



THE GARDEN GAL AN EYE FOR DETAIL

Gavin was a garden prodigy when I met him eons ago. You see, by the time Gavin Younie (say: "YOU-nee") was 14 years old he'd been featured in almost every chichi garden magazine across the country. He was that interesting; albeit rather shy and more introverted, but wise beyond his years about plants. Today, the 29 year-old man with a degree in landscape architecture and an eye for detail does not disappoint. The two of us caught up on lost time recently, played 20 questions (of which you'll get the best four because questions, like gardens, aren't always good) while overlooking his grown up garden in Southwest Portland.

Anne Jaeger:

I can't remember, what got you into gardening?

Gavin Younie:

I think I was seven or eight, we had a half acre and my mom brought home some plants from Cannon Beach. I think she bought some Penstemon. I was just blown away. We had a half acre garden that was very contained. And I made my own garden with a one brick wide path (he laughs). I was like 8 years old then.

AJ: What fascinated you about gardening?

GY: My mom liked it, I could be outside. Maybe I wanted something of my own, since I have a twin brother, this could be mine. I loved watching things grow and evolve, but I was into the design of it too. I needed that path. And I liked birdbaths and sculptures and pots. It's pretty weird that I'm a landscape architect today. Now gardening is stress relief. My mom died two years ago....everyone needs an outlet and this is mine. It's my baby.

AJ: When I met you at 14 or 15 you were already very knowledgeable. Did you know early on you would always garden?

GY: Yeah, that was my passion. I've got a combination of interests. My dad's a structural engineer. So I would see his prints of these mega-houses and I'd imagine what the gardens would look like. We built a greenhouse together, but the plant part was me plus the Hardy Plant Society and Barbara Ashmun (neighbor and established author, writer amazon.com/Barbara-Ashmun.)

Gavin Younie, a 29-year old landscape designer says "When I bought this house, I knew exactly what garden I wanted when I drove by. I drew it out on a cocktail napkin. I designed this front garden by turning sloped grass into three different tiers to show off masses of the same plants. The repeating pattern is restful and gives your eye someplace to stop before seeing the rest of the garden."



Photos by Horace Long

That got me started on a planting design obsession and then getting a degree at University of Oregon gave me the knowledge and theory to carry it forward. I mean, you really need to learn plants and hardscape for a successful garden.

AJ: Tell me about branching out from creating gardens for others, to designing and selling your own containers?

GY: I wanted something simple and I couldn't find any containers I liked for either side of the front door that weren't terra cotta, Asian pottery or FiberStone. So I created a modern line, a more French line and now I have interior steel planters, too. Some are in powder coated colors and others have a more natural rust finish. With gardening and my containers, my job is my passion and I'm pretty lucky to do something artsy most every day.

Anne Jaeger, writes The Garden Gal for *Just Out*. Anne was a hard news reporter and anchor at KGW and KOIN before turning to gardening full time. After that her award winning garden shows appeared on both stations. You can now look for Anne garden videos on the *Oregonian* newspaper web site: oregonlive.com/hg, catch her on Twitter: [@AnneJaeger@GardenGalTV](https://twitter.com/AnneJaeger) or send her a suggestion on her web site: GardenGal.TV.