

# Art *and* Nature

## Aesthetics or Investment? Landscape Architecture Enhances Both.

Like a smooth-flowing floor plan or an inviting interior design, your home's landscape is a valuable component of your property. Carefully planned and managed, trees, gardens and "hardscape" stone and structure additions create continuity between indoors and out and make the whole site more enjoyable.

At Van Zelst, a team of landscape architects and designers will work with you to create a scene that complements your home and your personal tastes, while painting a striking year-round view from your windows.

More than simply adding to the aesthetic appeal of your home, a well-designed landscape significantly enhances your property's value. In fact, according to a Clemson University study, consumers perceive a well-landscaped home to be worth an average of 11.3% more than its assessed value. Generally speaking, that correlates to a higher return on investment than additions and upgrades to kitchens, baths or master suites.

Our clients look to Van Zelst for the dramatic visual and functional enhancements that our landscape architectural services provide. We understand that homeowners are interested in developing a beautiful environment that's well suited to entertaining and active living. Gardens of today are expected to contain engaging features that can live and grow with a family.

Certainly, a long-lasting landscape design and installation is an important investment. At Van Zelst, Inc., we're proud to provide our clients with landscape environments that can provide not only financial returns, but emotional and lifestyle enjoyment year after year as well.

### Trees: Growing Assets

In addition to their beauty, trees provide a variety of benefits.

#### Environmental

They clean the air, reduce erosion, and save energy by blocking wind and providing shade.

#### Economic

Healthy trees can add between 6% and 15% to a residential property value; 98% of realtors believe mature trees have a "strong or moderate impact on saleability."

#### Social

Tree stands can cut noise, add privacy and screen unattractive features.

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◀ Contrasting foliage textures can be just as dazzling as colorful blooms. Here, a Japanese Painted Fern peeks from between Blue and Variegated Hostas.

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## Innovations in Brick and Stone.

When people think of landscape architecture, they focus too often on “landscape” and forget about the “architecture.” But the architectural hardscape — brick and stone, ornaments and structures — is an integral part of the overall design and can have a remarkable impact on the appearance of the finished product.

At Van Zelst, we encourage our clients to consider hardscape as part of their landscape plan, instead of something to be added in the future. When plants and hardscape features are designed to work together, they create the balance needed for a perfect finished product. Unlike most other landscape architectural firms, Van Zelst employs its own stone masons to ensure that our rigorous quality standards are maintained throughout the installation process.

Like any other part of the landscape design process, masonry and stonework require a mix of art and engineering. How will a pathway flow from the house to an herb garden? Will the patio be used for lounging, entertaining or both? How can we integrate a stone retaining wall into an informal wildflower garden? What will make a brick paver driveway harmonize with the existing brick house, without looking as if it were installed yesterday?

These questions (and many others) are asked at the beginning of any project, to help determine the scope of the site’s hardscape elements. After all, a new landscape installation or remodel is the perfect time to add a fully-equipped outdoor kitchen, swimming pool or relaxing fountain. We want to make sure all your needs and hopes for your landscape are addressed.

In addition to their tremendous functionality, brick and stone can help create interest in a space, divide various zones of the landscape plan and invite visitors into the plantings. A winding walkway, for example, encourages guests to wander past the edge of a deck or patio, enjoying the fragrance of an herb or flower garden, stopping to enjoy a water view or pausing to reflect under an arbor.

You can choose from an almost limitless array of colors, styles and textures. Consider the warmth of bluestone, irregular flagstone, brick pavers in a range of colors or the “old-world style” Brussels blocks. No matter which direction you decide to go, Van Zelst’s award-winning design team and expert stone masons will bring it all together beautifully.



*Architectural Hardscape*





**Opposite, top:** A bluestone patio “explodes” into the grass, to soften the transition from hardscape to softscape.

**Opposite, bottom:** Rough-hewn stone outcropping can create appealing niches for grasses and flowers during warmer months, and adds visual interest when the snow begins to fall.

**Left:** A gently curving brick wall, capped with rock-faced bluestone leads the eye to a spectacular display of native wildflowers. It’s a perfect example of successfully mixing man- and nature-made elements.

