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Indiana Backyard Remodel

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Project Highlights:



Before



After

Location: Valparaiso, IN

Property size: 3 acres

Problem: The existing landscape didn't complement the beautiful brick home and the backyard was uninviting.

Solution: Transform the property by creating a sense of symmetry and manipulating grades to create outdoor rooms.

Design Concepts

The number one request from the owners of the home was to create symmetry and balance that would be in keeping with the formal architecture of their home. "The owners are busy with their children and business. They wanted to look out their windows and see beautiful landscaping and wildlife," explains Nancy Marshall, president of Small's Landscaping. Marshall arranged Hicks Yew, Boxwood, and Hornbeam hedges, as well as pairs of beeches, amelanichiers and Japanese maples to create a symmetrical structure for the design and subtly lead visitors from one beautiful area to the next. "To attract wildlife, a cedar bird feeder was installed as well as a carved stone bird bath for the birds to enjoy year round," Marshall adds.

Previously, the home had a large wood deck that stepped down into the yard. "Grade was critical to the entire project," says Marshall. "For the main dining patio, we brought the grade up to create an inviting environment that is only a few steps out of the house." To create separation, the fireplace patio is a few steps lower than the dining area. Another set of steps leads down to the lawn where there is a swing and a gourmet garden featuring a wide variety of vegetables and berry bushes.



Upper Dining Patio



Lower Fireplace Patio

Material Choices

Thirty-three tons of flagstone were used to pave the two patios and several walkways that wind through the landscape. A warm stone color was selected with black variations that tie in with the black in the home's brick. "Huge sheets of stone, many larger than pallet size pieces, were sorted and carefully puzzled together by our experienced hardscaping team," Marshall explains. Smaller pieces were cut to fill open spots and achieve joints of less than 1/4" that were filled with polymeric sand to discourage shifting. The soil beneath the patios has a high clay content which can cause drainage problems. Drain stone and a 300' French drain beneath the flagstone ensures that the patios will remain problem free for years to come. The steps from the house and between the upper and lower patios were created with thick pieces of sawn stone. Multiple pieces of stone were butted together to create the 15' wide staircase leading to the fireplace.

The fireplace serves as a relaxing destination for the homeowners. "It was placed strategically to block a view of the neighbors' garage doors. When you sit in front of the fireplace it appears as if there is not a house on that side of the yard at all," says Marshall. The brick matches the home's exterior and the limestone hearth and mantel tie in with limestone accents on the home. A natural gas line and log lighter make it easy to start a fire and if the owners get tired of chopping wood they can install a ceramic log set to convert the fireplace to gas.

The final touches were added to the property with the addition of colorful Hydrangeas, Roses, Dwarf Butterfly Bushes, perennials, & ground covers. Containers that are changed seasonally also accent the landscape. Now that their landscape is complete, these homeowners couldn't be happier. Marshall has received multiple emails from the owners thanking them for their new landscaping.

Small's Landscaping

Valparaiso, Indiana

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