

Chestnut Hill Gardens – Litchfield, CT

An outstanding feature of Chestnut Hill Gardens is a 240-foot long perennial border planted in 2004 alongside a split rail and stone fence that separates the house and gardens from a nine-acre meadow. The owners first planted an 80-foot long border in the same location in 1982; by 2003 that border looked tired. Everything but the trees was dug up, more curves were added to widen the strip now three times the original length, and the soil was amended and tilled. Under the direction of landscape designer Mary Ann McGourty of Hillside Gardens four people replanted most of the perennials and shrubs that had been heeled into the vegetable garden temporarily, adding native plants and more deer resistant perennials - about 500 plants put in place on a single day in June 2004. Forty large pots of spring bulbs that were collected from the original border were replanted in the autumn. Milorganite, repellents and a large dog help reduce deer predation.

The 56-acre property includes a solar home, an octagonal barn with an espaliered crab apple tree, a vegetable garden in raised beds, a cutting garden, an ornamental grass garden, a parterre herb garden in raised beds with a water feature in the center, a pergola that shades the patio, a pinetum, and fruit trees. The varied plantings produce three seasons of color. The garden has been included in local garden tours on several occasions.