

# Living

MARTHA STEWART

103  
WAYS TO  
SAVOR THE  
SEASON



TAKE  
BETTER  
PHOTOS

(AND SHOW THEM  
OFF WITH 10  
CLEVER IDEAS)

Fire up the grill  
for corn on the  
cob with bacon  
and fresh herbs  
PAGE 39

GOULDSBORO HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY

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## TERRACE IN THE TREETOPS



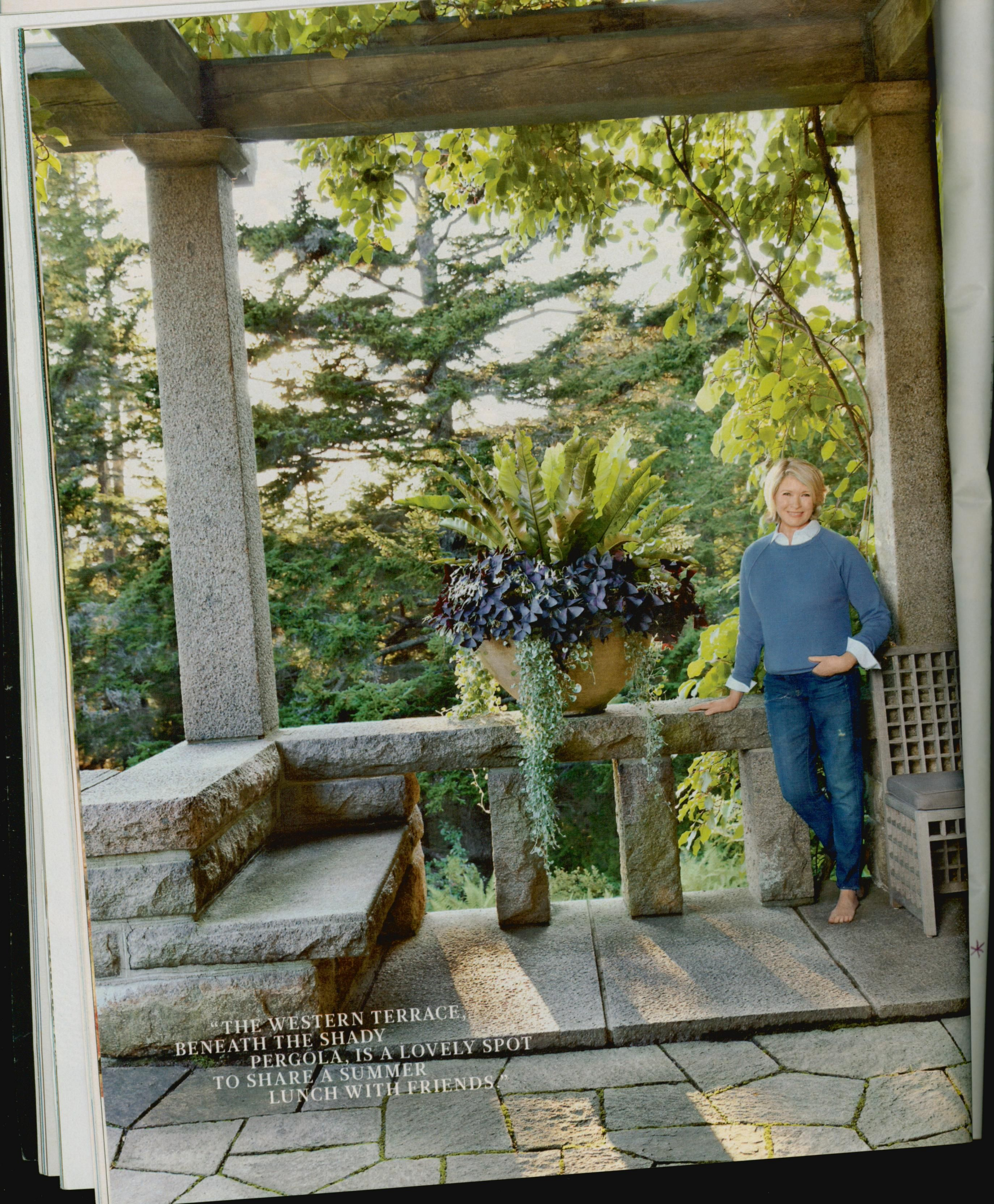
A pair of antique glazed terra-cotta sphinxes by Emile Muller preside over the terrace at Skylands. In the center, a huge pot by Eric Soderholtz shows off a blue agave surrounded by helichrysum, or licorice plant. The two concrete pots in front are by the Maine-based pottery Lunaform; the agaves are underplanted with various trailing succulents. The wall around the edge of the terrace is just the right height for sitting and looking out at the water.



