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Transformation

The outdoor appearance, or landscape, of a home can go a long way in the enjoyment, use, and resale value of your property. Landscapes should be designed to maximize use and pleasure and to create a visual connection between the home and the surrounding land. Many times a home's potential for a pleasurable yet functional surrounding is missed because of a lack of knowledge or too few design ideas. We asked Dave Fletcher, of Reder Landscaping, for his expertise on changing these landscapes.

by Dave Fletcher, Reder Landscaping



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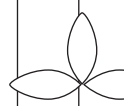


Traditional Twist:

This was a very large traditional home set close to the sidewalk. The owners wanted a showplace for interesting and unusual plants and an eclectic mix of materials. We focused on incorporating these ideas into a plan that brought this large home down to a human scale and provided several larger elements that would tie many separate spaces and styles into a whole setting that harmonized beautifully.

The entry walk is wide enough to allow guests to walk side by side. It invites them to the front door through small vignettes of specimen plants accented with artwork and moving water. The various levels and landings help to define each small space as a separate stage for the plants that it highlights. Long, low stone walls and boxwood hedges weave through them all to reinforce the idea that even though they're separate, they're all part of the same garden.

This idea continues in the backyard. Seating areas are situated on various levels, each with a different theme and level of formality, from refined pavers with wrought iron railings to rustic flagstone with stacked stone walls. Unusual specimen plants are nestled throughout. A large stream, with eleven falls running through a large portion of the backyard, has been installed as the focal point and feature that ties it all together.



Poolside Entertaining:

The owners of this home had an above-ground pool for years, and a very nice, but very small brick patio and garden. What they didn't have was a sense of connection between house, patio and pool. or enough room to enjoy all three at the same time with their growing family. The focus here was on creating an elegant outdoor living space that would feel like an extension of the rooms inside and would center on the main feature of the backyard-the pool.

The new patio is elevated to door level, which allows easy movement from the inside out without stepping down. This helps transform the patio from being just something on the ground in the backyard to being as much a part of the home as the family room. Wooden decks have been the traditional choice for an elevated space such as this, but homeowners are beginning to discover that raised brick paver patios are an elegant and beautiful alternative. Both were used here for added interest. A mixture of natural and man-made materials was blended throughout, which provides a nice transition between the home and the surrounding woodlands. The larger scale patio lets it conned two - relatively large spaces, house and pool, without being overwhelmed.

In the end, the owners have added well over 1000 square feet of gorgeous living space that blends beautifully with their natural surroundings; they'll be able to enjoy it with their children, friends, and family for years to come.

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An Elegant Entry:

This new home suffered from a cramped entry walk that did nothing to emphasize the front door, which should be a focal point for any home. A straight narrow walkway hugged the garage wall and left no room for planting. It forced guests to walk in single file to the door and gave no incentive for anyone to use it. With the front door out of sight around the corner, it was unclear whether the walkway went anywhere at all.

The new design focused on several key goals: 1) Pull the entry walk away from the garage so that it didn't feel as if the house was towering over guests; 2) Make the walk inviting by winding it through beautiful planting beds and create interest in finding out "what's around the corner"; 3) Make the walk wide enough so that guests could arrive walking comfortably side-by-side.

These goals were accomplished beautifully with a wide brick paver walkway that invites guests through swaths of lawn and rose gardens. They are rewarded at the end with an elegant and spacious outdoor foyer that highlights the beauty of the home's entry. A steep slope, which previously fell dangerously from the front door area into the side yard, has become an asset. A natural stone staircase now winds down out of sight around an outcropping boulder wall and perennial garden. Additional rolling contours and stone walls bring interest to other areas of the property, while outlying planting beds of appropriate size help settle this large home comfortably into its surroundings.

