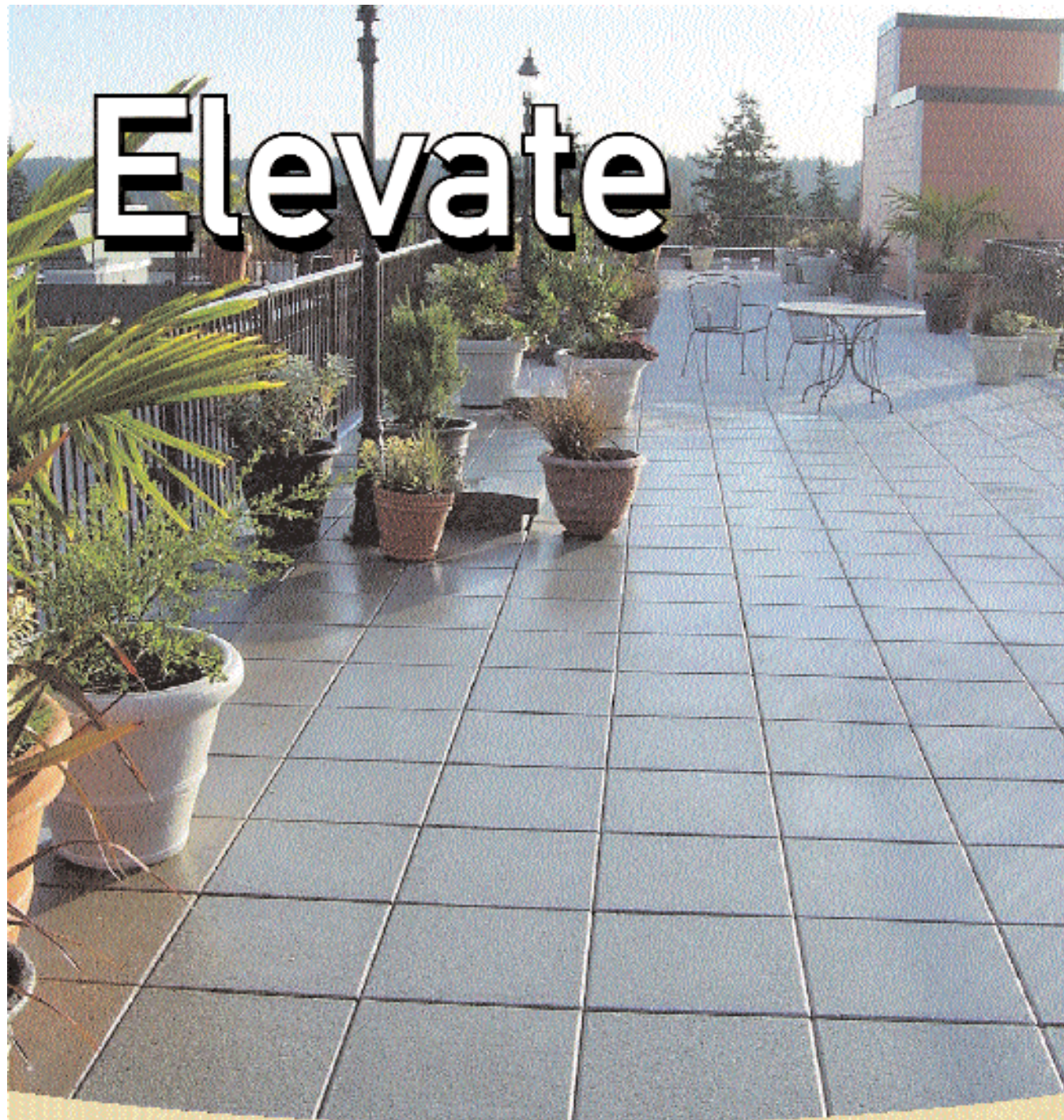


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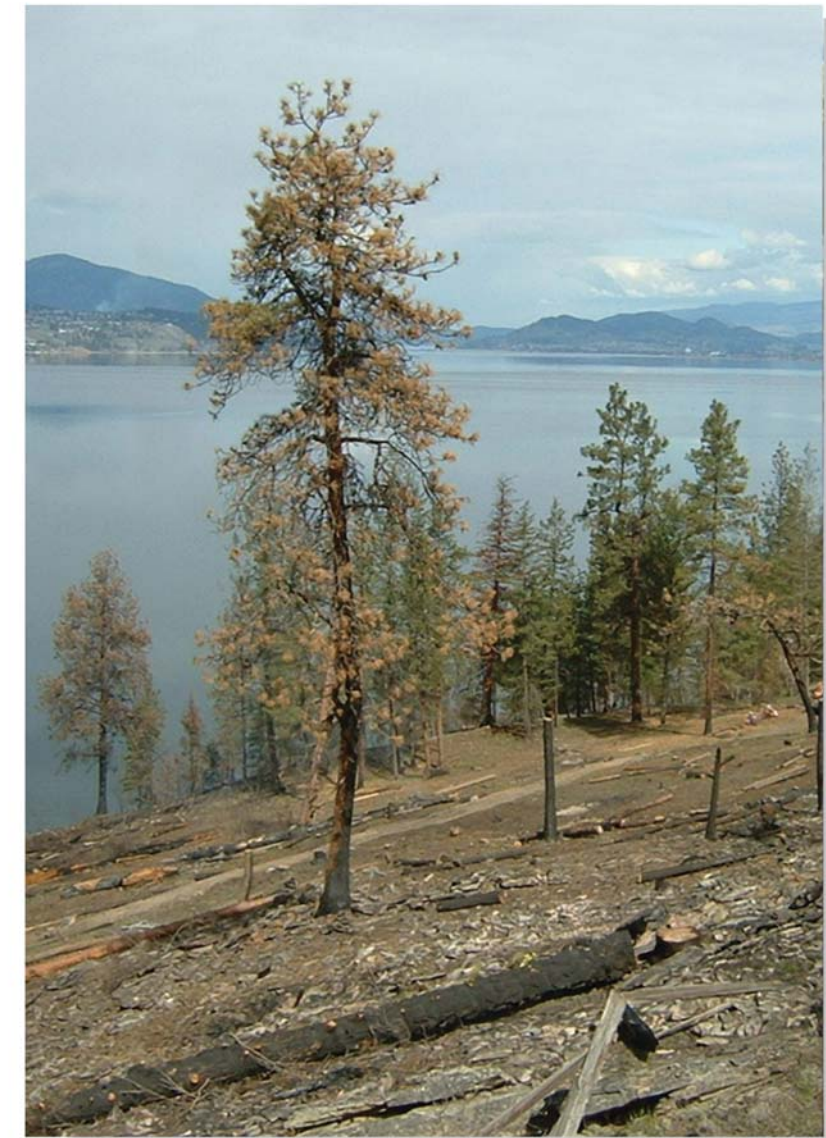
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Bimonthly Publication of The British Columbia Society of Landscape Architects



Firestorm

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The purpose of *Sitelines* is to provide an open forum for the exchange of ideas and information pertaining to the profession of Landscape Architecture. Individual opinions expressed are those of the writers and not necessarily of those of the BCCLA.

Firestorm 2003 – One Year Later

BY FIONA CHAMBERLAIN MA (HONS)
PARKS PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT TECHNOLOGIST
REGIONAL DISTRICT OF CENTRAL OKANAGAN

Twelve months after the fire and the visual spectacle of logging trucks barreling down the south slopes of Kelowna is finally dwindling. In early 2004, there was no end to the number of trucks loaded with large blackened timber on their way to the processing plant. One sunny afternoon, while waiting for the traffic lights to change at a busy Kelowna intersection, it occurred to me that the first year anniversary of the Okanagan Mountain Park Fire was upon us.

The fire that started on August 16, 2003 in Okanagan Mountain Provincial Park was a severe forest fire waiting to happen. More critical was the location of the fire and its proximity to residential communities on the forested south slopes bordering the park. A report prepared in 1990 for the park has an ominous tone, stating: "...fire hazard is a concern in the park due to the hot and dry conditions experienced in the valley during the summer months...compounded by the approaching climax status of the forest cover and the spread of pine beetle attack. Both conditions result in the extensive accumulation of downed timber. With such high fuel loading, there is significant potential for fire to be devastating in the park". Could the problem have been stated more succinctly?

