



Several sculptures in Sharri's garden were created by Cracked Pots of Portland, a group who uses reclaimed materials to make art. One swirling garden sculpture comes from the metal of an old red-orange pick-up truck.

Sharri created tile leaves and had them embedded in the cement sidewalk around her house. They are randomly placed and seem as though they've just landed on the ground from the trees above.

Vanessa Nagel's book, *Understanding Garden Design: A Complete Handbook for Aspiring Designers*, is coming out this fall from Timber Press.



A woodland garden

A homeowner's whimsical art collection complements this unconventional garden

STORY BY MARY PREISER POTTS

What do you get when you cross a garden designer with a printmaker? Why, a unique, one-of-a-kind garden, of course.

Vanessa Nagel of Seasons Garden Design in Vancouver and her client, Sharri LaPierre, spent about a year designing Sharri's garden. Sharri's home, located on the outskirts of Vancouver, is tucked among tall evergreens just off a hilly, rural road. The overall look and feel of the garden design neatly incorporates the woodsy feel of Sharri's house with its stonework accents and earthy color scheme.

While looking for a garden designer, Sharri discovered Vanessa's website, and she was immediately impressed by the diversity of plants Vanessa uses in her gardens. When I asked Sharri about her original vision, she gestured around her and said with a smile, "My vision was a woodland garden."

Instead of the standard variety arborvitae hedge edging the yard along the road, they chose a more interesting tapestry hedge. The tapestry hedge is a mixture of mostly native flowering plants and cultivars that, when mature, will be beautiful as well as create privacy and diminish road noise. Among them are *Edgeworthia* (paper bush), *Miscanthus sinensis* 'Strictus' (porcupine grass), *Ribes sanguineum* 'King Edward VII' (flowering currant), *Nandina* (heavenly bamboo), *Garrya elliptica* (silk tassel) and *Cephalotaxus* (plum yew).

We explored the expansive front garden by way of a mulch path leading away from the house and under a massive metal "Moon Gate." We stopped to observe a large stone spiral embedded in the ground and flanked on either side by a stone bench and a fountain. Then, the path curved and as we headed back toward the house, we stopped to admire three metal arbors. Created by glass and metal artist, Zoe Bacon, the arbors are covered with spiral designs and accented with clear glass spheres.

Next, we passed a giant painted ceramic pear and eggplant duo, a large-leaved *fatsia* forest and finally, the mulch path ended at a round, hammered copper sculpture.

"The end of a long path is a perfect place to put a piece of art, a fabulous plant or something to give you a reason to walk down the path," Vanessa said.

As a garden designer, Vanessa places much emphasis on carrying the eye from place to place. The borders of the garden are clearly defined, and then there's usually some element that draws your attention back inside. For example, the backyard is bordered on one side by a small pond and on the other by a gabion wall, which is a wire cage filled with stones. The wall delineates the end of the garden and also draws your eye back toward an inviting spiral-shaped, stone seat wall and firepit.

If you've noticed a trend with spirals, then you're on the right path (literally). Sharri's affinity for spirals and swirls comes from her work as a printmaker and painter. She and Vanessa incorporated them into many of the garden elements to create a motif that not only expresses Sharri's personality, but also lends continuity to the garden design.

Of course, designing the garden is just half the job. All of the stone work in the garden was completed by Emerald Stone Masonry and the landscape planting and maintenance is provided by D & J Landscape Contractors.

According to Vanessa, dialogue is essential to helping people express themselves through their gardens. And both women say one positive outcome of their garden collaboration is a friendship. **NB**

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