

MAKEOVER ISSUE

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elegant gardens & outdoor rooms

Life is better outside!

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CLASSIC COURTYARD

By framing the front yard with lush greens, landscape design firm Earth Inc. helped the homeowners create an intimate yet functional outdoor space that complements the home's traditional style.

1. Grand entrance

■ Pedestal urns enhance the home's neutral palette and contrast with the dark metalwork on the door and hanging light.

2. Strong focal point

■ The central black urn planted with coleus and fuchsias is an easy-to-maintain alternative to a fountain. 'Flower Carpet' roses encircled by boxwood soften the stonework's hard edges.



PRODUCED BY ANDREA MILLS

4. Living walls

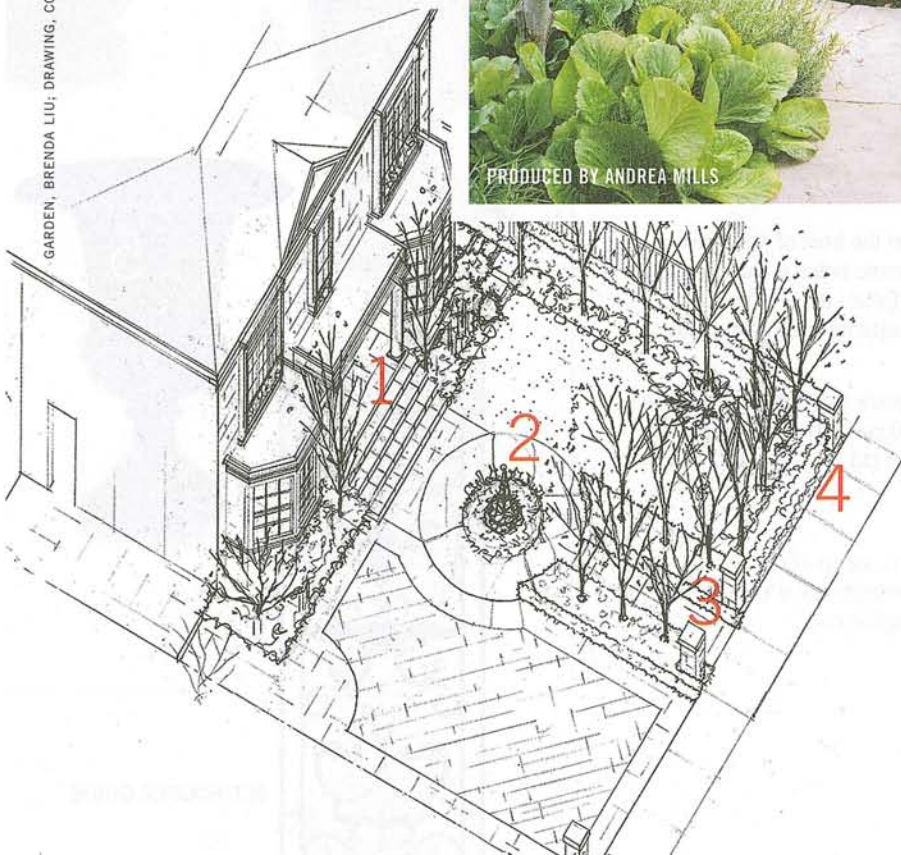
■ Columnar European hornbeams and a yew hedge define the courtyard, enclosing the space for privacy and tranquility.

3. Central path

■ Along the path, columnar European hornbeams underplanted with a mix of bergenia, hostas and coralbells add an unexpected twist on traditional symmetry.

