

grow

A GARDENER

Foodscapes Hawaii helps homeowners dig into edible gardens.

by TOM KUNZ | Photos by ELYSE & MATT MALLAMS



Foodscapes Hawaii owner Fran Butera



Senior garden designer Jenny Engle weeds this edible garden. "Gardening isn't that difficult, but you can get frustrated," she says.

THE ONLY THING THAT GREW with any regularity in Nicole Kobayashi's garden was frustration.

"It was always more of an 'attempted garden,'" says Kobayashi. "We'd grow things like pumpkins for Halloween, a papaya tree. Then we got chickens that took over and ate everything. It was a mess."

Kobayashi's friends recommended Foodscapes Hawaii to get her garden on track. Founded in 2008, the company designs edible gardens to fit any size yard or lanai — even in high-rise condos. All you need is sunlight and water and a can-do attitude.

"Nicole knew she wanted a garden, but didn't know how to do it," says owner Fran Butera, who has installed nearly 40 gardens on Oahu. "She was motivated, but we needed to make a bridge for her."

Looking back, Kobayashi says she had much to learn about building a proper garden. "I just thought you could stick something in the ground and it would grow," she recalls with a smile. "There's more to it than that."

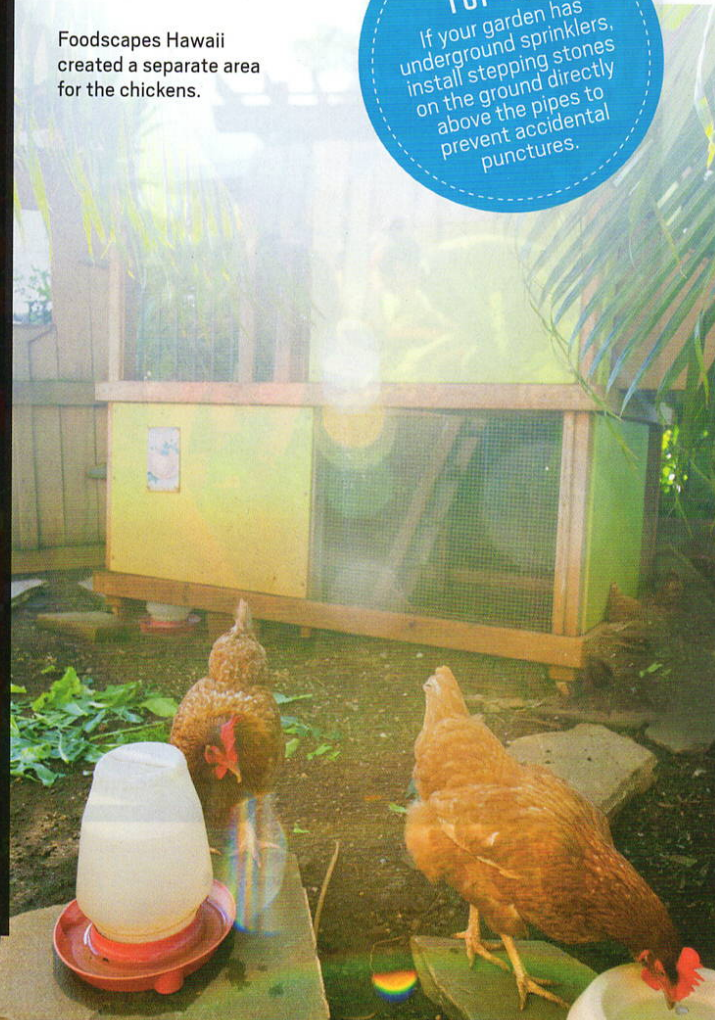
During its initial site visit, Foodscapes Hawaii inspected the site and completed an in-depth interview with Kobayashi to determine what garden configuration would work best for her lifestyle, budget and space. After developing a detailed plan (see illustration on page 109), Foodscapes Hawaii worked with Kobayashi and her family to plant a customized garden.

"Every site is different," says Butera. "The key here was



Foodscares Hawaii created a separate area for the chickens.

TOP TIP
If your garden has underground sprinklers, install stepping stones on the ground directly above the pipes to prevent accidental punctures.



“We want them to equate gardening with phrases like *fulfilling*, *relaxing* and *fun* instead of *pain in the rear*, *boring* and *expensive*.”

—Fran Butera, **Foodscares Hawaii**

to get those chickens under control and give the garden its own space.”

Working with Kobayashi, Foodscares Hawaii built a separate pen for the chickens along the side yard, leaving a 250-square-foot space for the garden. Rather than straight rows, Kobayashi opted for an organic look with multiple paths for easy access throughout.

Today, Kobayashi’s garden is thriving with an abundance of food including arugula, radishes, kale, beets, assorted herbs, peas, tomatoes, zucchini and more. Not to mention the fresh eggs from those chickens. “There’s always plenty of lettuce on hand for salads,” says Kobayashi, who has two children, ages 11 and 9. “The garden has been a good way to get the kids to eat more vegetables, or at least try them.”

Butera says Foodscares Hawaii is all about building a better future for generations to come. “Our goal is to grow gardeners,” she says. “We do provide maintenance at whatever interval is comfortable for the client, but our goal is not to stay on their payroll. We want to give them the skills and confidence to do it on their own. That’s why we make sure they’re there right beside us when we’re there, so they can learn.”



Mentha Spicata
SPEARMINT



Good to Grow

There are many types of culinary plants that thrive in Hawaii gardens. Here are a few of Foodscares Hawaii’s favorites:



MALABAR SPINACH
Not a true spinach but an excellent substitute for Hawaii gardens; vigorous climber that can take the tropical heat that flattens standard spinach varieties.



PAOLO GIANT WHITE LIMA
Boasts extra-long (but inedible) pods and huge white beans with a creamy texture; absolutely the perfect choice for cooked bean dishes and soups.



HAWAIIAN HOT CHILI PEPPER
Attractive shrub produces tiny, upright peppers as festive as Christmas lights; key ingredient in classic local condiments, chili pepper water and chili pepper jelly.



LISTADA DI GANDIA EGGPLANT
Beautiful, striped Italian eggplant; an excellent strain with consistent deep color; reliable, heavy yields of excellent quality, 6- to 8-inch thin-skinned fruits.



PURPLE DARK OPAL BASIL
Striking lilac flowers with dark red stems make this basil a standout for your garden; spectacular as a garnish in salads or for adding color to basil vinegars.



BRONZE ARROWHEAD LETTUCE
This is Foodscares Hawaii’s favorite oakleaf-type lettuce; slow to bolt; a cut-and-come-again type; harvest by cutting at the base and it will grow back.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF FOODSCARES HAWAII