



Art *and* Nature

Spring 2005

Local Color: Beautiful Plantings at Home in Illinois

Returning from a restful Caribbean or Mediterranean holiday, it's easy to imagine trying to re-create that lush, colorful environment at home. Unfortunately, an eight-foot hibiscus hedge, while beautiful, is unlikely to be happy here. The climate and soils of northern Illinois require hardier, more resilient plants than the temperate, humid tropics.

However, that won't stop you from having a brilliant garden since "continuous color" is a Van Zelst trademark.

Illinois is home to a wide variety of dazzling plants that thrive in our heavy, alkaline soils and extreme climate. Given the breadth of native varieties available, there is no difficulty finding trees, flowers, grasses and ground cover that give the look you desire.

Working closely with clients since 1979, the Van Zelst team understands how to design and grow flourishing, vibrant gardens that rival the color and abundance of holiday destinations. And, because we grow more than ninety percent of the perennials we use, the plants are already well adapted to their new homes.

We're always on the lookout for exciting new hybrids and varieties we can offer our clients. As a full-service landscape architecture firm, we work with each client from concept through installation, as well as provide ongoing landscape management services. This allows us to monitor different cultivars and continue to select plants that fare well in this area.

Whether you dream of a formal Parisian garden or overflowing drifts of oranges, yellows, and blues, the Van Zelst landscape architects will work with you to create a landscape that visually transports you just where you dream of going.

Plants and Chicago-Area Winters

While the Illinois State Water Survey suggests that northern Illinois hasn't experienced a significant change in climate or precipitation since the mid-1800s, we have been seeing more extreme fluctuations in winter temperatures.

In the past, an uninterrupted blanket of snow protected plants throughout the cold months. Today, however, we see greater temperature variations, causing freeze-thaw cycles that can cause real damage to dormant plants.



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◀ Mounds of native perennials, including Lavender, Coreopsis, and Chrysanthemums provide continuous color from spring through fall. Flowers and herbs are enhanced by natural stone steps and gravel, as well as arts and crafts-style path lighting.

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New Possibilities in Stone.

In recent years, exciting new choices in stone hardscape have burst onto the market. That may seem odd, given that stone is perhaps the oldest construction material with which any of us have come into contact. However, the demand for more creative outdoor living spaces, driven by the trend toward outdoor entertaining, has resulted in incredible new colors and styles, and greater flexibility than ever before.

Where backyard wooden decks once ruled, stone has emerged as a superior product—and a superior investment. In addition to setting a lasting stage for outdoor enjoyment, stone is unique in the way it significantly adds to your home's value. Stone retains its beauty throughout the seasons, enhancing your landscape in summer and winter alike.

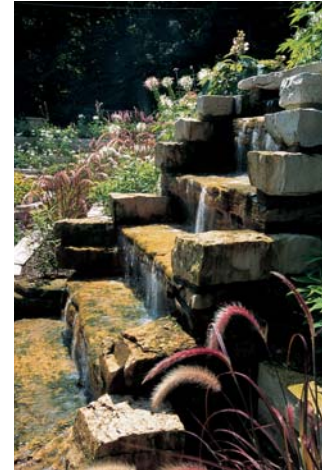
Economic advantages aside, nothing has the rich, substantial feel of real stone beneath your feet. Today's stone choices can integrate with virtually any home style. Consider fine-grained bluestone, rugged lannonstone or the tumbled look of Brussels block, as well as man-made products such as concrete or brick pavers. Stone hardscape defines a space and adds a heightened level of finish, creating continuity between a home's interior and the outdoors.

At Van Zelst, our landscape architects are continually exploring new artistic ways to work with different varieties of stone, creating

patios, outdoor fireplaces, meandering walls and stone planting structures. Sometimes two or more types of stonework are combined for a breathtaking effect. As a result, each hardscape design is one of a kind.

Naturally, our expertise doesn't stop at the design. Our experienced masons professionally install stonework using a combination of old-world and new techniques. They understand the nature of the stone itself, as well as how to use it to enhance your setting.

As you consider installing or renewing a landscape, think about how stone might enhance the space. A winding path can invite greater interaction with the flowers. A trickling water feature beckons to cardinals, goldfinches, and sunbathers alike. Hardscape ornaments or structures can add vertical interest. When it comes to integrating walkways, patios and plantings, if an idea can be imagined, we can make it real.



Beautiful Hardscape Pathways, Driv





Patios: From flagstone slabs that let the grass peek through, to textured pavers and warm, rich bluestone, your hardscape can set the stage for the way you live and entertain.

