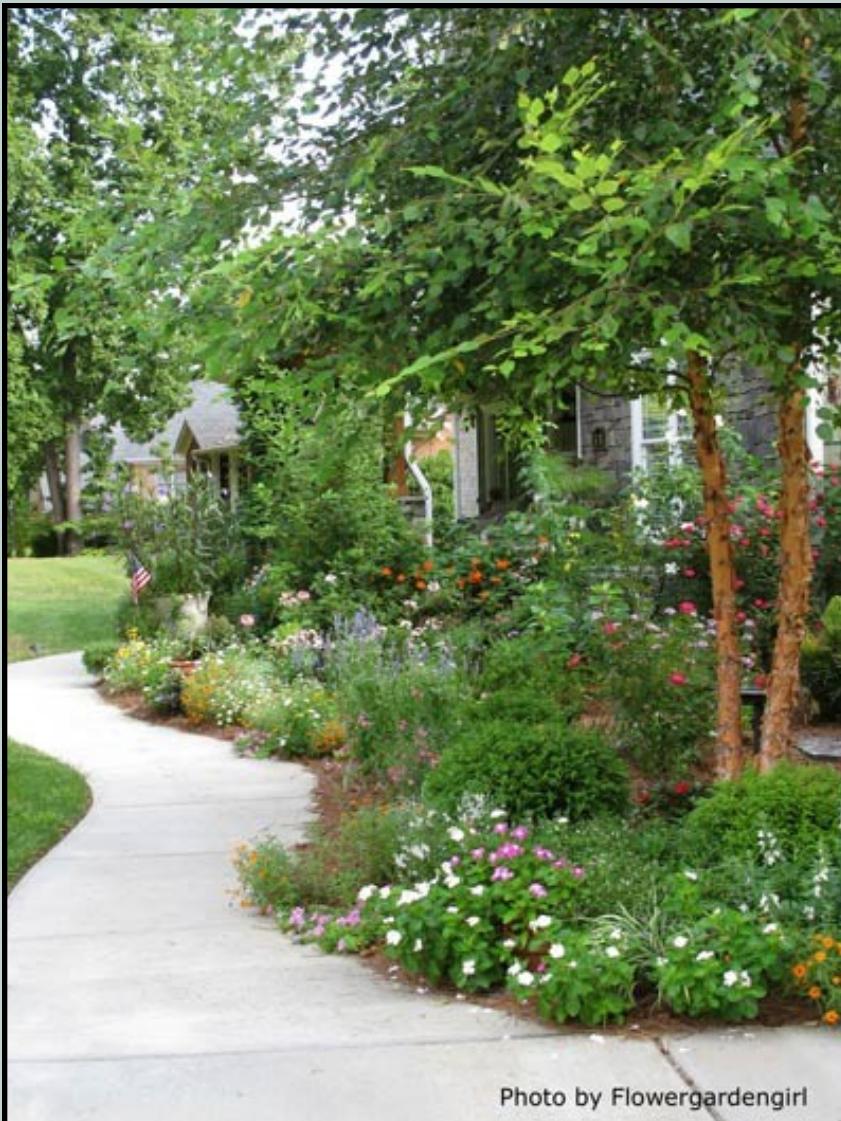


Photo by Flowergardengirl

**Notice the curvy walkway that leads to Anna's porch.**

In this setting the curves are so much more interesting than boxy lines. And they echo the gracefulness of her garden.

Take note how Anna uses **pine mulch** in her garden. Like the rock border, the pine mulch complements the red color of her porch's beams.

In the hot summer months in North Carolina, gardens are really thirsty. The mulch preserves moisture in the garden.

Anna still does plenty of watering but the mulch helps. Additionally, the mulch dresses up the soil and keeps the weeds down.

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Anna carries her garden around the side of her home...and you get a sneak peek of "**Copper Top Cottage**" her gardening workshop. See it in the back yard?

That is a whole different story for another time. But suffice to say, it's a spot any gardener would enjoy.

Notice how the coleus and vinca play off each other here. The lovely lantana, Russian sage and "Summer Solstice" zinnia, too.

It's living art! I bet each time you look at Anna's garden you will see something different.

