

EMBRACING 2030  
SUSTAINABLY:  
CORPORATE  
TRANSITIONS

JOURNAL OF THE GARDEN & LANDSCAPE DESIGNERS ASSOCIATION

VOL  
79

# COMPASS

AUTUMN / WINTER 2023



**INSPIRATIONAL  
LANDSCAPES**  
OUR BORROWED  
50 SHADES OF GREEN

**CORPORATE MEMBERS**  
SUSTAINABLE WORKING  
PRACTICES REVIEW

**REGREENING THE GREY**  
BELFAST'S ALLEYS & GREENWAYS  
GREEN CITIES EUROPE

**INTERNATIONAL FOCUS**  
GARDEN IN THE DRY  
WEST SIDE STORY

**PHOTO FOCUS**  
DEPTH OF FIELD

**NEWS & REVIEWS**  
GLDA SEMINAR  
THE CLASS OF 2023

[www.glda.ie](http://www.glda.ie)

# design

As we embrace 2030 sustainably, we delve deeper and gain some personal insights from two more GLDA members in our timely design transitions questionnaires.

04.



**Dean Lacey MGLDA**  
*Garden Designer & Garden Builder*



**Q1. Practice and location**

**A.** LandArt Limited based in Cabinteely, Dublin

**Q2. What influenced you to become a landscape designer?**

**G**rowing up, I had a keen interest in the outdoors and nature. I have great memories of spending my school summers at Brittas Bay; I loved the natural surroundings there. I inherited my strong work ethic from my dad. He started his career as a bricklayer and later transitioned into a college lecturer position at Dublin Institute of Technology. I always wanted to do something similar to him, however, due to my love of the outdoors, I found myself being drawn more and more towards garden design and garden construction.

**Q3. Why did you become an MGLDA?**

**A**s a garden designer, I felt it was important to join the GLDA and be part of an organisation of great people who strive to raise the profile of garden design here in Ireland. To become a member, you are required to provide the committee with comprehensive examples of your work and this is quite demanding. Becoming an accredited member of the GLDA, endorsed by my peers within the industry, and establishing an affiliation with our national garden design

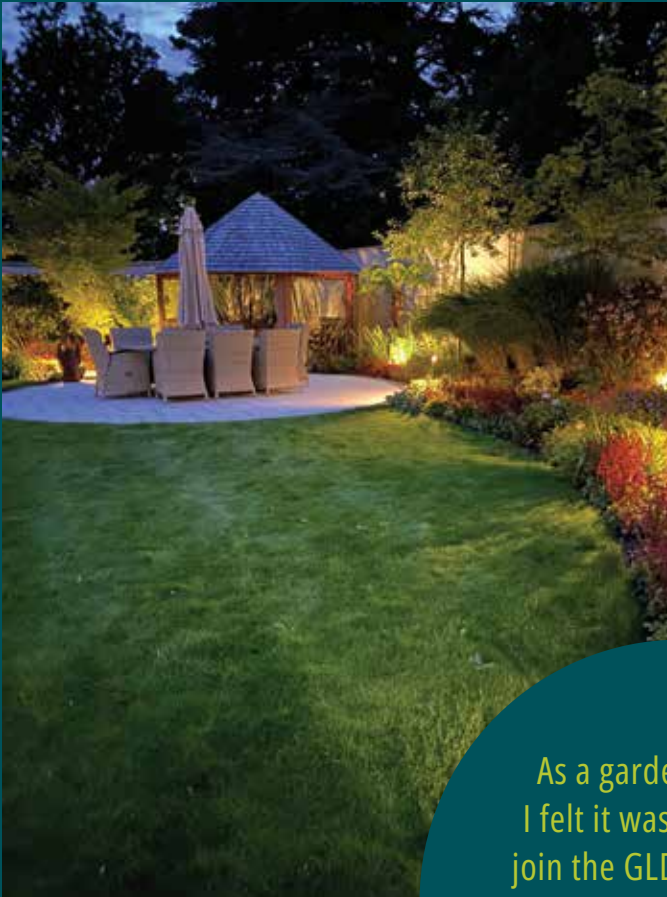
association, holds immense significance for me. It not only strengthens my credibility as a professional garden designer but has also empowered me to confidently set fair and appropriate fees for my garden design services.

