

EDIBLE ESTATES

Revenge Of the Lawn

*Subsistence farming
takes to the suburbs.*

IF FRITZ HAEG has his way, the American lawn will be best served not with a Weedeater and Roundup, but with a tasty vinaigrette. Since 2005, the Los Angeles-based architect/artist/provocateur has been on a crusade to transform the manicured meadows of suburbia into productive minifarms. At a series of post-modern homesteads around the country,



Fritz Haeg's garden for London's Tate Modern is moving toward harvest.

Haeg has swapped bluegrass for broccoli. He calls his latter-day victory gardens Edible Estates.

While the sites are chosen with an eye toward averageness, the suburban sod-busters, who agree to maintain their shares, must be willing to step outside the mainstream. Treading heavily on sacred ground, Haeg overthrows the tyranny of turf with dense, "aggressively beautiful" installations of flavorsome flora. The resulting foodscape is "a dramatic departure from agriculture, more like a highly designed and composed landscape of plants that happen to



be edible," Haeg told *Landscape Architecture*.

Haeg's earliest inkling of Edible Estates grew in the wake of the 2004 presidential election. "I had grown disillu-

sioned with the design and art world," Haeg said. "I was interested in doing a project that was for a broad, mainstream American public. I wanted to do a project for the red states."

With a commission from the Salina Art Center, ground was broken at the Salina, Kansas, home of Stan and Priti Cox on July 4, 2005. Edible Estates in Los Angeles and

Haeg designed this beautiful and edible garden for the Tate Modern in London.



Maplewood, New Jersey, followed. This summer, Haeg took his campaign overseas, lending his savory signature to the grounds of a London council estate, part of an exhibit titled *Global Cities* at London's Tate Modern.

With a vocabulary that's equal parts conceptual artist, ecowarrior, and heartland populist, Haeg says his greatest goal is to create a new lexicon of lawn care. "I think half the project is giving a name, an identity to an urban farming act that didn't have an identity, so it's publicly acceptable. So that if someone asks what you're doing, you can say 'I'm making an Edible Estate.'"

—JOSHUA GRAY

COURTESY ASLA SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA CHAPTER, TOP AND BOTTOM LEFT, HEIKO PRIGGE, RIGHT