**Bottom:** A relaxed, granite block pathway sets the stage for a lily-filled koi pond and stone benches. An ideal spot to sit and enjoy a warm summer afternoon.

## Paver and Stone Tips by Unilock, Inc.

America’s leading paving stone manufacturer shares its secrets.

- Curved, winding walkways and shapes make an area look larger.
- Consider four-foot wide walkways, so visitors can enjoy the garden in pairs.
- Consider stone driveways, walkways, patios, decks, terraces, walls, and archways.
- Think about your personality. Stonework can be informal and rustic, or polished and formal.



**Above:** Red Hollandstone pavers with tumbled sandstone Brussels Block banding and borders.

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### Garden Themes

This Tuscan garden was inspired by the home's architecture. But you can draw from any influence to create your own theme — a Zen paradise, an Impressionist scene worthy of Claude Monet, or a pared-down Arts and Crafts style.

## An Italian Villa Emerges.

The neo-Mediterranean style of the home was unmistakable, but the evocative, classic design seemed to end where the lawn began. The landscape was a blank slate — a vast expanse of green grass.

The owners wanted to extend the Tuscan feeling beyond the walls of their home, creating a slice of European living in the heart of the Midwest. They looked to Van Zelst, Inc. for the abundance of lush color that characterizes the Italian hillside.



Additionally, the owners wanted to incorporate a large area for entertaining, an outdoor kitchen, a pool, a play area for their children, and a variety of other details. They were also interested in enhancing the property's privacy, creating a retreat for themselves and their guests.

The Van Zelst team didn't limit itself to planting and hardscape recommendations. For this project, it was clear that some significant architectural additions would help

enhance the integrity of the home's design. So in addition to ideas traditionally associated with landscape design, the Van Zelst team worked with the owners to develop stone balustrades, iron railings, and stone window and door frames and sills.

A great deal of attention was paid to the main entertaining area behind the home, including a bluestone outdoor kitchen area that leads to a tumbled stone paver patio. The kitchen features have also been encased in stone, to complement the overall design.

Each of the home's secondary entrance terraces — and the indoor sun room — have also been laid with bluestone, for continuity indoors and out. What's more, a winding iron staircase from the upstairs master bedroom balcony to the patio below ties the interior and exterior living areas perfectly.



## The Tuscan Sun



For all the architectural and hardscape details, the true stars of the landscape are the plantings. Trees and flowers were planted tightly to provide instant color, giving the impression that they had been there for years. Expansive perennial beds and groundcover highlight a variety of evergreens and ornamental shrubs. Shade trees and ornamentals such as magnolia, crabapple and burning bush provide beauty and color year-round.

In all, more than 45 varieties of plants were used, including roses, daylilies, creeping thyme, pink turtlehead, coral bells and coreopsis. Additional plants are incorporated into the landscape as the seasons change, to provide the constantly changing beauty and interest the homeowners desired.

An Illinois Landscape Contractors Association gold award winner, this home renovation will be a source of pride for the homeowners and the Van Zelst team for years and years to come.

**Left:** The black-bottom pool, surrounded by generous limestone coping and tumbled pavers assembled in a herringbone pattern, is softened by lush beds of coral Impatiens. A stone dog stands guard over the scene, a whimsical contrast to the formal urns filled with New Guinea Impatiens.



After



With a fully appointed outdoor kitchen, the host can enjoy the party. In addition to a professional-quality grill, the arrangement includes a refrigerator, sink, side burner, warmer and rotisserie.

## Pansy

Pansies (pictured left) are used for color massing, edging, containers and window boxes during the Spring and Fall. They thrive in cool weather and bloom any time that temperatures are above freezing.

Pansies grow best in a location that receives morning sun and has rich, well-draining organic soil. Van Zelst crews add manure, leaf or mushroom compost to the soil to increase organic content.

There are more than 250 cultivars of pansies. Most of the cultivars are part of a series. A series consists of several cultivars that vary in color but share qualities such as hardiness, form, markings and so on.

