



Stephen & Kristin Pategas

in the garden *by Stephen and Kristin Pategas*

Challenge Us

We love a good challenge when it comes to consulting or designing a garden. We encourage our clients to share their concerns with us. In order to share them with you, we put our heads together to develop this list and added our solutions.

Our Lawn Is Suffering In The Shade

Tree roots out-compete lawns for water and nutrients, and then there is the canopy that decreases sunlight. Just thinning the tree canopy rarely solves this problem. We have identified dozens of plants with interesting foliage texture and color along with blooming plants that thrive under trees.



Pictured above, mushroom root rot kills Podocarpus.

At left, raised beds at Hortus Oasis allow the use of good soil.

Photos by Stephen G. Pategas/Hortus, Oasis.

Why Did One Podocarpus In My Mature Hedge Turn Brown And Die?

Mushroom root rot – ok, you are probably wondering who would be concerned about mushrooms rotting in their garden. This soil-borne fungus disease (*Armillaria tabescens*) affects almost every plant grown in Florida. There is no cure for the infected plant. Replanting the infected area frequently with the same type of plant, with a resistant plant (short and unreliable list), removing and replacing a great deal of the infected soil, or growing plants in containers set on the surface are the only solutions.

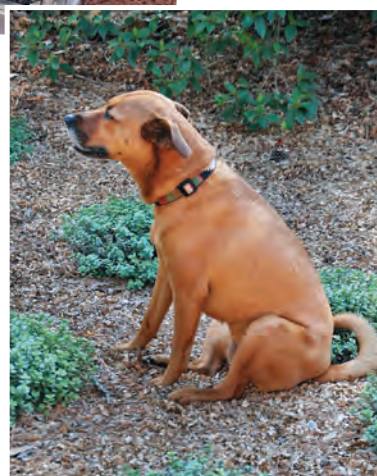


program for containers and plants clustered together by water needs are some of the strategies we employ.

We Want Local Food

We grew our first vegetables in New England the year we were married and continued in 1982 at our new home in Florida. Meanwhile Kristin

was growing vegetables hydroponically and in pure sand as part of her job as a plant pathologist at WDW at the Land Pavilion at EPCOT. Over 30 years later we are still growing our own, facing new challenges and sharing our knowledge. Planting in the proper months (September, January and March), using raised beds with good soil, having adequate sunlight and water, and regular monitoring for pests are critical.



Some dogs have little respect for plants.

My Partner And I Can't Agree

After 33 years of marriage we find ourselves successfully counseling couples to come together and agree upon a garden design that meets enough of each partner's needs to make everyone happy – or at least civil.

Our Water Bill Is Too High! Clever irrigation techniques using low volume irrigation, a separate

Dogs Rule The Garden

Plants cannot be hazardous and must be durable. Use temporary fencing to let the plants get established. Lawn in shady areas (see above) is impossible unless it's artificial turf which is an amazingly successful solution. Permanently portion off parts of the yard with fencing to create a pet-free zone.