

Pioneer Press

Van Zelst wins three national awards

Van Zelst, Inc., Wadsworth, has received three Environmental Awards for its landscaping work from the Associated Landscape Contractors of America in a national competition.

A Grand Award was received for landscape contracting of a Barrington Hills residence, judged on excellence in design and the quality of construction. This unusual project involved the blending of landscape elements to create a natural prairie appearance surrounding a newly constructed home. The front of the home presents a startling view of a sweeping prairie garden that runs along the property edge. A mortared bluestone walkway and entry to the home were installed and three-season color and diversity were achieved with perennial plants and shrubs. The use of low growing prairie grasses, native wildflowers, and spruce trees achieved the desired rustic setting to draw wildlife. Van Zelst, Inc. was the only firm in the Midwest to receive this award in the residential category.

The firm was honored with a Grand Award for quality landscape maintenance of a Glenview residential property set in a wooded area. The diversity of plant materials and light conditions require constant technical supervision to achieve consistent results. In this category Van Zelst was the only recipient of this highest award in the country.

An Award of Distinction was presented for the design/build landscape architecture of a Libertyville residence. The project balanced the objectives and priorities of the client. A spectacular brick entryway and drive were designed and constructed to frame a circular perennial garden. Large ash trees installed in the front occupy a prominent position. At the rear of the property, in addition to the new perennial beds, the usable space was extended with a flagstone walkway at the edge of the deck to allow access into the garden. Indirect mercury vapor lighting was designed and installed to highlight new and existing landscape features.

David Van Zelst, landscape architect and president of Van Zelst, received the awards at ALCA's Annual Conference, Nov. 14, in Ft. Worth, Texas. The Grand Award recipients will receive additional recognition at the ALCA Executive Forum in Phoenix, Ariz., on Feb. 14.

ALCA is a national trade association representing approximately 1,200 landscape contractors from the United States and abroad. ALCA's Environmental Improvement Awards Program is designed to reward landscape contracting professionals who execute high quality landscaping projects and to recognize project owners who underwrite such work.

"Various phases of the landscape can be considered for outdoor living areas in much the same sense as indoor rooms. The landscaping must be attractive and suited to the individual lifestyles of our clients. You shouldn't know that landscaping has happened, but should find the new surroundings aesthetically pleasing," Van Zelst explained.

As a complete design/build landscape firm, including architecture/design, contracting and management, Van Zelst can take landscaping projects from conceptual

sketches through construction to delivery of the finished product and then year-round maintenance.

Van Zelst's landscape architects often recommend the installation of plants which are in the low maintenance category. Among perennials are: Hemerocaliis (Daylily), Hosta, Astilbe varieties, Sedum "Autumn Joy," Euonymus Vegetus, Rudbeckia (Black Eyed Susan), Fountain Grass and other ornamental grasses. Some of the shrubs that require little maintenance are: Compact Viburnum, Dwarf Lilacs, Compact Burning Bush, Spirea (all species), and Compact and Creeping Junipers.

Van Zelst, Inc. operates from a main design office and its own nursery at 39400 N. Highway 41, Wadsworth.