**Q4. Career landmark achievements**

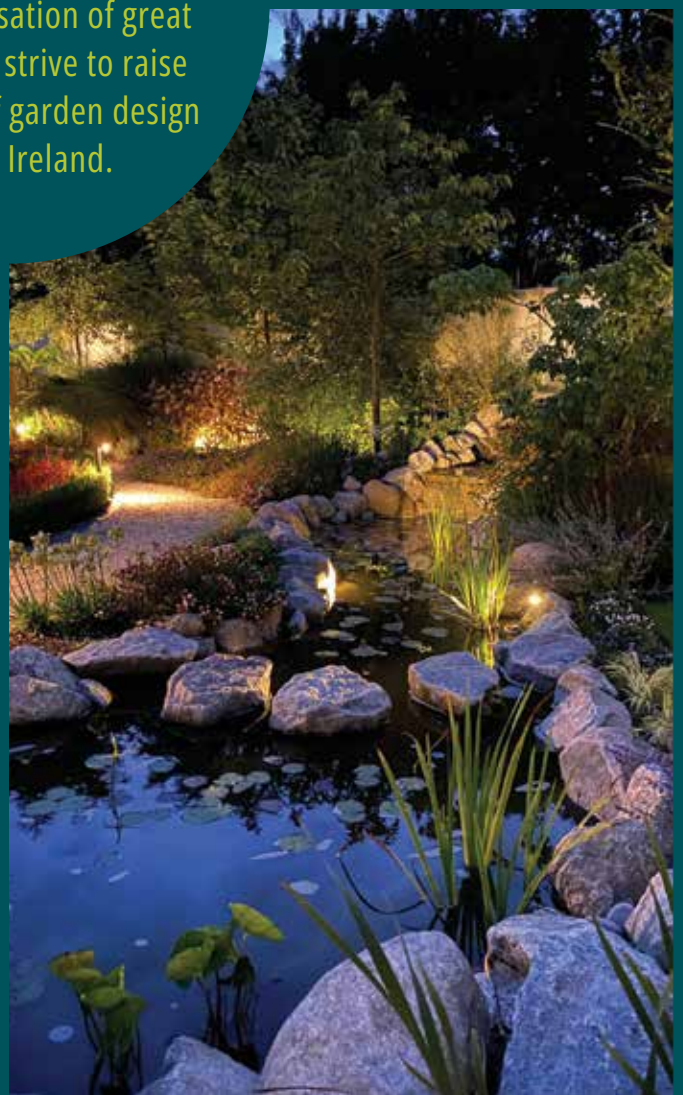
**2014** LandArt, my own garden design and landscaping company. Over the years, LandArt has grown into one of Dublin's most recognised and sought-after landscaping companies, which I'm proud of.

- Becoming a Full member of the GLDA in early **2022**.
- Writing multiple newspaper and magazine articles, including for The Irish Independent and The Irish Garden magazine.
- Winning medals at **Bord Bia Bloom** in **2010** (Gold - large garden), **2009** (Gold - medium garden) and **2008** (Silver - large garden).





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As a garden designer, I feel it is imperative that we all do our part to help mitigate climate change and advocate for more environmentally friendly gardens.

**Q5: What motivates you to be a sustainably focused designer?**

**A.** I'm 39 years on this planet and I have already seen a huge change in the climate. As a garden designer, I feel it is imperative that we all do our part to help mitigate climate change and advocate for more environmentally friendly gardens. In my practice, I've consciously reduced hardscaping elements in favour of expanding green, planted spaces within the garden. Additionally, I've made it a priority to actively incorporate pollinator-friendly plants into the gardens we create, thus contributing to a more sustainable and biodiverse environment

**Q6. Career**

**In 2006** I graduated with an honour's degree in Landscape Horticulture from UCD. Following that, I had the opportunity of working alongside the late Colm Doyle from 2006 to 2010. We specialised in creating high-end private gardens. During this period, we also achieved two gold medals and one silver medal at Bord Bia Bloom. I emigrated to Sydney, Australia for the next 4 years, working on prestigious gardens there. When I returned to Ireland in 2014, I decided to establish my own company, LandArt. Since then, our journey has been one of continuous progress and success. We take pride in offering an extensive spectrum of services that encompass garden design, garden construction, horticultural services, and garden aftercare.