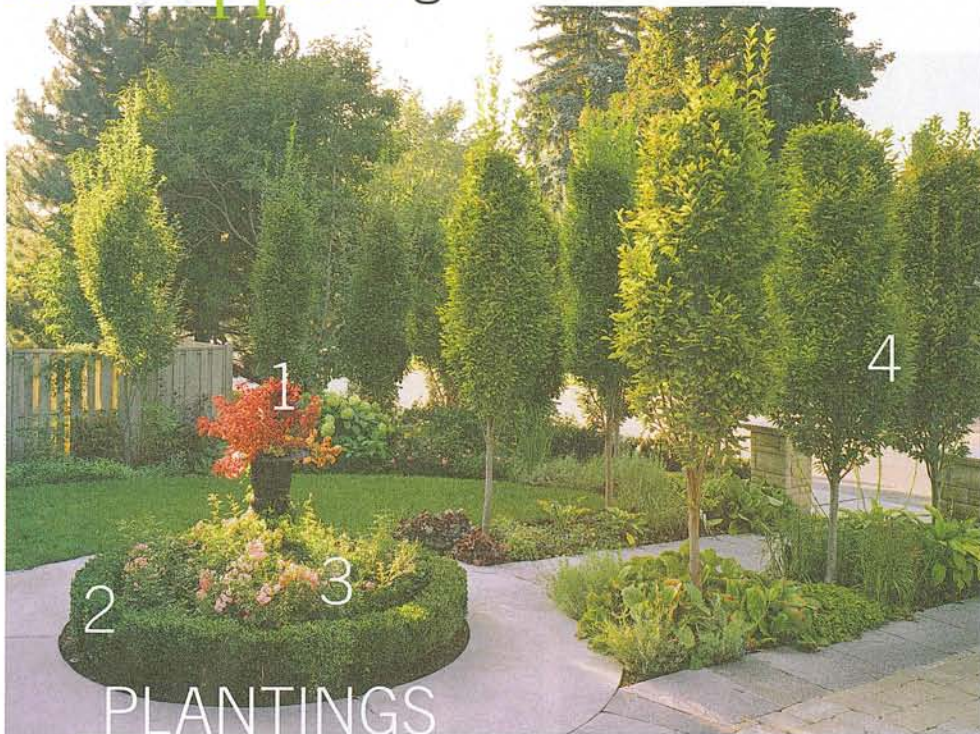
THE RESULT Instead of a generic cookie-cutter plot, the yard offers an intimate space and an enticing entry. Even the neighbour gushes that "it's like a view of Versailles every morning." And there is nothing cookie cutter about that.

turn the page to get the look >



GARDEN: BRENDA LIU; DRAWING: COURTESY OF EARTH INC.; PAINT: CARLO MENDOZA

curb appeal get the look



PLANTINGS

1. 'Red Queen' coleus

(Solenostemon) A trailing annual, this coleus' rich burgundy-red foliage is lovely paired with fuchsias, especially in a partly shady spot. It offers a welcoming contrast to this home's otherwise neutral palette.

2. Boxwood (*Buxus*) Used for formal hedging and topiary, boxwood can be clipped into almost any shape. To keep its leathery foliage a nice shiny green, give it fertile soil and some shade. Zone 5.

3. 'Flower Carpet' rose (*Rosa*)

Growing just three feet tall, the shrub roses in this series offer pink, white, yellow or red blooms all summer and are pest- and disease-resistant. Zone 5.

4. Columnar European hornbeam

(Carpinus betulus 'Fastigiata') With its serrated leaves and columnar habit, this tree is handsome alone or grouped. Its pollution tolerance makes it ideal for urban gardens. Zone 5.



TRIMMINGS

1. Vaughan Ely bronze-finish lantern, \$3,047, through Primavera Interior Furnishings.
2. Handcrafted copper lantern with seedy glass panels, \$430, Sescolite.
3. Este rotational-moulded plastic soapstone-finish urn, \$40, Canadian Tire.
4. Basket weave rotational-moulded plastic stone-finish urn, \$40, Canadian Tire.
5. Fibreglass urn, \$70, Canadian Tire.
6. Arteferro wrought-iron-and-glass door panel, Rome Collection, from \$4,000, through Tru Tech Door Systems.



FINISHES

The columns and detailing on the front of the house were custom made with concrete tinted a creamy hue. Get a similar shade with: **1.** Taffeta (6112-21) or **2.** Tea With Milk (6110-21), exterior latex paint, both about \$41 per gallon, Sico.

Cedar shingles soften the home's strong formal features. **3.** Cedar shingles, from \$700 per 100 square feet with installation, J. Stewart Roofing Ltd.

>>> learn more about cedar and the advantages of a cedar roof at gardeninglife.ca



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SEE SOURCE GUIDE

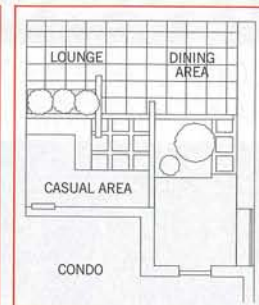
that, after all these years, I'm still so enamoured of it.



A classic Lutyens bench sits at the end of one garden room; behind it, an artfully trained cotoneaster adorns the garage.

design-ography

style A sleek, clean-lined condo patio
plant strategy Low-maintenance perennials with four-season interest contained in one area
main challenge solved Using substantial plantings without obstructing the views
size 750 square feet
designer Earth Inc.



▲ BEFORE

Despite fabulous south- and west-facing views, this downtown Toronto patio was merely ho-hum in its original state. Landscape designer

Kennedy McRae of the energetic firm Earth Inc. remembers it as a blank canvas. The homeowners envisioned a more pulled-together space that they could use for entertaining and relaxing. Not wanting to interfere with the cityscape, McRae used natural and unobtrusive materials—wood, stone and metal—in neutral tones. Special care was taken to remain true to the clean lines indoors, too. The design process was clearly set out from the start: to divide and conquer.