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Photo courtesy of Flowergardengirl

Anna says her *Lo and Behold Chip Buddleia* never stops blooming except in the winter. It's a butterfly bush that does best if it is cut back in the fall. In the winter, it stays evergreen—as long as it does not get too cold. It blooms early and long especially if it is fertilized monthly.

This butterfly bush looks sweet against Anna's **garden bench**.

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Photo by Flowergardengir

What do you think of the **Heritage River Birch** that Anna planted in her garden? That's a charming tree and it anchors her garden in a beautiful way. The showy bark on this tree is unique and interesting.

Anna says that she sprays dormant oil in the early winter to take care of any larvae and she uses insecticidal soap for aphid control.

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Leading up to Anna's porch is an assortment of overflowing pots. Here you see *Scaevola* and *Diamond Frost Euphorbia* just tumbling from the pot.

What a lovely way to welcome family and guests. The friendly little bunny looks right at home here, too.

Ready for a peek of Anna's porch?



Photo courtesy of Flowergardengirl

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A visit to Anna's garden would not be complete without seeing her **amazing front porch**. The sage green shingles are the perfect backdrop. Her husband built the white bench from a headboard. I love how she topped it with hydrangeas, a Tiffany-style glass lamp and the ceramic bunny. I really like the vintage-style clock hanging on the porch column.

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**Anna Looper**



Photo by Flowergardengirl



Photo by Flowergardengirl

**Our sincere thanks to Anna Looper**, for sharing these gorgeous pictures of her Craftsman-style home and organic flower garden in North Carolina.

**As the creator of [Flowergardengirl](#)**, Anna welcomes you to stop by and enjoy the wondrous flower gardens of her home state, North Carolina. She enjoys sharing her personable gardening stories with you.

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## Using Succulents to Create Front Porch Curb Appeal



(c) Debra Lee Baldwin

**Debra Lee Baldwin** is the go-to source for information on succulent plants and how to use them in garden design and containers. She is the author of *Designing with Succulents* and *Succulent Container Gardens*.

Enjoy the fabulous pictures and content Debra shares with us here. Porches are microclimates that make it possible to grow succulents in Zones that may be too hot, cold or wet for the plants to thrive year-round in the garden. Even if you're new to succulents, we know you will appreciate the ideas Debra shares here.



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### **Begin with a succulent garden in a colorful pot.**

This succulent container garden is full of **color and texture** and it definitely adds personality and warmth to this sitting area. Since your front porch is the first “room” of your home that your guests see, why not decorate it as you do the inside of your home?

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(c) Debra Lee Baldwin

**Echo the colors of your home with the plants you choose.**

The red aeonium in this garden echoes the color of the front door. Or perhaps it is the other way around. Either way, it is a fantastic use of color and design.

(Design by Gary Bartl, San Rafael, CA)



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### Line your porch steps with a collection of potted plants.

These sun-loving succulents — plants that store water in their leaves to survive drought — are low-water and low-maintenance.

Although there are numerous cold- and heat-tolerant succulents, the majority need protection from temperature extremes.

The **terracotta pots** pull together the green and red aeoniums, echeverias and sempervivums and a flapjack kalanchoe (upper right).



(c) Debra Lee Baldwin



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### Create a container garden at your entrance.

The group of pots at this attractive entrance is a **succulent garden**. The **cobalt birdbath** adds some height and striking contrast. It is filled with echeverias. They resemble water lilies.



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(c) Debra Lee Baldwin

### Have you ever seen a succulent topiary?

This design, by California Cactus Center in Pasadena, is a living work of art.

What a striking way to welcome people to your home.



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**Create a pleasing view with an assortment of pots and plants.**

These floral-style arrangements are planted with a variety of sedums and echeverias.

Senecio and aeoniums lend height.



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(c) Debra Lee Baldwin

### **Use succulents in creative ways with porch columns.**

Create a comfortable seating area with a couple of deep-cushioned chairs and an urn planted with sansevierias and cascading 'Fish Hooks' senecio.

(Home of Mike Allen, Rancho Santa Fe, CA)



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**Welcome your guests with beautiful pots at the entrance to your porch.**

The pots sitting on this low wall are home to living bouquets of *Sedum 'Aurora'* (in bloom), shrublike *Crassula sarcocaulis*, blue echeverias, trailing rhipsalis and bromeliads.