Okanagan residents consider Okanagan Mountain Provincial Park a recreational gem on the doorstep of Kelowna. The park is a great example of the double-edged sword of living in the Okanagan. The outdoor lifestyle that living in the Okanagan Valley provides attracts people to live here. However this immediate access to nature is also the community's greatest enemy. Last



Bertram Regional Park
After the Fire
Photo Credit: Eve Wegscheidler

year was a painful lesson to people living in interface zones. The loss of recreational opportunities such as camping and hiking were keenly felt in the summer of 2003. Two of the closest municipalities, the City of Kelowna and the Regional District of Central Okanagan closed all parks during the fire season – even going as far as to prevent access to Lake Okanagan by shutting down public boat launches while the fire raged to prevent boating 'lookie-loos' from getting too close to the fire-bomber planes.

Much work has been done to replace what was destroyed by fire. Residential building lots located on the south slopes that were never meant to be view lots have become hot commodities in the booming construction industry of Kelowna. The majority of homes lost to the fire are now being rebuilt. In my opinion the most devastating impact

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is the long-term loss of forested land damaged by fire. Most residents of the Okanagan Valley will never see the forest as it once was, in their lifetime.

There are a few positive, if bittersweet, aspects of the Okanagan Mountain Park Fire. Hikes this spring in parkland devastated by fire reveal a forest floor with subtle colour; post-emergent bunch grass and other shrubs flourish with the open canopy. Flowering prickly pear, unique kinds of lilies and the ubiquitous Okanagan sunflower (Balsamorhiza sagittata - arrowleaf balsam root) are all present in the fire zones.

Some fire-affected organizations have faced the challenge of the Okanagan Mountain Park Fire head on and are thriving as a result. The St. Hubertus Estate Winery has found innovative ways to produce wine with 'smoky' grapes and the owners of the Camp Dunlop scout camp are undertaking master planning work to make their once great camp even better than it was. The Kettle Valley Junction Playground committee reached their fundraising goal to rebuild their destroyed playground, which was located in the subdivision that was used a staging area for the fire fighters during the fire. The committee raised over \$410,000.00 and will be installing a brand new 20,000 square foot playground.

As employees of the Regional District of Central Okanagan Parks and Recreation Department, we also experienced our share of heartache during the firestorm. In addition to the municipal and provincial parks, two major Regional Parks were destroyed by fire, Bertram Creek Regional Park, an eighteen-hectare waterfront park, and Cedar Mountain Regional Park, an eighty-hectare mountainous park. The fire damaged over 75% of Bertram Creek Regional Park and burned all of Cedar Mountain Regional Park.

After the fire, public sentiment indicated that municipalities should do more to lessen the potential impact of fire, particularly in the residential communities that interface with forested land. The public sector has a responsibility to ensure that fire safe development practices are used (they require new

developments to have alternate or secondary evacuation routes in case of emergencies as well as the use of fireproof building materials) fire safety is also the responsibility of the private sector. Private landowners are encouraged to do fuel modification on their properties; to undertake maintenance practices such as removing yard prunings to the landfill rather than dump grass clippings in interface zones.

Human Resources Development Canada and the Regional District allocated \$667,000.00 towards the creation of a Fuel Modification and Trail Building Crew. The crew has been working since early this year to reduce the potential fire fuel threat in all Regional Parks by limbing, pruning and spacing trees, clearing underbrush and removing ground fuels. The riparian corridor of Bertram Creek (for which the regional park was named after) was rebuilt this spring to reinforce the creek sides. Thanks to their work, the erosion potential by the creek during this spring's run-off was much reduced within the regional park.

A more philosophical aspect of our role as a municipal parks and recreation department is to lead by example and create park spaces that emulate the surrounding natural landscape of the Okanagan. If we can create change on this small scale over time, there will be an acceptance by the community that we live in a place that is susceptible to natural occurrences such as forest fires. The desire to surround oneself with lush green grass is an example of continuing the denial that we live in a forested, dry valley where water is a precious commodity and forest fires a reality. Annual summertime temperatures range from 27°C in Kelowna to 37°C in the border town of Osoyoos. Landscapes that depend on high levels of precipitation experienced in more 'lush' parts of the province are simply not sustainable in the Okanagan Valley.