Three distinct areas were defined using an expansive, custom-made, wooden post-and-beam arbour, built-in raised planters and a mixed-media floor. “The post-and-beam structures provide a sense of false walls to create separation and mimic the indoors,” says McRae. The first section lies just beyond the indoor living room. Housing simple benches with ample storage, it’s a casual social area as well as a spot for the barbecue. The original patio slabs were removed and replaced with wood, much like the hardwood floors indoors. The slabs were then reused as a threshold into the next zone. To give definition, they were separated slightly and the gaps were filled with smooth black river stones from Mexico.

The eating area is next, featuring a simple teak table and chairs. “I didn’t want to tuck the table into the patio, I wanted it to be right out near the railing. It’s really all about the views,” reasons McRae. Overhead lighting was wired through the arbour. “It’s much more ambient and gentle,” he says, “versus lights in the ground beaming upward that can get in your eyes.”

The third and smallest section is a private enclave with two contemporary lounge chairs purely for relaxing. It’s hidden behind three planter boxes made of galvanized metal. Across the way on the east wall are two more boxes. “Originally, the planters were seven by seven feet, but because of the small service elevator, that was too big,” laughs McRae. So they were halved in size. Not only do the planters house a variety of sun-loving perennials, grasses and shrubs, they also anchor the post-and-beam arbour so contractors didn’t have to drill through the roof. *continued on page 84*

FROM TOP: The dining table and chairs are set near the patio’s outer edge to maximize the view, and the ambient glow from overhead lights creates a sense of romance; standard patio pavers were reused and given new definition with smooth black river stones; purple coneflower (*Echinacea purpurea*) and Russian sage (*Perovskia atriplicifolia*) make a good combo; anise hyssop (*Agastache foeniculum*) was chosen for its licorice scent.



> get the look, page 72

city makeover notebook: get the look

the look

the plants

lush wonderland



Create layers of lush foliage around meandering paths and punctuate with classic accessories like a wooden bench. Choose a favourite colour and use it in key plantings and accessories to add punch.



hellebore

TOP-LAYER TREES ■ **Franklinia** (*Franklinia alatamaha*) ■ **Japanese maple** (*Acer palmatum*) ■ **'Pink Pagoda'** mountain ash (*Sorbus hupehensis*)

MID-LAYER TREES ■ **Beautyberry** (*Callicarpa*) ■ **Dichroa** (*Dichroa febrifuga*) ■ **'Grace'** purple smoke bush (*Cotinus coggygria*)

BOTTOM-LAYER PERENNIALS ■ **Astilbe** (*Astilbe*) ■ **'Dickson's Gold'** bellflower (*Campanula garganica*) ■ **Fairy wings** (*Epimedium*) ■ **'Globemaster'** allium (*Allium*) ■ **Hellebore** (*Helleborus*) ■ **Hosta** (*Hosta*) ■ **New Zealand flax** (*Phormium*) ■ **'Obsidian'** coralbells (*Heuchera*)

terraced pleasure



Translate a loft look to your outdoor space with rectilinear, low-slung furnishings and large-scale plantings (mirroring indoor large-scale paintings or sculpture). Unadorned arbours delineate spaces and add to the loft feel.



globe thistle

SCULPTURAL GRASSES & SHRUBS

■ **Lyme grass** (*Leymus, Elymus*) ■ **Maiden grass** (*Miscanthus*) ■ **Sumac** (*Rhus*)

WIND-TOLERANT FLOWERING PERENNIALS ■ **Anise hyssop** (*Agastache foeniculum*) ■ **Globe**

thistle (*Echinops ritro*) ■ **Purple coneflower** (*Echinacea purpurea*) ■ **Russian sage** (*Perovskia atriplicifolia*) ■ **Yarrow** (*Achillea*)

modern tree house



Make a statement with metal accents, dark stone slabs and pared-down accessories. Keep foliage small and airy to soften the look. Fine-textured leaves sparkle in the sun and cast enchanting, lacy shadows.



lady fern

LOW-GROWING SHADE PERENNIALS

■ **Bloodroot** (*Sanguinaria canadensis*) ■ **Cohosh** (*Actaea simplex*) ■ **Creeping phlox** (*Phlox stolonifera*) ■ **Dwarf crested iris** (*Iris cristata*) ■ **Foamflower** (*Tiarella cordifolia*) ■ **Foxglove** (*Digitalis purpurea*) ■ **Lady fern** (*Athyrium filix-femina*)

■ **Wild ginger** (*Asarum canadense*) ■ **Wood fern** (*Dryopteris*)

TREES WITH TEXTURE ■ **Eastern redbud** (*Cercis canadensis*) ■ **Paper birch** (*Betula papyrifera*) ■ **Paperbark maple** (*Acer griseum*) ■ **Shagbark hickory** (*Carya ovata*)

bungalow chic



Get the Hamptons vibe by choosing small-scale but substantial-looking furniture in natural tones, and accessorize with soft, striped cushions. Shiny lanterns, glazed pots full of tall grasses and a trickling water feature set the tone.



