

North State  
**Gardener**

SPRING 2021



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A Message from Matthew

PG. 3

Feature: An Established Legacy

PG. 4

A Springtime Recipe

**Our Focus This Quarter:**

- Fertilizing trees & shrubs
- Planting summer color
- Mulching & pruning
- Applying fertilizer & pre-emergent on turf
- Designing & installing outdoor entertainment areas



## **A WELCOMED CHANGE OF SEASON**

The daylight hours are getting longer, and there is a distinct warmth on the night breeze. Spring has finally arrived, and it is bringing major changes in its wake. And change is welcome. Change is a gift that reminds us while we cannot control what happens outside of us, we can always control the way we respond. Our response is to revel in all the exploding colors and the greening of the grass; to realize that the dreaded pollen will lead to beautiful summer trees, and to begin planting spring herbs in our kitchen garden. Spring means creating outdoor areas to entertain family and friends safely and well into the evening. Spring means spending less time in the kitchen and more time grilling, boating and enjoying the outdoors. On page 4, you can find a sample of what is coming out of our kitchen these days. Happy Spring!



Hello, Friends.

I hope this newsletter finds you well and enjoying spring! This warm, sunny weather is most welcome after a wet winter. Our activities are in full swing, and our days are filled with keeping up with oak leaves dropping, weeds popping, irrigation start-ups, fertilization, and many other critical early-season tasks. We could always use a few more skilled hands this time of year!

On the home front, we have been rushing into summer by planting herbs on our deck in pots for easy access from the kitchen and flowers in other pots around the house and outside in the garden. Summer flowers for our clients are coming soon, and we are looking forward to all the beautiful colors they will bring. We have had a really good cool season for pansies and snapdragons, and the ones I have seen are still looking great and growing well.

Beverly and I have also been working on our “sanity garden” which we started during the virus lockdown. It is a place to experiment with different plants and a way to use up the rescue plants that clutter our holding area at the office - plants that Beverly simply cannot stand to let fade away. Some of the poorest specimens are now making a great comeback in our landscape!

The winter saw long wet periods of saturated soils which could slow spring green-up of turf and lessen the effectiveness of pest treatments. Easter weekend saw our lawns well on their way to waking up only to receive some frost and a temporary setback. It takes sustained warm, sunny weather to get the grass growing, and you cannot rush Mother Nature!

Demand for landscape services continues to spike, and we are seeing shortages of plant material and other supplies. COVID-related issues have created much longer than normal lead times for materials like pavers and some irrigation components. Of course, Economics 101 will tell you that this leads to higher prices. I have been getting price increase notices daily from nurseries, sod suppliers, and hard goods suppliers. Hopefully, this trend will soften as the pandemic eases and the growing season continues.

Our team continues to grow and to hone our skills and attention to detail to serve you better. After all, without you, our wonderful friends and clients, there would be no North State Gardens. We are very thankful for you! Please feel free to drop me a line if you have any questions or comments. I value your perspective.

*Matthew*

 Make sure to follow us on Instagram @ [\*\*north\\_state\\_gardens\*\*](https://www.instagram.com/north_state_gardens). We regularly post our landscape creations, gardening tips, and interesting information about plants and local wildlife.

# A LEGACY LANDSCAPE



Our feature this quarter is a landscape designed by NSG founder David Erwin and installed in 2010. This landscape, situated on the Cape Fear Country Club golf course, is a great example of the design technique of creating 'garden rooms,' or *outdoor living spaces*. Garden rooms are an interesting concept in design. Essentially, the idea involves creating different and distinct areas in your garden just as you might do in your home. This featured landscape design is a stellar example of outdoor living spaces at their finest!

Large hollies, Osmanthus, and azaleas form hedges at the property lines and create an envelope of privacy in the middle of a fairly dense neighborhood.

Inside the perimeter hedges are several distinct spaces. First, the driveway entry/motor court features a majestic Live Oak. Ornamental plantings are kept to a minimum around this tree to not compete with or detract from its stunning form. Notice how the driveway and paver walkway give the tree's root system a wide berth.

The second garden room is the front door/kitchen entry area highlighted by a water feature from local sculptor Dumay Gorham. Brick stepping stones lead to a focal point of two loquat trees, Tassel Ferns, and Clematis armandii. This lush and interesting layout really makes the most of a functional space.

Room number three includes a paver patio seating area enclosed with a low wall offering a feeling of comfort and privacy. It is a great spot for a morning coffee.

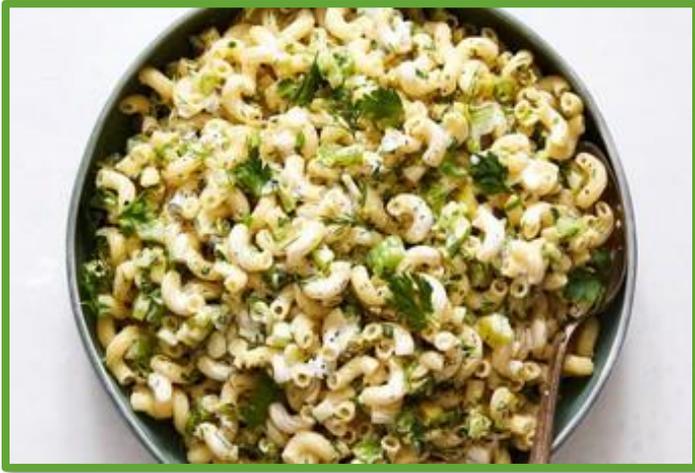
The fourth room is the golf course side. The view of the fairway is edged on the left by a Fringe Tree (*Chioanthus virginicus*) which is blooming profusely right now. No plantings interfere with the view, and the lawn leads toward the fairway to draw your eye in that direction.

I believe this landscape is a great example of David's design expertise and the craftsmanship of our installation team. I enjoy this beautiful landscape every time I go there.



# A TASTE OF SPRING – NSG STYLE

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Some of the best recipes are those that we happily stumble upon, like the first spring flower in your garden. This macaroni salad originates from *The New York Times* and has become a staple in our family. It is a very versatile recipe and can be adapted to many different palates – for example, we do not use the bread-and-butter pickles, preferring the salty-brininess of adding more capers instead. The dill and parsley can be augmented with fresh tarragon - and always more lemon zest. This easy salad keeps well and is excellent for boating and beach picnics.

## Ingredients

- Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper
- ⅔ cup minced bread-and-butter pickles
- 2 large stalks celery, peeled and finely chopped
- 4 scallions, trimmed and thinly sliced, plus more for garnish
- ½ cup mayonnaise
- ½ cup buttermilk
- ⅓ cup finely chopped fresh Italian parsley, plus more for garnish
- ¼ cup chopped fresh dill, plus small sprigs for garnish
- ¼ cup drained jarred capers, chopped, plus 3 tablespoons caper brine
- 4 teaspoons Dijon mustard
- 1 teaspoon fresh lemon zest and 4 teaspoons juice (from 1 large lemon)
- 1 teaspoon granulated sugar
- 16 ounces elbow macaroni

## Steps

1. Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil over high heat.
2. While the water comes to a boil, prepare your dressing: In a large bowl, stir together pickles, celery, scallions, mayonnaise, buttermilk, parsley, dill, capers and brine, mustard, lemon zest and juice, and sugar. Season with 2 teaspoons salt and 1 teaspoon pepper.
3. Cook the macaroni in the boiling water until al dente, about 6 minutes; drain well and let cool for a few minutes.
4. Once cooled, toss macaroni with dressing, season to taste with salt and pepper. Serve immediately or refrigerate until chilled. Top with extra scallions, parsley, and dill to garnish just before serving.