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### Repeat design elements for visual delight!

The baskets of burro tail sedum hang above elephant stands topped with flapjack kalanchoes in cobalt pots.



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**Create interesting appeal with plants that lend height and texture.**

These tree-like plants are textural bottle palms. They lend vertical interest and whimsy and are conversation starters.

(Kent and Nancy Wood garden, Santa Barbara)



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(c) Debra Lee Baldwin

**Use repurposed items from salvage yards and second-hand shops as planters.**

They are fun to collect and intriguing to behold. They hold jade, aeoniums, sedum, graptopetalums and haworthias. This is a very pleasing presentation of succulents.

(This and the first design are by Kathy McCarthy, Del Mar, CA)



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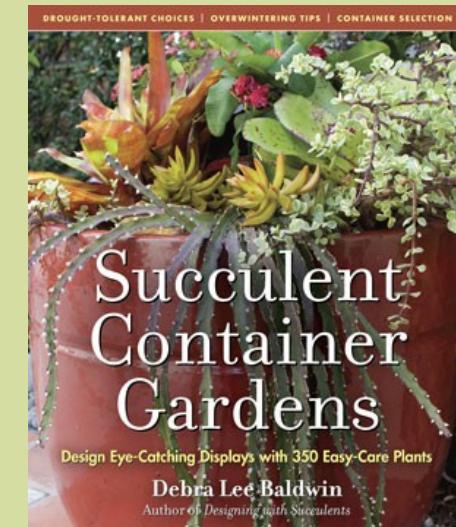
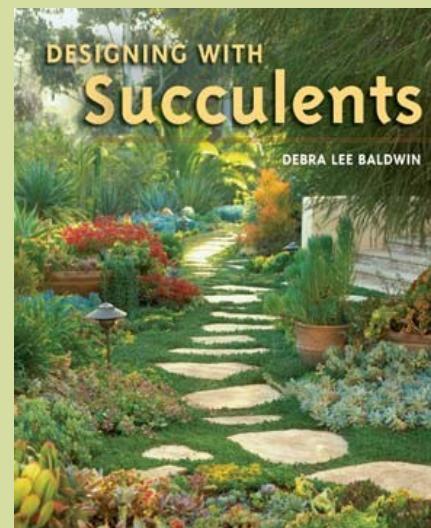


**Debra Lee Baldwin**

Find Debra on [Facebook](#)

**Our sincere thanks to Debra Lee Baldwin**, for sharing these beautiful pictures and front porch ideas for using succulents.

**Debra Lee Baldwin** is a garden photojournalist, artist and author of [\*Designing with Succulents\*](#) and [\*Succulent Container Gardens\*](#). You can find her on the web at [DebraLeeBaldwin.com](http://DebraLeeBaldwin.com) where she shares a wealth of information about how to use succulent plants especially as part of a garden design.



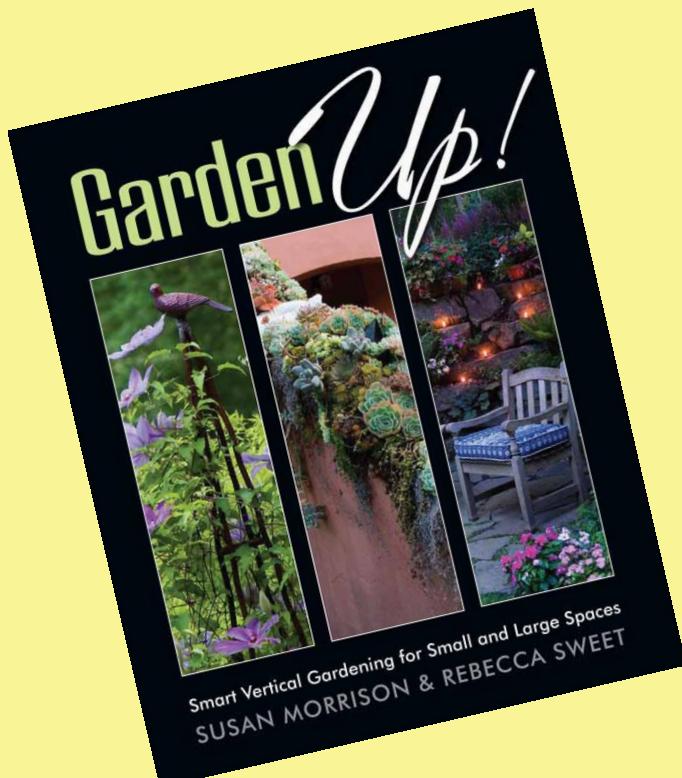
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## Smart Vertical Gardening

