

## Pioneer Press

### Van Zelst wins honors for design, construction

Van Zelst, a landscape design/build firm from Wadsworth, has been honored in a nationwide competition with two environmental awards for its landscape design and construction work. The contest sponsor was Associated Landscape Contractors of America.

David Van Zelst, landscape architect and president of Van Zelst, received the awards at ALCA's conference Nov. 16 in Cincinnati. The firm will also receive recognition at the ALCA Executive Forum in Acapulco, Mexico, Feb. 19.

The Grand Award was received for landscape design and installation at a Glenview residence. The site's minimalist structural design by architect Edward Dart was effectively complemented by surrounding forests and owner-installed plantings. Much of the plant material had deteriorated with age and needed replacement. The owners wanted a landscape that appropriately fit their lifestyle, which includes frequent walking around the property and hosting social gatherings outdoors. To meet these goals, it was vital to preserve and extend the woods while installing appropriate plantings to add diversity and color. An expanse of manicured turf, bordered by layered understory gardens, provides a walkway from the forest edge back to the rear entry of the home.

Blooming peonies add color to beds surrounding six new spruce trees along the property border. It took three years to locate these spruce specimens of an acceptable quality and 45-foot height to balance with the 60 to 80 foot adjoining trees. An extensive night lighting system was installed high in the tree canopy to provide viewing of the gardens at night and during all seasons. A brick driveway completed and unified the landscape design concepts.

Van Zelst also received a Merit Award for quality landscape design and installation at a new Highland Park residence. This contemporary residence was designed and built by its owner, an interior designer and art dealer. The wide mix of landscape elements included several varieties of mature trees, perennials, annuals, low-growing shrubbery, expanses of turf and large boulders hand picked by the owner. The completed landscape allows the owners to fully enjoy their property. New large trees were placed in the garden area near the adjacent waterway. The owner often hosts large family gatherings, mandating adequate parking. Reinforced "grass paving" was installed to soften the appearance of the front drive area, which can be used for parking.

A view of the garden shows the variety of interspersed plant materials, including large white pines, junipers, hostas, coreopsis 'moonbeam,' dwarf blue spruce and veronica which have been successfully blended together.