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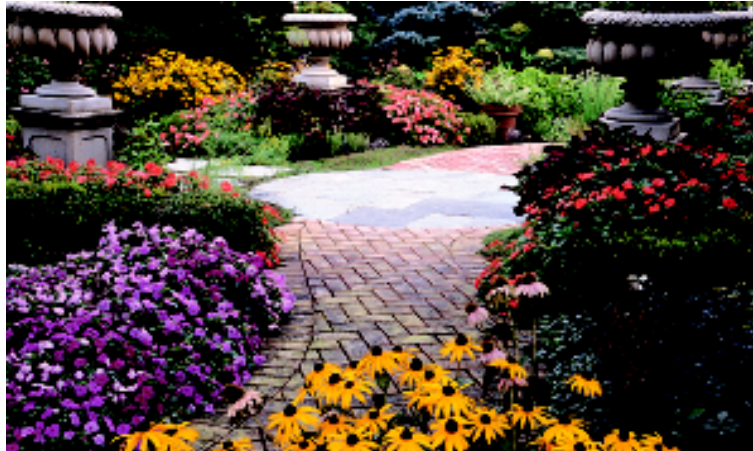
**Right:** Flowers are chosen to provide continuous color throughout the growing season. Here, pink Impatiens bloom heartily in the shade, and Black-Eyed Susans (*Rudbeckia* "Goldstrum") require occasional deadheading to assure late-season color.

**Below:** Light, frequent watering creates a lush, healthy lawn. Grass heights are adjusted during the season to foster healthy roots and keep grass under control during cool, fast-growing seasons.

**Opposite, top:** Even the most informal-looking garden requires maintenance to assure maximum color. Here, white "Annabelle" Hydrangeas artfully mix with tall purple *Liatris* and Yellow Coreopsis.

**Opposite, below:** Daylilies, Purple Coneflower (*Echinacea*), Yellow Coreopsis, Blue Salvia "May Night," and a bed of Impatiens provide contrasting heights, textures and colors in a long-lasting display.

## Maintenance. The Unsung Hero of Every Glorious Landscape.



Creating art out of living, growing things requires continuous, hands-on management. A landscape plan may take years to fully mature and achieve its final vision. Only expert maintenance throughout the year can assure that the most painstakingly planned landscape achieves its full potential.

That's one reason Van Zelst, Inc., is pleased to provide a complete range of services for our clients. In addition to designing and constructing the plan, including plantings and hardscape elements, we can provide weekly and periodic maintenance after the installation is complete.

Of course, even before a project is installed, the Van Zelst team is thinking about ways to nurture and protect existing healthy plants. We begin by making sure that the soil is rich with the necessary nutrients and that it drains properly for the types of plants that will be used. Appropriate irrigation systems are installed to meet the needs of various plant materials throughout your property. These steps, and others, will lay the foundation for healthy plants and a more efficient maintenance program.

As part of your overall landscape design, your Van Zelst team will provide a year-round maintenance plan. Because different types of plants, trees and lawn turf require varying levels of care, each variety will be considered. Ongoing management can then be transitioned to our maintenance team, who can take on weekly mowing, weeding and watering, as well as seasonal fertilization, pruning and more, so you can just sit back and admire the view.

Healthy plants not only look better and bloom longer, they're more resistant to pests and disease. A little preventive care will go a long way toward promoting your long-lasting, picture-perfect landscape.

# *Creating Art, Managing Nature*

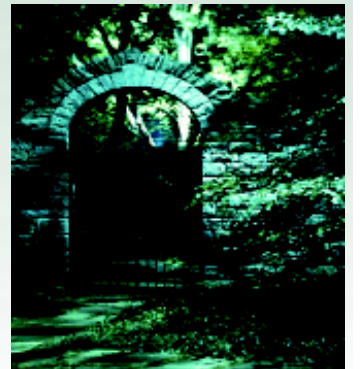
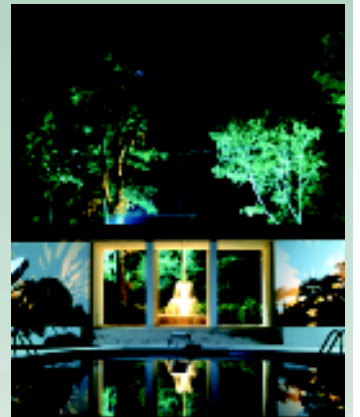




## Outdoor Lighting by Night Light, Inc.

From the drama of highlighting the canopies of your trees to the delicate moonlight patterns filtering through the leaves, Night Light's landscape illumination will transform your grounds into a soft ambiance of understated elegance during the evening hours.

