

# Los Angeles Times | HOME & GARDEN

LOCAL U.S. WORLD BUSINESS SPORTS ENTERTAINMENT HEALTH LIVING TRAVEL OPINION MORE

Search  Go

HOME FOOD IMAGE AUTOS BOOKS HOT LIST BRAND X MAGAZINE YOUR SCENE

 **Mercedes-Benz of Encino**  
 Mercedes-Benz 16721 Ventura Blvd., Encino, CA 91436  
[CLICK HERE FOR SPECIALS!](#)

**2009 E350 SEDAN**  
 Certified, Previous Loaner Cars, Low Miles  
**\$39,856**  
 6 At This Price! \* Plus Tax & License



## L.A. at Home

DESIGN, ARCHITECTURE, GARDENS,  
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA LIVING

« Previous Post | L.A. at Home Home | Next Post »

### Hollywood Hills couple tame their garden slope

October 2, 2010 | 5:59 am



It's a problem for many in Los Angeles: how to handle the steeply sloped garden. At a loss of what to do, Amy and David Messinger called landscape designer Joan Grabel of [Park Slope Design](#) to help them come up with a solution. Her game plan?

"I treated the slope like bleachers in a class picture, where you get to see everybody," Grabel tells writer Emily Young. "I used some plants that were the same height but not on the same plane."

Read the full story on this [sloped garden](#) or click through our [photo gallery](#) to see the plants Grabel selected and how she put them together.

-- Deborah Netburn

Photo credit: Kirk McKoy / Los Angeles Times

@ Twitter: [@latimeshome](#)  
Facebook: [latimeshome](#) | [latimesgarden](#)

More in: [Gardening](#), [Low-Water](#)

### Stay connected:

 RSS  twitter  facebook

advertisement

Designer lighting event

Enjoy 15% off designs from Flos, Modemica and Pablo. October 7-19. [Shop now](#)



Room&Board  
HOME FURNISHINGS

### Homes of the Times



A look at the most interesting homes in Southern California.

### The SoCal Garden



Garden tours, low-water landscapes and deals.

### Browsing



Everything that's new, cool and on sale.

Dial (818)718-7470 Today

Landscape Installation-Maintenance Commercial-Residential-Industrial  
www.GomezTreeService.Net

Landscape Design Experts

Design, Installation, LA area. Get a Free 1-Hour Consultation.  
BostonBrick.com/LandscapeDesign

ADS BY GOOGLE

## RELATED STORIES

From the L.A. Times

It's raining, it's pouring: Submit your weather photos  
untitled entry

From KTLA

LaRoche notches 100th RBI in D'backs' 7-5 win over Dodgers, who clinch losing... | [ktla.com](http://ktla.com)

POWERED BY 

## Post a comment

If you are under 13 years of age you may read this message board, but you may not participate. Here are the full legal terms you agree to by using this comment form.

Comments are moderated, and will not appear until they've been approved.

If you have a TypeKey or TypePad account, please Sign In

Name:

E-mail Address:

URL:


Remember personal info?

Comments:

Preview

Post

## Comments (0)

 You can follow this conversation by subscribing to the comment feed for this post.

## Man of the House



Weekly dispatches from Chris Erskine's adventures in fatherdom.

## Parenting



Recent stories about the face of parenting in the 21st century.

## Hot Property



The latest on who's selling and buying in the L.A. real estate market.

## The Fixers



A series on Southern California's experts of repair and keepers of dying trades.

