



Sustainable Landscape Enhances New Construction

RIGHT: Before – An existing wall and an eroding, roughly graded front yard present problems that the design addresses. **ABOVE:** The homeowner views her completed landscape in the fall of the first year. Three trees above the wall have already begun to screen the street. The river birch and Canadian hemlock also mitigate the height of the house.



TOP PHOTO: MARK GROMKO, BOTTOM PHOTO: JUDY NAUSEEF



This residential project went from a scarred ground and exposed presence to a landscape that embraces the newly constructed, Craftsman-style home. The landscape design also keeps rain water on site, limits deer browsing and attracts a diverse community of birds, butterflies and insects. The design also screens views of and from adjacent properties, yet retains its good-neighbor feel.

The owners wanted to partially screen the street and a private space behind the house. They looked forward to maintaining a landscape that would provide beauty and the opportunity for study of the natural environment. The house would serve not only as a refuge for the

couple, but also as a welcoming home for their children to visit. They looked forward to meeting their neighbors and becoming part of the community.

Native and Nonnative Plants

The garden surrounding the wall at the sidewalk curves from the driveway to the property line and creates an envelope for the house and yard. It forms a wide planting area and a buffer from the street. The yard slopes toward the wall, and rain water tile lines carry rain water to an area of stones and native plants that obscure the wall.

The garden is planted with a mixture of native and nonnative plants, including

ABOVE: A limestone wall and outcropping stone direct water away from the house where lower level windows provide a view of this pretty garden. Russian sage (*Perovskia atriplicifolia*), northern sea oats (*Chasmanthium latifolium*) and a creeping thyme (*Thymus* spp.) form a lovely combination.



river birch (*Betula nigra*), Canadian hemlock (*Tsuga canadensis*), Gro-Low sumac (*Rhus aromatic* 'Gro-Low'), catmint (*Nepeta faassenii* 'Walkers Low'), prairie blazing star (*Liatris pycnostachya*) and prairie dropseed (*Sporobolus heterolepis*).

Nature focus of patio views

In the backyard, a generous Borgert-brand cobble patio provides a place to gather and observe the garden and wildlife. The natural area beyond the property blends into a planted garden of native plants that encloses the yard

ABOVE: The planting for a northern exposure softens the edge of the patio. Lady's mantle and coral bells surround a dwarf Japanese maple. **LEFT** The Borgert cobble patio with its Adirondack chairs provides a private space for the homeowners. A willow shrub and a tree lilac screen the neighbor's backyard.



Brilliant prairie blazing star in summer directs our eyes to the front entrance. The very narrow bed below the wall is an inhospitable site, but native prairie plants thrive there.

without fencing. Birds, butterflies and bees find food and habitat in the yard. Deer-resistant plants discourage browsing. The native plants include vernal witch hazel (*Hamamelis vernalis*), serviceberry (*Amelanchier canadensis*) and eastern redbud (*Cercis canadensis*). Willow (*Salix integra*) and one 'Ivory Silk' Japanese tree lilac (*Syringa reticulata* 'Ivory Silk'), a deer resistant ornamental tree, screen the neighbor's yard without blocking it entirely.

The north-facing garden along back of the house includes the versatile and colorful foliage plants lady's mantle (*Alchemilla mollis*) and coral bells (*Heuchera* spp.). These perennials fill the ground layer under a Japanese maple (*Acer palmatum*), which the owners received as a gift.

We hope to have mended and repaired the landscape, preventing further loss of habitat while reflecting the quality of design in the house. The



gardens bring a sense of past woods and prairie to the site. ♡

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Native plants absorb runoff from the yard in early summer. Prairie dropseed grass softens the connection with the pavement and the taller prairie blazing star hides the wall.