- When nighttime falls, Night Light uses light as a paintbrush to enhance the beauty of your home & the landscape while providing the necessary security.
- Tell the landscape story after dark by providing a visual harmony between the key site and landscape elements.



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## Old-Fashioned, At-Your-Door Service.



I've always known how I wanted to build this company. If my name was going to be on the door, I wanted to be personally available to every client, and I never wanted to grow so big that I couldn't do that.

But as Van Zelst, Inc. became more successful, I was spending too much unproductive time driving between my office and project sites. So last fall, in an effort to reduce wasted hours and provide better client service, I moved my field office into a van.

It's fully equipped with wireless Internet, a laptop, printer and fax machine, so everything I need travels with me.

I'm spending more time with clients doing what I love. My wife and kids remember what I look like, and my clients are happier than ever. I think we're entering a whole new chapter of Van Zelst, Inc., and I hope you'll be a part of it.

Regards,

*Dave*

## Ideas for Your Midwestern Landscape.



Order your copy of *Transformations: Ideas for the Midwestern Landscape* today. In each chapter, David Van Zelst describes a project's challenges and solutions, while photographer Linda Oyama Bryan captures its essence in lush color photography.

For your copy, visit [www.vanzelst.com](http://www.vanzelst.com) and click on Book Order.



### Grilling with Dave

For great grilled veggies:

- Slice vegetables into large pieces that won't fall through the grate. Cut into smaller pieces after cooking.
- Marinate vegetables in olive oil, garlic and spices. Toss with balsamic vinegar after grilling.
- Skewer meats separately and stagger grilling times so vegetables aren't overcooked. Peppers, for example, take longer than squashes, eggplant or asparagus.

### Recent Honors

*Awards for Landscape Design, Construction and Management presented by the Illinois Landscape Contractors Association (ILCA)*

- 2004 Gold Glenview Residence
- 2004 Silver Lake Forest Residence
- 2004 Merit Kenilworth Residence
- 2003 Gold Kenilworth Residence
- 2003 Silver Wilmette Residence
- 2003 Merit Lake Forest Residence
- 2003 Merit Glencoe Residence

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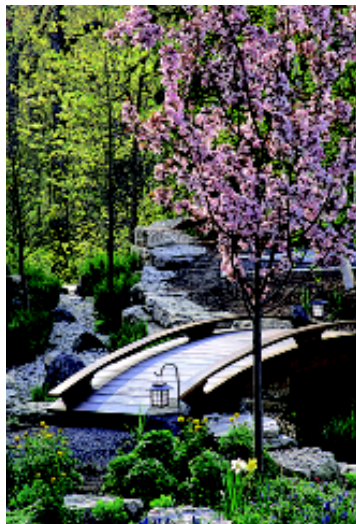
## Gardening for the Four Seasons.

In northern Illinois, landscapes are often planned around our blink-of-an-eye spring and swift summer. But attention must be paid to the year-round view if a homeowner is to enjoy the results fully.

Once colorful summer blooms have faded, the planning skills of Van Zelst landscape designers really emerge. Fiery leaves take center stage, and intricate ornamental grasses dry to create textural, earthy interest. As fall gives way to winter, decks, water features, ornaments and, of course, conifers become more important. Arbors

and boulder gardens step to the forefront. Deciduous trees chosen for their delicate limb structures and interesting shapes catch and hold snow like natural sculpture.

Trees and shrubs selected for their ability to attract birds can bring life into the landscape, even after grasses and perennials have gone dormant. The result is a cheery postcard scene on what could otherwise be the shortest, grayest days of the year.



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