## Recent Posts

Pro Portfolio: Calm and collected in Santa Monica | [October 11, 2010, 7:00 am](#) »

Times Past: The Key-jector | [October 11, 2010, 6:30 am](#) »

Datebook: Events, exhibits, classes for the week ahead | [October 11, 2010, 6:00 am](#) »

Eco-parenting and a search for the greenest lunchbox | [October 9, 2010, 6:00 am](#) »

A celebration of Julius Shulman | [October 8, 2010, 12:18 pm](#) »

## Recent Comments

**RE:** Set Pieces: Inside the homes of 'Parenthood' | [comment by L.A. at Home editor](#)

**RE:** Set Pieces: Inside the homes of 'Parenthood' | [comment by Liza Pagel](#)

**RE:** Pasadena gardener becomes a one-woman food bank | [comment by save the deserts!](#)

**RE:** Pasadena gardener becomes a one-woman food bank | [comment by cam slocum](#)

**RE:** Master in training: Making the most of every tomato | [comment by cam slocum](#)

**RE:** Pasadena gardener becomes a one-woman food bank | [comment by anthony](#)

## Categories

100% design antiques architecture art arts & crafts auctions backstory barbara thornburg bathroom bedrooms books budget catalogs celebrity ces communitygardens crafts craig nakano david a. keeps deborah netburn decorating design diy drive-by design dry garden eames emily green entertaining etsy events family film flea market food and drink frank lloyd wright furniture gadgets gardening gifts green happy holidays home office home tour hot property icff indoor-outdoor inspiredawfulness invasives kids kitchen lighting lisa boone lists look for less lost l.a. low-water made in california madeleine brand magazines maison & objet mary macvean mastergardener media midcentury milan modern neighbors object lesson only in l.a. parenting pets photography prefab preservation proportfolio reader mail realist idealist recyclyst remodeling sales&deals set pieces sewing shopping small spaces technology television the fixers timespast urban farming vintage

## Archives

October 2010

---

## More from The Times

---

24 Frames	Afterword
All The Rage	Babylon & Beyond
Big Picture	Booster Shots
Brand X	Comments Blog
Company Town	Culture Monster
Daily Dish	Daily Mirror
Daily Travel & Deal Blog	Dodgers Blog
Fabulous Forum	Framework
Gold Derby	Greenspace
Hero Complex	Homicide Report
Jacket Copy	L.A. at Home
L.A. Now	L.A. Unleashed
La Plaza	Lakers
Ministry of Gossip	Money & Co.
Opinion L.A.	Outposts
PolitiCal	Politics Now
Pop & Hiss	Readers' Representative
Show Tracker	Technology
Top of the Ticket	Varsity Times Insider

---

[Horoscopes](#)

[LATMG Media Kit](#)

[LAT Events](#)

[About Us](#)

[Site Map](#)

[Contact Us | Help](#)

---

# Los Angeles Times

[Coastline Pilot](#) | [Daily Pilot](#) | [Huntington Beach Independent](#) | [Valley Sun](#) | [Burbank Leader](#) | [News Press](#) | [KTLA](#) | [Hoy](#) | [Brand X](#) | [LA, Los Angeles Times Magazine](#) | [ZAP2it](#)  
[Baltimore Sun](#) | [Chicago Tribune](#) | [Daily Press](#) | [Hartford Courant](#) | [LA Times](#) | [Orlando Sentinel](#) | [Sun Sentinel](#) | [The Morning Call](#)

[Terms of Service](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | Los Angeles Times, 202 West 1st Street, Los Angeles, California, 90012 | Copyright 2010

*A Tribune Web site*



# Los Angeles Times | HOME



LOCAL U.S. WORLD BUSINESS SPORTS ENTERTAINMENT HEALTH LIVING TRAVEL OPINION MORE

HOME FOOD IMAGE BOOKS PARENTING HOT LIST BRAND X MAGAZINE YOUR SCENE CARS

IN THE NEWS: NOBEL PRIZE IN ECONOMICS | BOX OFFICE | KIM JONG IL | MARIJUANA | NFL | WINDOWS PHONE 7

 Mercedes-Benz of Encino  
 Mercedes-Benz 16721 Ventura Blvd., Encino, CA 91436  
 2009 E350 SEDAN Certified, Previous Loaner Cars, Low Miles  
**\$39,856** 6 At This Price! \* Plus Tax & License  
[CLICK HERE FOR SPECIALS!](#) 

## Firmly planted in family enjoyment

The yard surrounding Amy and David Messinger's Hollywood Hills home presented problems aplenty, but designer Joan Grabel helped to bring color and accessibility to their lives.



