



discovering

zen

Beauty-line product makers Matthew Malin and Andrew Goetz harness knowledge, joy, and enticing scents from their own New York garden.

By TOVAH MARTIN • Photography by KINDRA CLINEFF



the best way to explain the evolution of Matthew Malin and Andrew Goetz's Hudson, New York, garden is to start with Stem—that's the perfume recently released by their company, Malin + Goetz. Initially, Stem hits your nose like a good wine with hints of tangy, herbal notes before settling into a smooth, full-bodied finish. The scent plays like a series of soloists, then combines into a harmonious chorus. In other words, it's the essence of everything green distilled into a bottle. But really, Stem is a synthesis of Matthew and Andrew's journey digging into the land and building a robust relationship with their property. Through engaging with the earth and learning how to better serve their soil via planning, planting, and observing, they have begun to see their land as a deeply nuanced whole full of exhilarating inspiration.

Matthew and Andrew bought this property intending to be hands-on in June 2013. They selected it because it was less finished than their previous weekend escape, which they purchased as a perfect, completed design. "Actually, it was overembellished, and that's not what we wanted," Matthew says. When they decided to move, they sought a different approach—one they could immerse themselves in and call their own. Andrew, who has a design background, especially wanted to dive into a major home renovation project. They found a mishmash of a house on 9 acres near Hudson that desperately needed help. It was the personal project they dreamed of undertaking.

Above: Matthew Malin (left) and Andrew Goetz (right), posing with their friedly pug, Mr. Greenberg, took on a full home renovation in Hudson, New York, but they chose to keep the existing windows, which offer floor-to-ceiling views of their gardens from inside. Opposite: Matthew cannot resist cutting fistfuls of herbs like basil and dill to bring indoors. Herbal fragrances from Matthew and Andrew's garden became the inspiration for their company's perfume, Stem.



Andrew and Matthew went to work collaborating with Bernheimer Architecture (a firm that worked on a number of their brick-and-mortar shops) to redesign the house and ramshackle outbuildings. Matthew dived into courses at the New York Botanical Garden to discover the potential of their newly acquired land. But they didn't go it alone on the landscape. They chose to collaborate with Jamie Purinton, a local landscape architect, because of her deep understanding of naturalistic design and the region's plantings. She inspired them to grow local.



Purinton's first step in any project is to take inventory of the plants and wildlife already on the property and in the surrounding habitats. Her goals: to strengthen the site's ecological web by selecting plantings that enhance the existing ecosystem and to avoid anything invasive. Matthew and Andrew learned to pay attention to the native plants and animals and how to help them thrive. They created a more natural flow throughout the property by uniting formerly segmented areas and opening up spaces to create dining and seating areas to visually and physically draw them outside. But the moments of deepest insight occurred when the duo really dug their hands into the planting and development of the gardens.

"The act of gardening is really physical. It's about constant reaching and stretching. Meanwhile, you're expanding boundaries on all levels," Matthew

Above: Matthew likes to harvest different plants and see what fragrances arise when he rubs their leaves and stems as well as smells their flowers. *Opposite, clockwise from top left:* A metal tuteur gives cucumbers a leg up in the vegetable/pollinator garden. Abutting the vegetable garden is a natural meadow with plenty of bee balm in summer and daffodils in spring. Because Andrew wanted chickens but realized that protecting poultry might be difficult, he settled for a cement flock instead. Flowering African blue basil shoulders carrots in raised beds created from repurposed and upended bluestone coping from a former patio. Andrew and Matthew chose to mix edibles with ornamentals, including pairing greens and veggies with flowers like alyssum and signet marigolds, for longer-lasting seasonal interest that invites pollinators and people to mingle too.



“There’s something magical about getting in touch with nature on a daily basis. The garden helps us use herbs to their full potential.”

—MATTHEW MALIN, HOMEOWNER

This photo: An aromatic herb garden filled with Russian sage and *Calamintha* leads around the house and connects a pergola with a circuit of outdoor areas. *Opposite left:* Installing the white oak pergola was one of Matthew and Andrew's first outdoor projects. They ordered a custom bluestone and welded-steel table from a local artisan to give them a place to host informal meals outdoors. The two love the hearty smell of their homegrown tomatoes so much, they turned the fragrance into a tomato-scented candle. *Opposite right:* A sunken garden bristles with blue *Salvia × sylvestris* 'May Night', yellow-flowering foxglove, and boxwood mounds. The seating area is an idyllic place to find renewal and soak up the garden's beauty.





