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SOUTH CAROLINA HOMES & GARDENS



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The art of landSCULPTING

Whatever you do, don't call it landscaping. In fact, the father/son team behind Jungle Taming has had to coin an entirely new word to share what they do. Bill and Jonathan Kunze are dedicated to bringing a new era of landsculpting to Columbia. Text: Jacque Riley.



These modern-day Tarzans specialize in removing excess growth so existing plants can flourish. Unlike traditional landscaping, which often entails completely uprooting a yard and replacing all its shrubbery, landsculpting works with nature so dormant beauty can re-emerge.

"Most landscape designers are concerned with addition," explains founder Bill Kunze. "We specialize in strategic subtraction. That way we can uncover the hidden splendor that many yards already possess."

Jonathan illustrates his father's point on the winding Forest Acres property of the Cantey family. Carefully peeling away the overhang of an unplanned trash tree, he gestures toward what, to the untrained eye, appears to be a perfectly ordinary bush. "Do you know what this is?" he asks excitedly. It turns out to be a Lady Banks rosebush, known for its tiny, charming buds. The Jungle Taming team will remove the vines stealing its sunlight to rejuvenate the plant and coax back the blooms.

"Lots of landscapers would cut this down completely because they don't have tools for delicate work," laments Bill. "But personally, I don't think it's right to cut down a woman's rosebush."

Because landsculpting requires such a careful inspection of existing plants, Bill and Jonathan do approximately 80 percent of their work down in the dirt with hand clippers. For tricky wisteria vines, they may employ slender carpentry saws—a stark contrast to the power mowers of landscape conglomerates and the chainsaws of power companies.

"The Jungle Taming guys are wonderful to work with," said Betty Cantey. "I don't know anybody else who would get in there and do what they're doing." Cantey and her husband decided to redo their yard instead of taking a trip for their 40th wedding anniversary. "It's money well spent," she explained. "I'd rather have something that I can enjoy every day."

After liberating a yard from the stranglehold of trash trees and unwanted vines, Bill and Jonathan take an extra step to ensure that clients can enjoy their yards for years to come. Using artists' paintbrushes, they carefully coat each stump with herbicide—enough to effectively kill the vine without harming nearby plants. Because Jungle Taming is in the business of revitalization rather than maintenance, its reputation depends on doing things right the first time.

More and more, yards are becoming an extension of the home itself — a place where families get together," explains Jonathan. "Instead of clear-cutting the area and waiting years for new azalea bushes to grow, our clients are finding that landsculpting allows them to conserve existing plants and enjoy their yards right away."

For a free landsculpting assessment of your yard, contact Jungle Taming at (803) 269-6339 or visit www.jungletaming.com. ▮