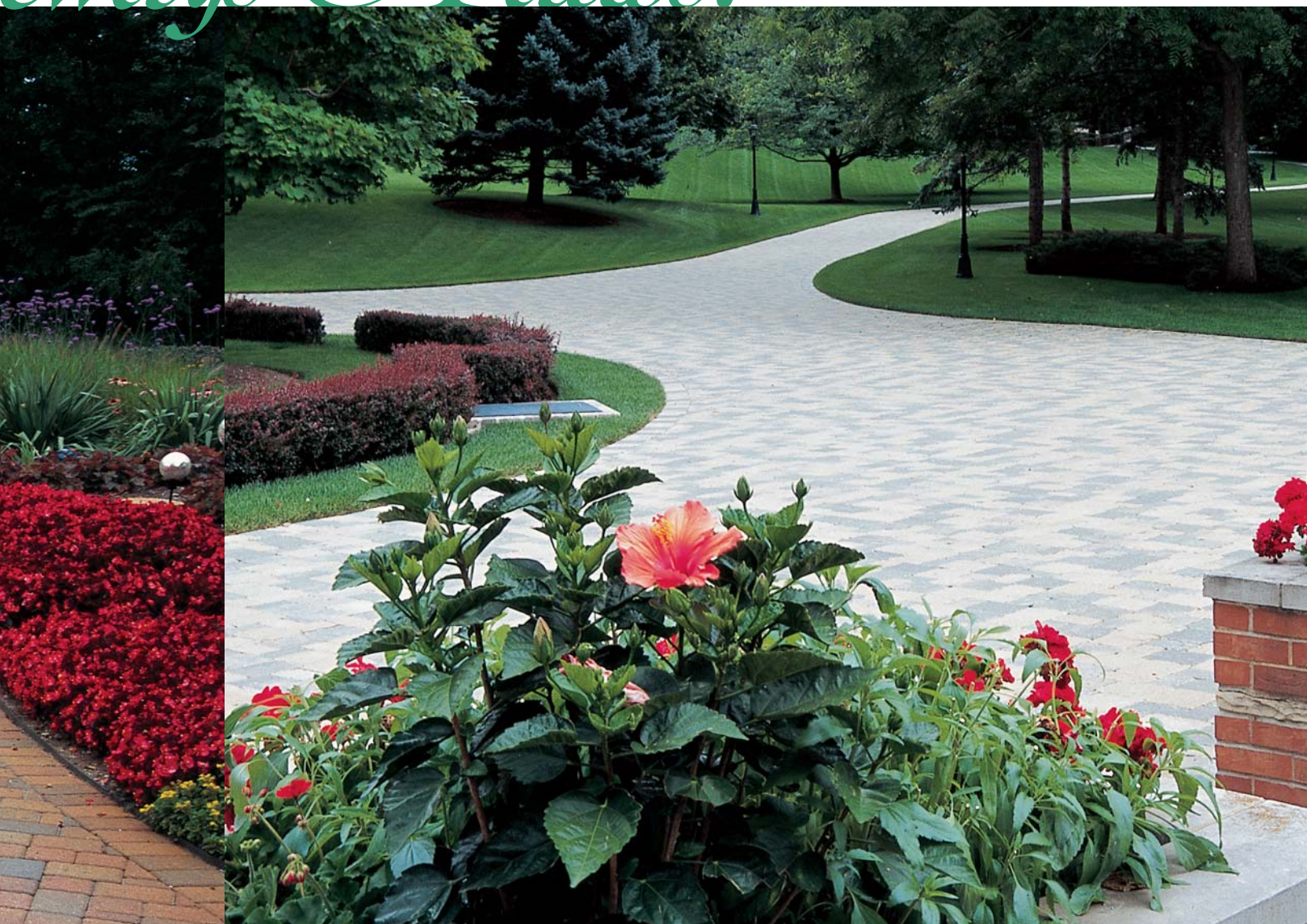


Pathways: Winding pathways enhance the way people interact with and enjoy your garden. Carefully arranged concrete, bluestone or brick pavers impart a finished look, while gravel sets a casual tone.

Stonework Tips

- Don't be afraid of color. Stone and pavers come in a range of tones to enhance the overall look of your home, so be creative.
- Complement formal plantings with right angles and regularly shaped stones. Or choose winding shapes and tumbled edges for a more informal look.
- Use garden walls to divide spaces, carve out robust stone planters or create level beds within sloping lawns.
- Think about how your design will look from a variety of vantage points. Walk around and consider interesting angles and shapes from various positions in the yard.

eways & Patios.



Opposite page, top: Water flowing over stepped Lannon stone suggests a soothing, old-world atmosphere.

Opposite page, bottom: Brick pavers in a variety of sizes are arranged in a loose herringbone pattern for a more relaxed effect.