Above: 'Limelight' and Little Lime hydrangeas bedded in lamb's ears and *Geranium 'Rozanne'* are coupled with pine and spruce trees to create a live screen giving their property privacy from the road. **Below right:** In the sunken garden, purple perennial salvia mingles with foxglove for a long season of performance. **Below, far right:** The couple's property came with plenty of wild spaces and lots of room for Matthew and Mr. Greenberg (the pug) to roam. **Opposite:** By midsummer, cheerful dahlias peek above the pickets in the vegetable garden, adding splashes of color.

says. Each new space hatched more ideas and plans. They collaborated with a local garden designer, Pamela DeGeyter, to help them select flowers, herbs, and other culinary options to expand their palette and try out new scents.

When, due to COVID-19, Andrew and Matthew decamped to Hudson full-time, they engaged in daily gardening, which sparked healthy realizations: They ate better, breathed deeper, exercised more doing meaningful physical work, and slept soundly at the end of the day. They had planted vegetable and herb beds in the beginning, but the more they gardened, the more the beds expanded, especially after Matthew and Andrew saw populations of pollinators swell. "Fresh" took on new meaning when they harvested and ate from their own berry bushes, fruit trees, and edible vines. Andrew even discovered a love for mowing the grass ("talk about instant gratification") and weeding ("those are my Zen moments when I'm lost in thought"). Matthew found ways to further the harmony by expanding their selection of fragrant and flowering plants nearest to the house to turn coming and going into a sensory experience.

They both agree that it's all ultimately been about the journey. As Andrew says, "The act of gardening is never really done. You have to let nature be nature and that's so liberating." To that, Matthew adds, "It's a journey of understanding. Nature is imperfect, and that's perfection."

Of course, it was all bound to trickle into their beauty- and skincare-product lines. They discovered the template for Stem in the aroma of a newly sprouted tomato seedling. When Matthew and Andrew are knee-deep in their land, they find new inspiration in the natural world all around them. They have discovered their own Zen.

FOR RESOURCES, SEE PAGE 94.



PLANTING FOR FRAGRANCE

As Matthew Malin and Andrew Goetz got down on their hands and knees to delve deeper into the earth, they gained insights into the plants' aromas. Their perfume Stem is only one of the products that benefited from their newfound knowledge. The Malin + Goetz lines feature six fragrances, a dozen scented candles, and many skincare products that sprouted from their landscape. To impart the full experience, they worked with landscape architect Jamie Purinton and garden designer Pamela DeGeyter to incorporate plants rich in scent into their beds. Some of the plants that influence Malin + Goetz products include:

BASIL

Tangy and exhilarating, both African blue basil and Genovese basil are present in the landscape—each providing its own nuances that fueled the fragrance of shampoos and candles.

BEE BALM

Throughout the purposely unmown fields that abut their gardens, the native bee balm prevails, producing its pale lavender flowers to delight pollinators. The herb's refreshing scent found its way into Malin + Goetz deodorant.

CALAMINT

This lesser-known member of the mint family is so beloved by pollinators that landscape architect Jamie Purinton couldn't resist adding it to Matthew and Andrew's garden plan. With a signature menthol scent that takes your breath away, it soon became a staple.

CHAMOMILE

Andrew finds this veteran of nighttime tea to be exhilarating, labeling its signature aroma "unctuous." He says, "Growing chamomile, watching it come into bloom, and breaking the flowers from the stem—that's magic."

DILL

Self-seeding throughout the vegetable garden, dill now pops up everywhere unbidden. Occasionally crushing the seedlings is inevitable, releasing their aniselike scent.

LAVENDER

This soothing, aromatic classic grows beside the patio to surround the space with its deep, throaty scent.

PARSLEY

Rather than the curly parsley that primarily pleases the eye, garden designer Pamela DeGeyter recommended they plant the more zestful Italian flat-leaf parsley for its flavor. The result became Andrew's scrumptious "go-to" breakfast mix-in for eggs.

TOMATO

Learning how a grassy scent emanates from tomato stems and foliage was one of many realizations that came through working with the plants.

THYME

Virtually every footfall as you stroll through Andrew and Matthew's Hudson, New York, garden releases the rich aroma of thyme. Purinton suggested they planted the herb between paving stones and to edge gardens where it might make the experience more layered.