At her home in Maine, Martha decorates the outdoor space with massive pots of plants that enhance the natural beauty of the surroundings.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY PIETER ESTERSOHN



A woman with blonde hair, wearing a blue sweater and jeans, stands barefoot on a stone terrace. She is leaning against a large, tan-colored pot filled with various plants, including a large fern and purple foliage. The terrace is part of a pergola structure with thick stone pillars and a wooden roof. The background is filled with lush green trees and foliage. The floor is made of large, irregular stone tiles.

"THE WESTERN TERRACE,  
BENEATH THE SHADY  
PERGOLA, IS A LOVELY SPOT  
TO SHARE A SUMMER  
LUNCH WITH FRIENDS."



# THE VIEWS THROUGH THE EVERGREENS DOWN TO *Seal Harbor* AND THE *islands* BEYOND ARE SPECTACULAR. BUT YOU DON'T NEED TO LOOK PAST THE EDGE OF *the terrace at Skylands,*

Martha's home on Mount Desert Island, in Maine, to appreciate the beauty of nature. The 1920s house itself is grand, with a vast terrace facing south. "It needs something to break up the expanse," says Martha. "Instead of furniture, I chose planters."

The vessels, a mix of large-scale vintage and newer pieces that she has collected over the years, are overflowing with plants combined in unexpected ways: There's spiky and soft, upright and trailing, lacy and leathery, all in Martha's signature color palette. "I prefer greens, chartreuse, silver, dark burgundy, and even bluish and black tones," she says.

The striking contents look right at home on the stone terrace—though, like Martha, the plants spend most of the year in Bedford, New York. Every spring, one weekend in late May is designated "planting weekend." The plants are carefully moved from the Bedford greenhouse to Skylands, where Martha and some helpers—her gardeners and a few friends—spend a couple of busy days preparing the terrace for the summer. "She makes an event out of it," says Ryan McCallister, Martha's Bedford gardener, who makes the trip with the plants he has helped tend over the winter. "It's really fun."

When Martha and the crew arrive, the pots are empty and waiting. Several of the most prized vessels are the century-old works of Eric Soderholtz, a Swedish-born architectural photographer who moved to



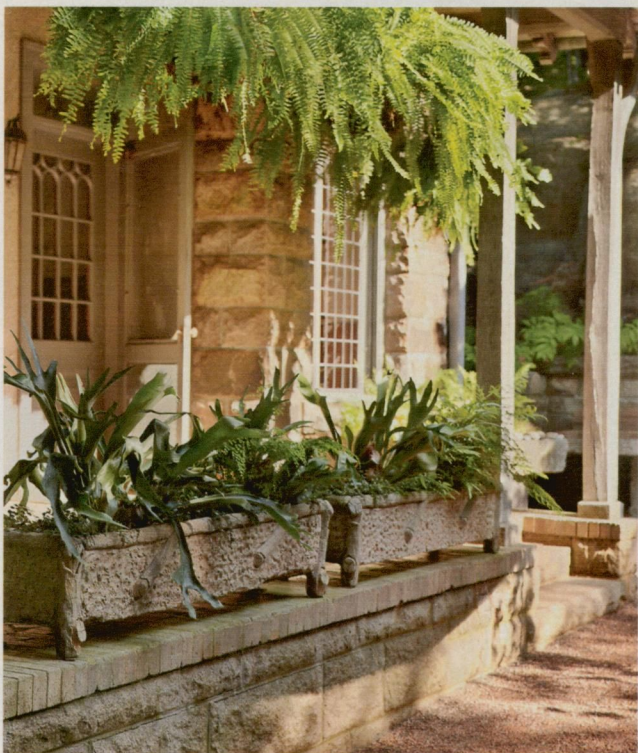
Maine and devised a way to make reinforced-concrete pots that could withstand the region's rough winters. His travels though Europe influenced his work: His massive, simple bowls and urns evoke classical designs. Other vessels are from Lunaform, a coastal-Maine pottery making all-weather concrete planters that are also reminiscent of those found in Greek and Roman gardens. Still others are French antiques and faux-bois pieces that Martha has sought out at garden and antiques shows.

