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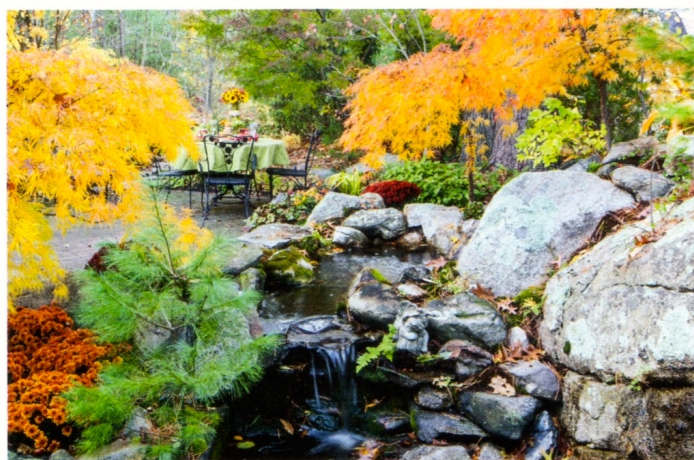


# *Bewitched* BY AUTUMN

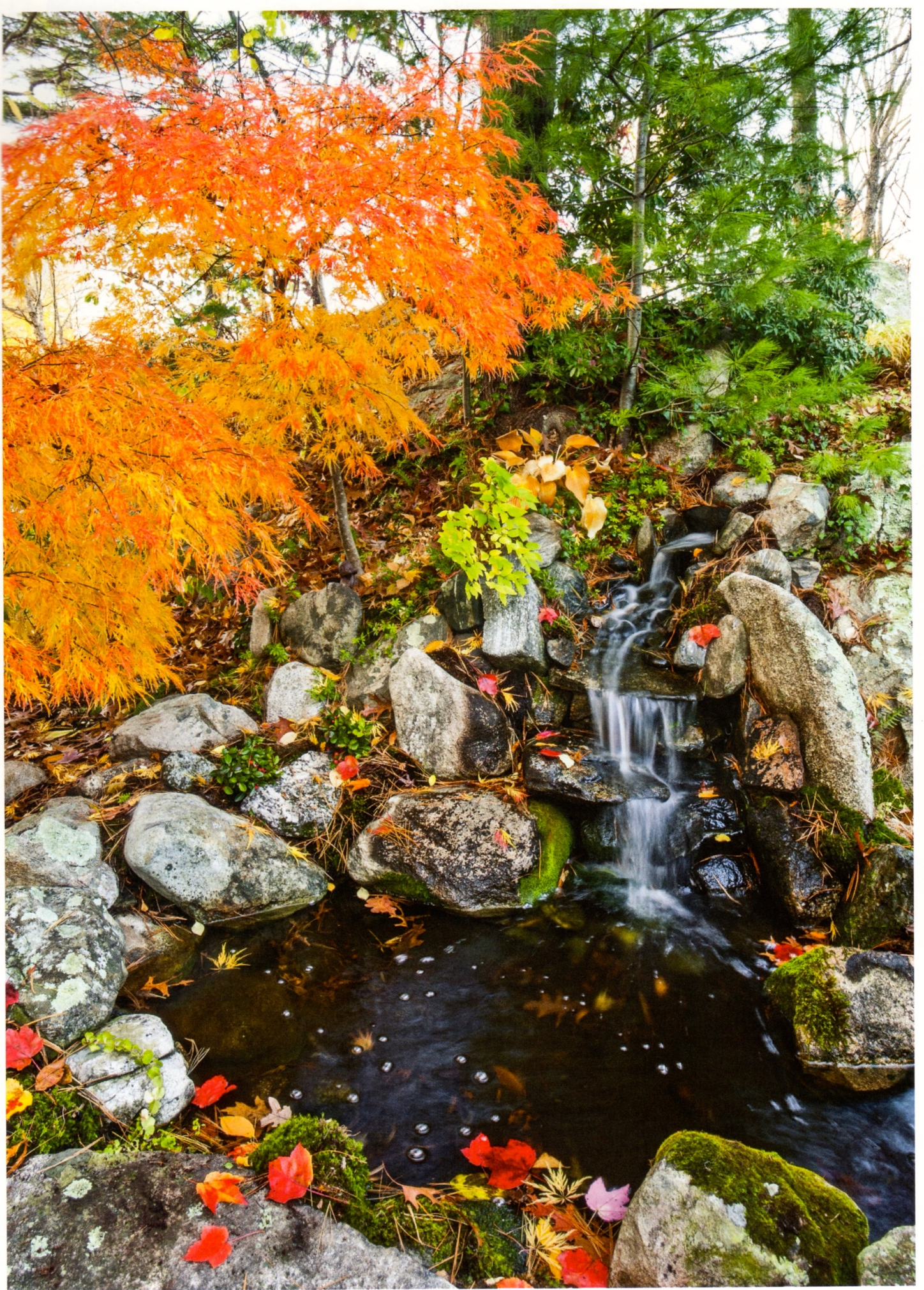
Pumpkins are the signal. As soon as they start appearing at farm stands, that's when Sarah Boynton knows it's time to dress her patio in its autumnal attire.