**Q7. How was climate change affecting your design approach five years ago?**

**Five** years ago, when considering garden design and construction, my typical client's brief often revolved around the creation of gardens with minimal maintenance requirements. This included a preference for low maintenance patios, lawns, and plants. In my opinion, this trend was driven primarily due to a lack of awareness around the environment and sustainability. Thankfully, I have noticed a significant shift in my clients' requests, particularly in the last year or two. I find people are now much more informed and conscious of their environmental responsibilities leading to a notable change in their mindset towards creating sustainable gardens. Convincing and educating clients about the importance of incorporating more trees and plants into their gardens has become easier compared to the situation five years ago. This year alone, I have seen a big increase in my clients actively participating in the 'no mow May' initiative.

**Q8. How has your design style and practices progressed as we embrace sustainability?**

**Three** years ago, just after my wife and I had our third daughter, I started to really educate myself on climate change and sustainability. I became more conscious of the impact we are leaving on the planet for our children and the generations that will follow. I made a conscious decision to audit my own design style and how I convey the importance of sustainable garden design practices to my clients. I started to change the way I design. I now prioritise allocating a significantly larger portion of the garden to soft landscaping. I do acknowledge that gardens are often getting smaller in suburban areas, but clever design can allow for aesthetically pleasing, functional, environmentally friendly, and sustainable gardens. I have also created a brand-new horticultural team, where we take on planting only projects.

To gauge the success I have had from this approach, in the last two years alone we have increased our tree and planting spend with local nurseries by over 65% and we have decreased the volume of imported natural stone and porcelain products we use in our gardens, by over 50%.

**Q9. How do you envisage adopting sustainable design goals leading up to 2030?**

**A.** In recent years I have noticed, we have been getting longer periods of drought which has emphasised the challenge of plant irrigation. I find myself faced with the dilemma, do we add an irrigation system to these planting schemes or is there a better, more sustainable way to water the plants to keep them alive. Introducing more native and drought resilient plants will most certainly be a goal of mine but also encouraging my clients to leave areas of the garden just to nature. Going forward and looking to 2030, I will commit to continue to educate myself and my clients around sustainability and seek to make consistent improvements in my company, year after year.



Please provide one project example designed and delivered to a high sustainable standard.



I designed this garden in Templeogue in South Dublin back in 2019. The main reason that my client bought the property, was for the big rear garden. My brief was to create a beautiful garden for his family to use and appreciate, all year round. They wanted lush planting and lots of colour. My client loves nature and wildlife and as a bonus, the river Dodder flows right behind the garden, so he really wanted to encourage the local wildlife into the garden.

We built the original garden in 2019, using only Irish grown trees and plants. Part of the original design included a variety of native and some non-native trees, planted along the boundary. To address the noise of a nearby road, we strategically incorporated trees into the design and they have played a significant role in mitigating the sound effectively. The outdoor lighting used in the garden is low voltage.

In 2020, we introduced a gazebo, and the following year, we added a waterfall and pond. The addition of the waterfall and pond to the garden was a deliberate effort to create a welcoming habitat and entice wildlife into the garden. It was also used to help further mitigate the traffic noise from the nearby road. The gazebo was constructed using exclusively Irish grown timber and the pond was constructed using local Wicklow granite.

Each year we add something new to the garden and we always try to do it in a sustainable and environmentally friendly manner. Annually, we meet to discuss the project for the year, and it is usually directed around how we can encourage more wildlife into the garden and surrounding gardens.

Last year, we planted native trees and hedges on the opposite side of the garden wall, into derelict land, again to mitigate the noise of the nearby road traffic and to encourage more wildlife into the area.

Next year, we are talking about dedicating a sizeable portion of the lawn area over to a wildflower meadow. We keep up the ongoing maintenance of the garden, but we only use organic compost and organic lawn feed, and we don't use any nasty chemical herbicides in the garden. ■



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