Left: Smooth, variegated Brussels block pavers make a truly grand entrance, winding through a manicured lawn and leading right up to the front door.

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Landscaping Adds Value to Any Size Home

From multi-acre properties to a standard 25-foot city lot, any home's aesthetics and value can be enhanced through the help of professional landscape design. In fact, estimates suggest that the proper use of landscaping can add more than six percent to the value of your home. The Van Zelst team has experience making the most of smaller outdoor spaces, creating a natural haven to complement any size home.



A Complete Renewal—Inside and Out.

The design brief for this Wilmette home was, indeed, brief. The owners knew they loved color—particularly bright spring tulips—and wanted to make the most of a traditionally sized village lot. Beyond that, they presented our landscape architects with a blank canvas.

The landscape plan was undertaken just as a comprehensive home renovation was being completed. A full indoor-outdoor rejuvenation of the property was underway—an exciting prospect for the design team and the homeowners.

We recommended carving out intimate spaces for relaxing and entertaining, surrounded by lush drifts of plantings. A red, pink and purple palette, highlighted by splashes of white and broad swaths of green, was selected to encourage harmony among the many varieties of flowers and plants used. Varying heights, from groundcover to an arborvitae privacy hedge, impart a beautiful visual rhythm to the space.

Vibrant plantings are balanced by thoughtful hardscape additions, including a luminous bluestone patio, curved lannonstone walls capped by great bluestone slabs, and a simple, peaceful granite fountain. Generous terra cotta pots hold mounds of seasonal color.

The owners are thrilled, saying “We love to go out and look at it—just to sit outside and relax on the patio. When people walk by, they tell us what pleasure it gives them, too.” From daffodils, hyacinths and tulips ushering in springtime, through brilliant summer and fall color, to interesting shapes under the snow, the landscape provides year-round enjoyment.

Very little has changed since the original plan. “I told Dave Van Zelst we liked Clematis, and he came up with a trellis design that we love,” explains the owner. In addition, they add a few plants of their own each year, for the sheer satisfaction of planting.

After three years, the landscape has filled out beautifully, with the help of an ongoing management plan carried out by the Van Zelst maintenance team. “We have an irrigation system, which is a huge time saver. We used to do some of the work ourselves, but for the most part, we just don’t have the time to take care of it the way we’d need to.”

“When it was time for us to renovate our home, we realized that too many people focus on the interior and neglect the outside. But our landscape is designed so we can enjoy it from inside, too. For us, it was all part of one big picture.”

Refresh & Renew





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.

Hydrangea

This group consists of hardy and tender shrubs and woody climbers. They are mostly deciduous plants, though a few of the tender species are evergreen. They are natives of the Himalayas, North and South America, and central and eastern Asia. These flowering shrubs have different flower forms—from the large globes of the “mopheads” to the discs of the “lacecaps” to the thick cones of oakleaf and panicle hydrangeas. They come in an array of colors from pure white to brilliant crimson, pale lilac to intense azure. In addition to their lovely flowers, some hydrangeas are valued for their attractive foliage or bark. The sizes of the plants range from dwarf (about 3 ft. high) to large bushes with stems over 10 ft. high.



Top: The curve of the bluestone-capped Lannon stone wall echoes the shape of the perennial beds, giving the garden a sense of harmony. Generous drifts of violet Salvia and Annabelle Hydrangeas provide a sense of abundance.

Above, left: A custom-designed trellis gives Clematis a place to climb, and adds interest to a plain exterior wall.

Above, right: As the seasons change, so do the pots set out on the bluestone patio. Pretty, colorful annuals and interesting foliage enrich the family's outdoor living area.

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CONSTANT COLOR
TO YOUR GARDEN?**

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Below: A stone path brings visitors right into the color—yellow Black-Eyed Susans, pink Liatris and red Begonias, matched by Lilies in the same three hues.

Opposite: A study in textures. Trees, shrubs and grasses star in this Lake Geneva garden. The jewel tones of compact Japanese Maples, bluestone blocks and brilliant green foliage are beautifully reflected in the water.

Maintenance Keeps it Healthy and Green.

A well designed landscape is immediately apparent. Yet few people look at a beautiful garden and realize just how much effort goes into keeping it that way. Like paint and furnishings, without the proper attention, plantings can become worn. As a living, growing part of your home, a landscape needs continual management to keep looking its best.



That's why many people turn to the professional Van Zelst landscape management team. Our experienced staff makes sure gardens retain their full beauty by focusing on three key elements—consistent watering, planting care and proper nutrition.