The Okanagan Mountain Park Fire was a not so gentle reminder to embrace these natural qualities and integrate them fully with the unique character of the Okanagan Valley. Through this acceptance, we will be more prepared for forest fires in the future.



Cedar Mountain Regional Park After Fire
Photo Credit: Eve Wegscheidler

Firestorm 2003 Quick Facts

- There were 2,500 wildfires in the Province of British Columbia in 2003
- Fifteen large (over 100 ha. in size) interface fires were recorded for 2003. The three biggest fires were the Chilko Fire, McLure Fire and the Okanagan Mt. Park Fire.
- Over 260,000 hectares of forest was destroyed province wide in 2003.
- The Okanagan Mountain Park Fire started in the early hours of Saturday morning of August 16 by a lightning strike.
- It destroyed an area of forest 25,600 hectares (256 square kilometers) in size – an area equivalent to more than two times the size of the City of Vancouver (Vancouver is 113 square kilometres in size).
- The Kelowna fire forced the evacuation of more than 30,000 people and destroyed 238 homes.
- The total cost of the firestorm 2003 was \$700 million and resulted in the deaths of three pilots. ●

Footnotes:

Master Plan for Okanagan Mountain Provincial Park, Ministry of Parks, 1990

The Healing Garden

BY DONNA M. RODMAN, DIPL. NURSING, BA, CTECH, MLA

The restorative garden is one among many types of gardens which incorporate human scale, function and beauty. Restorative gardens address the physical, psychological, emotional and social needs of visitors and participants.

Such gardens were found in medieval courtyards and were part of the Christian charitable foundations attached to hospitals and monasteries nursing the unwell person. The evolution of the paradise garden caused the demise of the restorative garden, and the courtyards and open spaces within and surrounding the hospitals of renaissance and reformation Europe were left as anomalies of local wealth and local architectural tradition.

With a few exceptions from then on,

restorative gardens were excluded from health care facility design. Johns Hopkins Hospital (circa 1875) became known because of its pavilion style, accompanying gardens, sun decks, and sun roofs. It also included an enclosed Victorian garden.

The minimizing of garden spaces continued while at the same time the development of horticultural therapy grew for the treatment of many patients. Horticultural therapy, the active involvement with plant materials and gardening within an integrated clinical program, became a sub-specialty of occupational therapy. The professionalization of horticultural therapy appeared in 1992.

Restorative Experience

Restoration includes: development of independence, stabilization of emotions, reduced tension, enrichment, satisfaction and pride, relief from boredom, aesthetic and intellectual pleasure, sensory stimulation, learning of form and size, sense of open space, enjoyment, excitement about growth,

and finally, the comprehension of the vastness of the environment.

Each one of us has unique abilities to read and find our way through our environment. Theories of holistic environmental knowing include: object perception—the natural but often unfulfilled ability of the body to sense nearby objects, obstacles and danger — and body subject — the natural ability of the body to move with neither conscious awareness nor effort. The body is always actively reacting and collecting information such as physical presence, air pressure, memory of landmarks and cues. With practice we can develop enhanced sensations, reduced distraction, elevated consciousness and perception.

The garden provides a benevolent setting in which a person can take the first steps toward confidence. Plants take away anxiety and tension of the immediate and show us that there are long, enduring patterns in life, peacefulness and tranquility. This offers a sense of control which in some cases, people with

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disabilities, seniors and women at risk, do not feel they have. Gardening allows for escape. The garden can give a purposeful, human scale activity which is home-like and can provide a variety of experiences. The opportunity for self-expression and personalization is present and it provides the motivation for physical exercise, social interaction and networking with other gardeners.

Gardening is a subjective personal involvement and personal response to natural elements. The human spirit is invested in the garden. Beyond visual observation, the physical participation as a gardener, the growing and caring for plants, are all nurturing activities. The gardener develops a sensitivity to the needs of the plants, responding to distress or flourishing of growth, just as caring for others is a basic quality of being human.

For the person with a disability or a senior citizen, the world of gardening serves as an extension of oneself. This is particularly true for a person who lives a dislocated life inside an apartment or in a confined space. There is a strong rehabilitative effect of self-esteem with gardening providing control in an environment where physical and attitude barriers may exist.