TEXT BY TOVAH MARTIN PHOTOGRAPHY BY KINDRA CLINEFF






Nothing much was going on in the Hingham, Massachusetts, backyard when Sarah Boynton married her husband, Bill, and moved to his one-acre property in 1989. Friends commiserated with her about the shady conditions around the house, but Sarah wasn't fazed. In fact, she was delighted for the opportunity to flex her creative talents in any sort of outdoor venue. Always a gardener, she formerly funneled her tendency to play in the dirt into a raised bed beside her apartment, while simultaneously moonlighting as a florist. Everyone knew she would put in a garden when she got married, but they thought the rocky location and lack of light would crimp Sarah's style. They were so wrong. She partnered with the rocky terrain and embraced the lack of bright sunlight. Enlisting coral bells (*Heucheras*), foam flowers (*Tiarellas*), hostas, bugle weed (*Ajuga*), ferns, and all sorts of other shade-lovers, Sarah proved that smart plantings can make shadows pop.



Then came her 40th birthday, and Bill asked what sort of jewelry his wife might like. Sarah turned down that kind of bling in favor of a waterfall, and her brilliant decision added a new kind of sparkle to the perks on the patio. Meanwhile, she was planting with the colorful palette she favors and also extending the growing season. When the temperatures begin to dip at night, Sarah visits the local farm stands and makes autumn the highlight of the year. She selected Japanese maples specifically for their dazzling fall foliage—checking out nursery inventory to find just the right shades. Rather than watching her patio containers slowly slip into weary disarray after a growing season, she replants. Sarah seeks shrubs and perennials that provide bright autumn color. Needless to say, all the pumpkins, squash, and gourds she finds serve as accents and inform her color spectrum.

Given the ravishing fall foliage at the periphery of her wooded lot, Sarah prefers not to compete color-wise in her containers. Instead, she sprinkles in muted shades such as burgundy and bronze, recycling what she can from the summer display. Plus, while she's picking up pumpkins, she gathers late season performers at garden centers, often at sale prices. She finds a few snappy mums to highlight the fire in the Japanese maple foliage as well as asters to play off the blue squash, and then she dapples in dark blood-red blossoming annuals from summer to offset the colors. Ornamental grasses in full plume bring texture, while the patina of the waterfall boulders and the patio brickwork adds to the palette. The result is just as harmonious as the melody of the nearby waterfall.

Just when everyone else is preparing to hunker down indoors, the Boyntons cannot pull themselves away from their backyard. Sarah makes dining outdoors a special occasion with candles, seasonal cut flowers, and simpatico place settings. Given some good food and great company, the scene glows. No wonder autumn is Sarah's time to shine. 



A sunflower centerpiece tied in raffia crowns the table setting, while pumpkins, squash, and mums (above) dapple the color from the trees into the lower landscape design. (Opposite) The waterfall is orchestrated in two parts with a side pond circulating not far away, making use of the rocky terrain.