Joan Grabel came up with an interesting solution for a difficult rear hillside at the Messinger's home, utilizing a low-maintenance mix of aloe striata blooms at eye level and a ground-cover ice plant, Drosanthemum floribundum, that tolerates full sun. (Kirk McKoy / Los Angeles Times / October 2, 2010)

### Latest Home Stories



Esa-Pekka Salonen puts his home in Brentwood up for sale



DIY queen Kristan Cunningham's rental, including a \$1,000 kitchen makeover



Design for a Dollar: The Pratt student booth at the 2009 ICFF

advertisement

 Share

6 tweets

 retweet


 Digg

By Emily Young, Special to the Los Angeles Times

October 2, 2010

 E-mail  Print  Share  Text Size

 Like

 Be the first of your friends to like this.



Amy and David Messinger's home in the Hollywood Hills posed vexing problems common to many properties in Los Angeles. The steep front and rear slopes were difficult to navigate, much less landscape. One side yard opened to the top of yet another embankment. The other side yard was flat lawn reduced to a muddy mess by sprinklers and poor

#### RELATED



Hillside gardening: Hollywood couple tames their slope

ADS BY GOOGLE

**Monte Vista Landscape**  
complete landscaping construction

### The Latest | NEWS AS IT HAPPENS

Tech industry to RIAA, radio biz: Keep your 'legacy technology' demands away from our cellphones - *Pop & Hiss* 10/11/2010, 11:16 a.m.

Wall Street: Foreclosure halt would be 'catastrophic' - *Money & Company* 10/11/2010, 11:10 a.m.

2011 Rose Parade court is announced in Pasadena - *L.A. Now* 10/11/2010, 11:02 a.m.

Banksy leaves his mark on 'The Simpsons' - *Culture Monster* 10/11/2010, 10:56 a.m.

design company.  
www.montevistalandscape.com

**Farmscape: Urban Farming**  
The Time is Ripe for a Fall Garden.  
Grow a Productive Edible  
Landscape.

FarmscapeGardens.com

**Landscape Design LA Area**  
Design, Installation & Maintenance  
Get a Free 1-Hour Consultation.

BostonBrick.com/LandscapeDesign

drainage.

For help, the Messingers hired landscape designer Joan Grabel of Park Slope Design in Studio City. Grabel, an artist-turned-gardenmaker, is known for creating functional, sustainable outdoor rooms with painterly flair.

"Amy and David were starting a family and needed child-friendly space outside," Grabel said. "The site had many issues with the slope, erosion control, drought from hot afternoon sun, and aesthetics, but the goal was to make every space attractive and usable."

Her design strategy was based in color harmony and the repetition of plants for a sophisticated and consistent look throughout the garden. One of her first moves was to change the exterior paint scheme of the house. Garish yellow walls with green trim became quieter cream walls with brown trim, the better to complement the stone paving of the entry courtyard and the stamped concrete of the back patio.

Get breaking news alerts delivered to your mobile phone. Text BREAKING to 52669.

Conditions in the side yards turned out to be easily addressed. A sturdy new fence allowed the Messingers to pass through one side without worrying about the 9-foot drop down an embankment. On the other side, wet grass was ripped out in favor of artificial turf for the kids.

On the front slope, where the garden was so overgrown that it shrouded the house, she carefully layered plants with strong colors and architectural shapes. The Messingers' choice of an orange, purple and gray palette includes coral aloe, lavender and senecio, punctuated by chartreuse euphorbia, yellow-green agave and bronze phormium.

"I treated the slope like bleachers in a class picture, where you get to see everybody," Grabel said. "I used some plants that were the same height but not on the same plane."

