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## CALIFORNIA COASTAL LOOK

GARDEN BURL: Jeffrey Gordon Smith Landscape Architecture LOS OSOS, CA

Ditch the palm trees and tropical flowers and go native! Landscape architect and long-time Cali resident Jeffrey Gordon Smith shows us how. BY MURRYE BERNARD

**Your design philosophy is based on "regionalism." What does that mean?**

Many California residents want palm trees because they can see the ocean from their backyards, but they're actually in coastal sage-scrub communities with oak trees. I encourage clients to celebrate where they live.

**Does that limit the types of plants you use?**

Though I consider myself a "plant geek," it's difficult to describe how a plant wants to live: full shade, partial sun, etc. If you experiment and push the limits, you learn that anything living will try to live, so you can really abuse the hell out of a lot of plants. Maybe you won't get the best performance out of them—less flower or a little leggier look—but if you really want to grow that plant, you can break the rules.

**You don't rely much on flowering plants. Do you have an aversion to color?**

I don't use color as a primary focus for designing; instead, I focus on the structure and texture of the plant. When it's not flowering, which is the majority of the time, what is it doing? The flower is the "Fourth of July"—an explosion of personality, but the rest of the year the landscape in California is primarily brown. Pink is a color that I have an aversion to; it's just too cute for me. But I've always had a fantasy of designing a pink garden just to face my fear.

**Any other design deal-breakers?**

Lawns. It's the American Dream, and most people judge you on how green your lawn is. I tell clients, "If you really want a lawn, I need you to explain how you're going to use it." When was the last time you went out and picnicked or did cartwheels on your lawn?! ♣

### WHAT'S TRENDING ON THE CALI COAST:

Vertical gardens  
Green roofs

Outdoor living spaces  
Bocce courts

Low-maintenance  
grasses

Photo by Chris Leachowsky

#### COLORFUL KAMADO

Gordon Smith certainly doesn't shy away from color when choosing outdoor grills. In many of his projects, he has installed Komodo Kamados, ceramic grills covered in shimmering, green-tone tiles. Their distinct shape is inspired by "a heart-shaped football," says designer Dennis Linkletter, the company's founder. And although the shape comes standard, "it's very customizable" due to the custom tile hues that fit almost any color palette. "Jacket it in earth tones, it's subtle, and it blends right in. Jacket it in vibrant blue tiles, you have a Fabergé egg that makes a great statement and cooks great to boot," Linkletter says. A modern sculpture and cooking machine all in one? Yes, please.

#### CALI GRASSES & PLANTS

Smith recommends using "Native-esque" plants. These aren't all from California, but blend right in with the local species.

**Anemathella**  
(New Zealand  
Wind Grass):  
A feathery,  
tactile  
"touch-me-feels-me"  
plant.



**Bealia**:  
A reed-like  
South  
African plant.



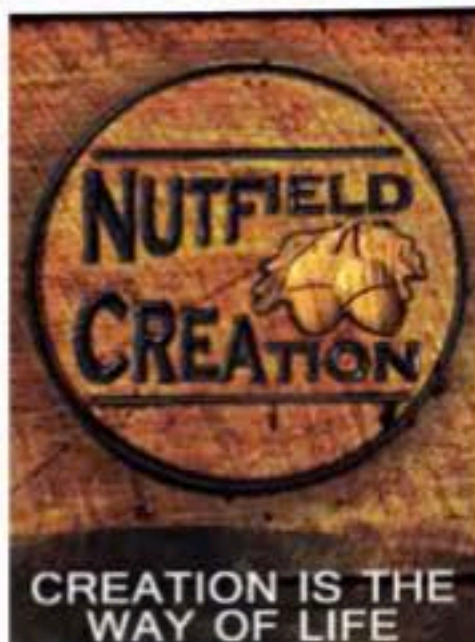
**Thamnochortus**  
Very  
architectural,  
almost an  
art-piece that  
rocks in the wind.



**Agave**:  
Bulletproof  
(climate-wise)  
and bold.



**Aloe**:  
Booms in the  
winter and  
provides  
punchy color.

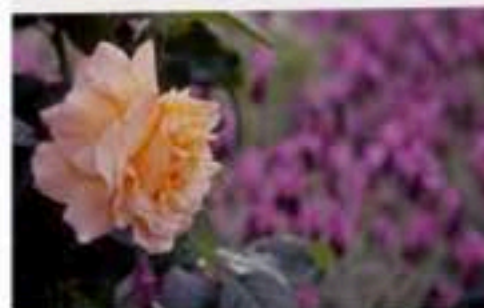


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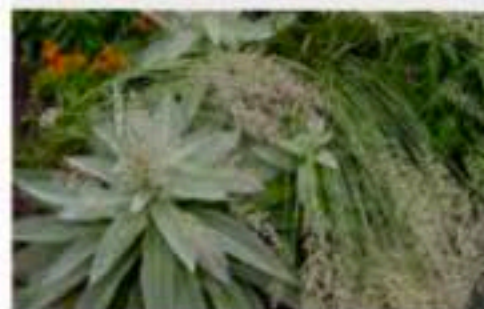
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