The planters are prepared with a protective plastic lining and filled with a good potting mix, a blend of sterile soil, well-rotted leaf mold, and compost. The tropical and perennial plants—including many agaves and ferns—are chosen for their interesting shapes and textures, but also because they are "so easy and low-maintenance," says Martha. Many of the plants have been propagated from cuttings of ones she already has, an

economical way to expand the collection. They may start out small in May, but they fill in beautifully over the summer. Martha mixes up the compositions in the pots every year, creating new combinations that celebrate the contrasts among the plants. After two days of lugging and digging and designing and potting, the terrace is transformed. What began as a post-winter bare expanse is on its way to becoming a lush oasis, the perfect spot to relax and enjoy those unbeatable views.

Opposite Pink granite quarried on the island was used for the pergola's pillars, built-in benches, and terrace (and for Martha's home as well). This monumental Soderholtz bowl is planted with shade-loving bird's-nest fern and deep-purple oxalis, with 'Silver Falls' dichondra and golden lysimachia trailing out of the pot. Above Large alocasia leaves tower above delicate, lacy lotus vine; the two are wildly different in shape and scale—and that's what makes this dramatic arrangement, in a reproduction of a Gertrude Jekyll pot, work so well.





Clockwise from top left A spearlike agave shoots out from fast-growing, bright-green lysimachia (it was just six inches long when planted!); in fact, this plant, commonly known as creeping jenny, can be invasive as a ground cover but works well in containers. Small bicolored agaves are lined up in a granite trough that Martha found recently but that looks as if it's been there forever. *Begonia parviflora* stands tall in a cast-iron planter, flanked by a pair of urns. On the back porch, where Martha shells peas and shucks corn, hanging baskets of Boston ferns are suspended over faux-bois planters of staghorn ferns. Opposite In a square lead planter, the whimsically named ponytail palm swings above frothy, gray-green lotus vine—which has an appealing and unusual growing habit, in that it is both bushy and cascading. The terrace has a “cracked ice” pattern, with random, sharp-edged pieces that fit neatly together. Martha encourages moss to grow between the cracks.









"I JUST LOVE THIS OLD  
ENGLISH TROUGH—EVERY  
YEAR I PLANT SOMETHING  
DIFFERENT IN IT."



COME ON IN

Take a tour of the interior of Skylands—  
it's featured in the July  
issue of *Architectural Digest* and at  
[archdigest.com/go/skylands](http://archdigest.com/go/skylands).



*Opposite* The prehistoric-looking trough outside the dining-room window is filled with crassula and trailing dichondra, which grows quickly and almost reaches the ground by summer's end. *Above* This Soderholtz pot is one of a pair (the other is shown on pages 68 and 69). At about five feet across, it provides lots of room for a giant agave, a profusion of helichrysum, and some red-flowering echeveria. In general, the plants Martha has chosen for the terrace are easy to care for. Agaves and other succulents don't need a lot of water, and most of the plants offer interest without flowers, which means no deadheading—and more time to savor Maine's short, sweet summer.

Text by Amy Conway