

# Father-son team tames suburban jungles

By JACQUE RILEY

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Some fathers and sons spend time together watching football, working on cars or playing golf.

Bill and Jonathan Kunze like to save plants.

In fact, the father-son team recently opened Jungle Taming, a yard business that uses a term they've coined as "landsculpting."

Unlike traditional landscaping, which often entails completely uprooting a yard and replacing all its shrubbery, landsculpting removes excess growth from clients' yards so existing plants can flourish.

"We specialize in subtraction and strategic removal," said Bill Kunze. "Most landscape designers cut everything down to start with a clean slate. But with landsculpting, we look for ways to uncover the hidden splendor that many yards already possess."

Jonathan illustrated his father's point during a recent tour of winding property in Forest Acres.

Carefully peeling away the overhang of an unplanned tree, he gestures toward what, to the untrained eye, appears to be a perfectly ordinary bush. Excitedly, he explains that the struggling plant is a Lady Banks rosebush, known for its tiny, charming blooms.

Using precision hand clippers, the two remove the sunlight-stealing vines to rejuvenate the plant. The father-son team works together with an intuitive understanding, dodging clippers and removing overlapping vines with the ease of a close-knit family.

"Lots of landscapers would cut this down completely because they don't have tools for delicate work," said Bill Kunze. "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, the two do about 80 percent of their work down on all fours in the dirt with hand clippers.

For the tricky wisteria vines that plague the Northeast, they may employ slender carpentry saws — a stark contrast to power mowers and chain saws.

"The Jungle Taming guys are wonderful to work with," said Betty Cantey, who had the pair work on her Forest Acres yard. "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 said. "I'd rather have something that I can enjoy every day."

After freeing a yard from the stranglehold of trash trees and unwanted vines, the Kunzes make sure the vines won't return by using artists' paintbrushes to carefully coat each stump with herbicide. This requires special herbicide licenses, but it minimizes maintenance without harming nearby plants.

"We're in the business of revitalization, so we have to do things right the first time," said Jonathan Kunze. "And because families are spending more time in their yards, we want to give them a place they can enjoy right away. Landsculpting lets our clients capitalize on the beauty that's already there."

## FOR DETAILS

Contact Jungle Taming at (803) 269-6339 or visit [www.jungletaming.com](http://www.jungletaming.com).