foxglove

EASY-CARE PERENNIALS ■ **Bee balm** (*Monarda didyma*) ■ **Foxglove** (*Digitalis purpurea*) ■ **Globe thistle** (*Echinops ritro*)

■ **Purple coneflower** (*Echinacea purpurea*) ■ **FLASHY FOLIAGE** ■ **'Bronze'** New Zealand hair sedge (*Carex comans*) ■ **Coralbells** (*Heuchera sanguinea*) ■ **Jacob's ladder**

(*Polemonium caeruleum*) ■ **Japanese maple** (*Acer palmatum*) ■ **Weeping purple beech** (*Fagus sylvatica* 'Purpurea Pendula')

FLOWERING SHRUBS ■ **Lilac** (*Syringa*) ■ **'Pink Beauty'** hydrangea (*Hydrangea macrophylla*) ■ **Rose of Sharon** (*Hibiscus syriacus*) ■ **Weigela** (*Weigela*)

LADY FERN, LAURA ARSIE; FOXGLOVE, IMAGE BOTANICA

Introducing Tetley Iced. Expertly crafted using Tetley's premium tea, raw cane sugar, and delicious natural fruit flavours, it's the light, refreshing way to satisfy your thirst.



MODERN TREE HOUSE FROM PAGE 69

"I sit here quietly and look at all my trees. It feels so peaceful," says Hockin.

Encouraging guests down toward the lower, more casual lounge and dining area is the stunning, reflective bent-aluminum "bridge," or staircase of eight wide stairs. "We designed the staircase to be engaging, and to allow you to sit and hang out among the trees," says Rapoport. Flanking the steps is the centre plot, where a smattering of trees offers the feeling of walking through a forest. Finally, down below is the simple patio area.

"We reused stones from the front garden, and the steel-framed, open-slatted fence provides privacy but also allows a framed view of the park beyond," explains Rapoport. The fence also doubles as a frame for a makeshift movie screen on nights when a projector is set up outside. By creating these two outdoor rooms, Rapoport figures she has added about 30 per cent more living area to the home.

But perhaps the most exciting elements for Hockin in this process are the 12 (mostly) native trees she invested in. She and Rapoport chose paper birch, Eastern redbud, shagbark hickory and paperbark maple for their textured bark and winter interest. "I had this immense feeling of pride when they were planted. I am so much more aware of trees now," she says. These trees were at the root of the planting strategy, and help to stabilize the slope and prevent erosion. A carpet of ferns, moss, foxgloves, creeping phlox, foamflowers and many other native perennials provide dimension along with spring colour and fill in the garden's floor.

When asked about the success of the garden, Rapoport says, "By treating the slope as a place for tree-canopy growth rather than a problem we had to fix, we've managed to design a retreat-like space that relates to the forest. It's not fussy, it's not tight—it's just right."

For Hockin, the results are more personal. "This garden and especially my trees are taking on a personality all their own," she says. "I'm really looking forward to watching them grow." □

TERRACED PLEASURE FROM PAGE 67

Plants were chosen with particular attention to size. "We didn't want to block any views, but we wanted substantial perennials that would grow no taller than six or seven feet," says McRae. Ornamental grasses, including maiden and lyme, provide winter interest. The spectrum of blue-, pink- and purple-flowering perennials includes globe thistle, purple coneflower and Russian sage. Anise hyssop was chosen for its licorice-like scent, and a hardy shrubby sumac adds a strong punctuation mark.

All the perennials were planted in rows for visual impact and are extremely easy to maintain with the irrigation system in place. "The plants simply exploded the very first year," McRae recalls. "It almost felt like a mature garden in mere months." He urges everyone to invest in sizable greenery, especially in a small space, to prevent it from looking too precious. Now, this space is anything but! □

BUNGALOW CHIC FROM PAGE 71

a lush specimen. While there was no mowing, I found myself puttering a lot—filling in blank spots for a tighter planting, trying out bee balm and foxgloves, and pulling weeds next to the patio.

The backyard that I'd originally envisioned as "entertainment central" had instead become my retreat, the place where I relaxed and recharged. Oh, I invited friends over—but it was more about leisurely wine-soaked dinners than dance-the-night-away parties. "Brave" and "bold" weren't what I was looking for; "calm" and "relaxed" were. It was time to rethink the paint choices.

And so my little yard was transformed again, this time with softer, coastal-inspired hues. Nothing's shouting to be looked at: it's all just calmly there, in cloud white and softly tinged blue. Now the colourful stars are the purple foliage of the trees and grasses, the rich greens of the leaves, and the blooms on the lilacs, weigela and rose of Sharon that blossom in succession throughout the season. I'm still no expert gardener, but I'm learning. And I love it. □