Because access to plants on the steeper rear slope promised to be much more limited, Grabel stuck to plants that are drought tolerant, fire resistant, low maintenance and conducive to preventing erosion. For extra soil stability, she also planted through a layer of jute netting.

At the top of the slope, African sumac and hedges of Italian buckthorn and native ceanothus provide privacy from neighbors above. For quick coverage across the middle, she planted *Myoporum parvifolium*, an evergreen groundcover that serves as a refreshing backdrop to the dining patio. And to foster a more intimate atmosphere down low, she grouped small, orange-blooming aloes and echeverias amid purple ice plant. Like little jewels, they cry out for up-close viewing.

More than a year since the garden was completed, the Messinger family enjoys spending time together indoors and out, proving that what seemed like insurmountable drawbacks were design opportunities instead.

"Before, it was really ugly outside. Now it's a desirable space where the parents can entertain and the kids can play," Grabel says. "It's a contemporary place they'll be able to grow with."

home@latimes.com

Copyright © 2010, Los Angeles Times

ADS BY GOOGLE

**Dial (818)718-7470 Today**  
Landscape Installation-Maintenance Commercial-Residential-Industrial  
www.GomezTreeService.Net

**Monte Vista Landscape**  
complete landscaping construction design company.  
www.montevistalandscape.com

**Landscape Design Experts**  
Design, Installation, LA area. Get a Free 1-Hour Consultation.  
BostonBrick.com/LandscapeDesign

Man who allegedly stabbed brother to death in Hollywood arrested in San Bernardino County -  
L.A. Now 10/11/2010, 10:53 a.m.

Time Warner Cable

Make your home complete.

Bring home the bundle.

TV + INTERNET + PHONE

Get It Now

Time Warner Cable

## Workplace Risk »



Years spent in a noisy workplace may take a toll on both hearing and heart health.

E-mail Print Digg Twitter Facebook Read This Later

Share

Comments (0)

Add comments | Discussion FAQ

Currently there are no comments. Be the first to comment!

### L.A. at Home

Design, Architecture, Gardens, Southern California Living

- Pro Portfolio: Calm and collected in Santa Monica *10/11/2010, 7:00 a.m.*
- Times Past: The Key-jector *10/11/2010, 6:30 a.m.*
- Datebook: Events, exhibits, classes for the week ahead *10/11/2010, 6:00 a.m.*

More...

### Home & Garden Features



Homes of the Times: The latest in Southern California design



Garden tours, low-water landscapes, and deals



Marketplace: Shopping for Smart Design

### In Case You Missed It...



Marc Weinstein, co-founder of retailer Amoeba Music



Photos: Top 10 grand hotels in the U.S.



China moving heaven and Earth to bring Beijing water



Vehicle complaint database



The Find: Red Chili Pakistani and Red Chili Express

**hp** HP Small Business Direct **BOOST YOUR BUSINESS SALE** **SAVE UP TO \$225** **SHOP NOW** Get your business ready for holiday growth with HP's top-quality laptops **STARTING AT \$449.99** **FREE Shipping**

# Los Angeles Times

[Coastline Pilot](#) | [Daily Pilot](#) | [Huntington Beach Independent](#) | [Valley Sun](#) | [Burbank Leader](#) | [News Press](#) | [KTLA](#) | [Hoy](#) | [Brand X](#) | [LA, Los Angeles Times Magazine](#) | [ZAP2it](#)  
[Baltimore Sun](#) | [Chicago Tribune](#) | [Daily Press](#) | [Hartford Courant](#) | [Los Angeles Times](#) | [Orlando Sentinel](#) | [Sun Sentinel](#) | [The Morning Call](#)

[Terms of Service](#) | [Privacy Policy](#) | Los Angeles Times, 202 West 1st Street, Los Angeles, California, 90012 | Copyright 2010

*A Tribune Newspaper website*