Grow Stunning Plants & Gardens in Vertical Spaces



**Susan Morrison and Rebecca Sweet**, both from Northern California, are writers, garden designers and friends!

Together they authored [Garden Up!](#) [Smart Vertical Gardening for Small and Large Spaces](#). They share with us how to use vertical gardening to beautify and embrace our porches.

With Susan's and Rebecca's smart gardening ideas, you can bring life and beauty to the vertical spaces around your porch.

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***Porches are a wonderful way to add curb appeal to your home.***

Few things are more welcoming than a cozy outdoor “room” that invites visitors to sit and visit awhile. Because curb appeal is something we all think about when landscaping the front yard, the tendency is to choose larger foundation shrubs that are easily appreciated from the street.

However, the more inviting you make the garden around your porch, the more likely you are to spend time on it. *One way is to choose plants with flowers or foliage that are best appreciated up close.*

We’re particularly fond of shrubs, ferns and perennials with interesting foliage since their good looks can be enjoyed season after season, long after flower blooms have faded. Some of our favorites include the soft and feathery leaves of threadleaf bluestar (*Amsonia hubrichtii*) or mother fern (*Asplenium viviparum*).



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*Intricate foliage like this is easily appreciated from the porch.*

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**Since the garden around a porch is likely to be in shade for at least part of the day, choosing plants that brighten up shadowy spaces is a good strategy.**

Unusual and striking selections to consider include tall and narrow Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica* 'Variegata') or finely textured Japanese forest grass (*Hakonechloa macra* 'Aureola').

Fragrant plants are a wonderful addition to a porch and a charming way to welcome visitors to your home, as the perfume of even subtly scented flowers is intensified in intimate quarters. Plants that perfume the air include the old-fashioned daphne (*Daphne odora* 'Marginata') or a scented variety of camellias such as 'Scentsation' or 'Scentuous'.



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*A mix of green, variegated and chartreuse-colored foliage not only acts as the missing sunshine on a shady porch, but also creates a serene and tranquil atmosphere.*



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### ***Don't limit your garden to just the space around the porch.***

Containers are an easy way to create an instant garden, and an opportunity to let your creativity and decorating skills run wild. In small spaces, choose plants and containers thoughtfully, since they will be enjoyed up close.

This is not the place for chipped, ordinary containers or spindly plants! Porches are often narrow, making it difficult to create an illusion of depth. If all of the containers are the same height and placed close to the wall or railing, then the ultimate effect will be two-dimensional.

You don't want your container garden to look like a row of soldiers lined up at attention. Instead, look for pots in a range of widths and heights to create a dynamic vertical dimension.



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*Interesting and unique pots of different styles, heights and sizes add depth and texture to this setting.*

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We are particularly fond of tall, narrow pots, as they complement the low, wide options that are more commonly found in garden centers.

Not only does their smaller footprint make it easier to stagger containers in a tight space, but the taller containers make smaller plants an option as well, increasing the range of plants that can be used to create the vertical effect that will result in a ***lush, abundant garden.***



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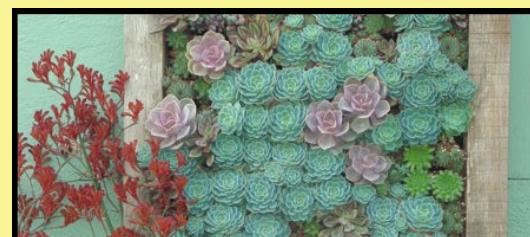
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***Don't worry if your porch is small and has less room than you would like for containers.***

*Porches have more than just floor space.* When it comes to making your porch an inviting destination, take a tip from interior designers by creating a focal point wall.

