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# Horticulture

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If you're an avid fan of gardening programs, chances are you recognize William Moss's name or smiling face from his many television appearances. He made his first foray into TV with *Rally Round the House* on the Discovery Channel, in which he taught viewers about gardening, landscape construction and choice plants. His next project was TLC's *Town Haul*, which allowed him to design artistic yet functional landscapes that encourage people to get outside and be active. Currently William hosts HGTV's *Dig In*, where he shows homeowners how to create their own ideal landscape. William is also a "greening" contributor for *The Early Show* on CBS, a frequent gardening guest on QVC and a spokesperson and author for the National Gardening Association.


As a youngster in Spartanburg, S.C., he worked on his grandfather's farm. Like most children, he'd rather have been out somewhere playing with friends. However, farm work fueled his love of nature and the outdoors, and looking back, William can appreciate it as the basis for his interest in gardening. As the great Gertrude Jekyll once said, "The love of gardening is a seed once sown that never dies." Young William also acquired a love of learning. One person in particular helped shape the course his life would take; his sophomore English teacher had taken a sabbatical at Northwestern University and spoke highly of it, inspiring William to apply. After graduation, he was off to Chicago to become a Wildcat.

At Northwestern, William first studied to be a chemical engineer. He recalls his summer internship in a windowless lab as "the most boring 10 weeks of (his) life." He quickly switched majors and went on to receive a bachelor's degree in American history. He spent three years teaching sixth grade in the Chicago Public Schools and loved it. During this time William and his soon-to-be-wife, Natasha, whom he'd met at Northwestern, at-

tended the Chicagoland Master Gardening Program together. After its completion, William had the opportunity to join the Chicago Department of the Environment to work on habitat restoration and greening efforts throughout the city. From there, he became a horticultural educator for the Chicago Botanic Garden, working in youth programs, adult continuing-education courses and school gardens.

These opportunities gave William what he calls "the best of all worlds": being a hands-on teacher to various sectors of his community. His expertise and warm personality gained him chances to reach even wider audiences, through local radio and television guest spots right up to national cable TV. He is still an edu-

cator and advisor at the Chicago Botanic Garden, leading students toward Master Gardener and Ornamental Plant certifications. To stay current, William studies horticultural and environmental science while conducting plant trials and testing products in his own gardens. He's also in the final stage of a master's degree in natural resources and environmental science from the University of Illinois.

Once dubbed the Garden Boss for his in-depth knowledge, he says, "Gardening is one of the highest forms of science." He loves how it fulfills his "nerdy" science craving—plus that it provides good exercise and helps the planet. William feels our country is going through an urban agriculture movement that will touch all aspects of our society, from the economy to social policy. He strongly believes that we can all make a difference if we "get out and grow." He is spreading the word with a series of "mini-books" under the *Get Out & Grow* name; books on tomatoes, veggie gardening and small spaces are scheduled for release this spring. You might think William Moss is one tired guy at day's end, but he says he just feels lucky and blessed to be sharing with others all that's good about gardening. 

# Garden Teacher William Moss

by MARIA ZAMPINI ~ photograph courtesy KNIGHT ENTERPRISES