A great way to ensure consistent watering is through an irrigation system. In addition to saving the time of hauling hoses around your property, an irrigation system provides the right amount of water at the right time of day. It can water certain flowers or grasses more heavily, depending on their needs, and avoid spilling onto driveways and hardscape. This precision saves water while resulting in the healthiest plants possible.

In landscape terms, caring for plantings is much more than simply mowing the lawn and weeding beds. After a season or two, plantings may require separation or moving. Old bulbs need to be replaced. Trees and shrubs must be pruned.

In addition, plants and trees require regular fertilization. Nutrients should be introduced slowly and steadily, to avoid growth spurts that can stress grasses and plants.

A full-service landscape management plan takes all of this into account, without preventing you from exercising your own green thumb as much as you desire. We monitor the growth, health and evolution of your garden, doing the day-to-day work that will keep it looking as striking as it was designed to be.

Maintain. Monitor. Manage.



Enhancing Lake Geneva's Natural Beauty.

Afternoons by the pool. Evenings on the terrace. The Lake Geneva summer-home lifestyle is the perfect reason to work with a professional design-build landscape architect. Together, we can create a setting that complements your home and lifestyle—from a gracious space for entertaining to a lakeside cottage style overflowing with blooms.

A second home offers an opportunity to let your imagination run wild. It's a place to express yourself through non-traditional plant-

ings or a new color scheme. Install a full-service outdoor kitchen for the enjoyment of family and friends. Paint a welcoming atmosphere with lighting. Incorporate natural materials such as rough-hewn stone. Just let the ideas flow.

Van Zelst teams regularly travel to Lake Geneva and southern Wisconsin to plan, install and manage landscapes. So you can enjoy a spectacular, care-free landscape wherever summer takes you.

Why Light? By Night Light, Inc.

A beautiful landscape can be wonderfully enhanced by well-planned lighting.

- Invite enjoyment of your outdoor spaces after dusk.
- Enhance your home's security and value, as well as the safety of your guests.
- Consider lighting a part of your overall landscape plan, for seamless integration.
- Draw attention to special design features by "painting" with light.



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Awards for Landscape Design,
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presented by the Illinois Landscape
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- 2005 Gold Wilmette Residence
- 2005 Silver Glencoe Residence
- 2005 Merit Kenilworth Residence
- 2004 Gold Glenview Residence
- 2004 Silver Lake Forest Residence
- 2004 Merit Lake Geneva Residence
- 2003 Gold Kenilworth Residence
- 2003 Silver Wilmette Residence
- 2003 Merit Lake Forest Residence
- 2003 Merit Glencoe Residence

For a complete list,
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Every Season, Something New.



It interests me that after 25 years in this business, every project allows me to experience something new. Perhaps that's what keeps landscape architecture so fresh. Of course, there are always new plant and hardscape concepts to incorporate. But it's getting to know our clients and figuring out how to address their individual landscape objectives that keeps me revved up for each new season. There's nothing my team and I like better than being

presented with a situation we haven't seen before.

I love that. From concept to installation and even maintenance and management, there are no "off the shelf" landscape architecture solutions. Nothing will ever substitute for sitting down with a client, getting to know how a family lives and what they want their landscape plan to achieve, and then challenging ourselves to exceed everything they've imagined.

Regards,

Dave

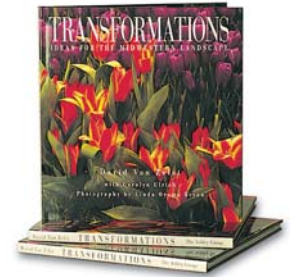
P.S. Looking at the photos in this newsletter, I think the one below best exemplifies our enthusiasm for "continuous color." Here, long-blooming purple Coneflowers, yellow Daylilies, purple Liatris and other bright blooms flank a white picket fence, creating an idyllic setting.



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 and click on Book Order.

Jamaican Pork with Melon

Ingredients

- 1-1/2 pound boneless pork tenderloin, cut into 1-1/2-inch cubes
- 2 small red onions, quartered lengthwise
- 2 tablespoons roasted peanut oil or peanut oil
- 4 teaspoons Jamaican jerk seasoning
- 1/4 of a small honeydew melon, cut into 2-inch cubes
- 1/2 of a small cantaloupe, cut into 2-inch cubes
- 1 tablespoon honey

Directions

1. Toss pork cubes and onion with oil and jerk seasoning in a medium mixing bowl until evenly coated. Thread eight 12-inch skewers alternately with pork, onion, honeydew, and cantaloupe pieces.
2. Place pork skewers on the lightly oiled grates of the grill directly over medium heat. Grill for 18 to 24 minutes or until pork is cooked through and no pink remains. Remove from grill; brush with honey. Makes 4 servings.

Submitted by Brian Nacker