There are many options available ranging in size, price and complexity. We're particularly fond of living walls planted with hardier plants like *Carex sp.* or *Heuchera sp.*, which provide year round foliage color and texture in even cold weather gardens. For more information on creating and maintaining a living wall, see **Garden Up! Smart Vertical Gardening for Small and Large Spaces**.

If you get at least some sun, another option that's both beautiful and practical is a living wall planted with edibles. Fill your wall with shade tolerant lettuces or herbs such as oregano, sage, or thyme for an easy-to-reach garden.



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Whether it's due to a lack of space, the desire to create living art, or simply a wish to decorate an unappealing wall, a living wall is an innovative way to turn the outside of your home into a focal point wall for your porch.

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If you're an apartment or condo dweller with a balcony instead of a porch, most of these garden design ideas will apply to you as well.

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A challenge of balcony gardening is often limited sunshine, so taking advantage of railings is a particularly good way to take advantage of the sunniest location.

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Hanging a garden over a balcony railing is a great way to grow herbs and other shallow-rooted vegetables such as trailing strawberries, radishes and lettuces.

As long as you choose dwarf varieties like 'Windowbox' or '8-Ball', you can even grow tomatoes or squash.

The window box photo is courtesy of Jenny Peterson at <http://www.jpetersongardendesign.com/>



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**Rebecca Sweet** is the owner of [Harmony In The Garden](#), located in Northern California. Rebecca's signature 'Garden Fusion' style blends her clients' personal desires with regionally appropriate plants.

Her gardens have been featured in *Fine Gardening Magazine*, *Horticulture Magazine*, *Women's Day Magazine* as well as regional newspapers and publications.



**Rebecca Sweet**

In addition to designing gardens, Rebecca is also a featured columnist for *Horticulture Magazine*, a contributing author for *Fine Gardening Magazine*, and writes design-focused articles for Fiskars.

Rebecca contributes content to online garden sites as well, including Fine Gardening Online and Real Simple Online and is a founding member of the Garden Designer's Roundtable. It's easy to get to know Rebecca better – chat with her on Facebook, Twitter or leave a comment on her blog **[Gossip In The Garden](#)**.

Follow Rebecca on Twitter [@SweetRebecca](#)

Read Rebecca's blog at [www.gossipinthegarden.com](#)

View her design portfolio at [www.harmonyinthegarden.com](#)



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**Susan Morrison** is a landscape designer, garden writer, and Master Gardener based in Northern California.

Her design philosophy is simple: to create beautiful, sustainable, gardens that fit her clients' lifestyle.

In addition to writing for traditional media publications such as *Fine Gardening Magazine*, Susan blogs about her life as a garden designer and shares her challenges and successes as a home gardener at *Blue Planet Garden Blog*.



**Susan Morrison**

An early convert to the value of social media, Susan connects with gardeners from all over the world via Twitter and Facebook, and is a founding member of the Lawn Reform Coalition and the Garden Designers Roundtable. As a Master Gardener and Bay-Friendly Qualified Design Professional, Susan is active in the gardening community and speaks regularly on sustainable design principles. She is a member of the Association of Professional Landscape Designers and has served on the California Chapter Board of Directors.

Follow Susan on Twitter [@susanlmorrison](#)

Read Susan's blog at [www.blueplanetgardenblog.com](http://www.blueplanetgardenblog.com)

View her design portfolio at [www.celandscapedesign.com](http://www.celandscapedesign.com)



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Dave and I hope you enjoyed these front porch landscaping ideas as much as we enjoyed collecting them for you.

As Founders of [Front-Porch-Ideas-and-More.com](http://Front-Porch-Ideas-and-More.com), our goal is to bring you the best ideas and information for creating a wonderful and comfortable porch for you and your family.

Please be sure to visit our website for related ideas to create your perfect porch:

- [Porch Landscaping Ideas](#)
- [Walkway Ideas](#)
- [Curb Appeal Ideas](#)
- [Front Porch Design Ideas](#)
- [Porch Decorating Examples](#)

Our Warmest Regards,  
Dave and Mary Morris



Dave and Mary

P.S. Life is short so enjoy your porch...and we always enjoy receiving [your feedback](#) on our eBook.