Implementing the Restorative Experience

A garden should stimulate all senses including taste and encourage the visitor to wander, browse, and experience freedom of space with delight. By placing an emphasis on strong textural characteristics and fragrant plants, a visitor to a garden experiences a multitude of sensations.

The garden will have greater success if it stimulates an excitement for gardening, broadens one's knowledge of the plant kingdom and the natural environment, aides in the development of observational powers and finally, provides a learning area. An ideal restorative garden will include the following features:

- Two or three scents in each section
- Fragrances that change with the seasons.

- To aid in orientation, four different quadrants off a central axis enabling one to recognize the corners.
- Small spaces that concentrate the fragrances.
- A bench that enables one to rest and absorb the garden, even better if the bench has a broad armrest so there is space for a cup or plate.
- Irregular landmarks that help provide recognizable sequences of objects and memory to identify space.
- Raised beds at a height of 30 cm (12") to 43 cm (17") for convenience of reach and touch.
- Textural plants, from the seedling to the rose petal, providing sensations of interest to all. Spiked plants and trees with different barks are interesting to touch.
- For safety, no overhead or low lying branches in the path of travel, and a clear height of 198 cm (6'-6").
- Fun, e.g. the adventure of stepping stones over a shallow pond.

Some ideas derived from the Islamic (Moorish) Gardens of Spain between the 8th and 15th centuries, lend themselves to making the garden experience pleasurable.

- Pebbled paving with herringbone and weave patterns. Patterns can be used aesthetically for the tactile designation of a type of garden feature, an interruption or change for finding one's way, or a hazardous feature.
- Use of fragrant fruit trees and shrubs such as the Honeysuckle, Jasmine, Lemon Balm, Winter Honeysuckle, and Magnolia.
- Small fountains giving lighter, gentler sound patterns rather than large noisy ones, refine the sense of sound within a garden, each fountain giving a different sound depending on droplet size and receiving surface. The staircase to the North of the Mirado in the Generalife uses water intertwined in the handrail. Experiment with water sound.
- A small hand basin near the fragrance garden would be ideal in order to wash off the scent of the plants after tactile/textural exploration.

- Shallow pools of 5 cm (2") in depth with stepping stones. Pools can be sheltered so that the water does not ripple and the pool appears to be deeper by illusion.

Our responses to our environment can vary with our perception of that environment and the enhancement of alternate senses produces very rich and pleasurable experiences. Gardens can add to that experience safely and memorably so that an impression stays within the garden visitor. The next time there is an encounter with a similar environment, the past experience will initiate a pleasant memory and enhance the new experience.

While economics have dictated a decline in the development of restorative gardens, history and humanity have sustained a continuing thread of existence of such gardens. They may exist in one's backyard, an apartment balcony or in an institutional or nature setting. Their impact will depend on thoughtfulness and sensitivity in their creation.

Some books worth reading include:

THE ABLE GARDENER, by Kathleen Yoemans, 1992, soft cover: \$16.95 ISBN 0-88266-789-0, Storey Communications, Inc. Formerly a nurse and still an avid gardener, Kathleen has a family member who uses a wheelchair.

THE ENABLING GARDEN: CREATING BARRIER-FREE GARDENS, by Gene Rotherth, 1994, soft cover: \$13.94 ISBN#0-87833-847-0, Taylor Publishing Company. Gene Rotherth is the Manager of Urban Horticulture at the Chicago Botanic Garden. He is highly regarded in both the horticultural community as well as in the community of people with disabilities.

The author gratefully acknowledges the contributions of Mr. Patrick Mooney and Ms. Lois Lawrie in the writing of this article. ●



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City Farmer Waterwise Garden

BY JUDITH COWAN BLA

Vancouver has cool wet winters and warm dry summers. Most rain falls during winter and spring, often leaving the summer months with drought conditions. Although we dwell in the midst of a coastal temperate rainforest; our maritime climate is one of extremes.

The Lower Mainland places greatest demand on its water supply when the storage of the reservoirs are at their lowest. During summer months the Greater Vancouver Regional District implements sprinkling regulations in order to conserve water, since outdoor water use comprises forty percent of daily summer consumption. Restrictions are necessary to control demand for water and to heighten public awareness of the preciousness of this essential resource. The principles of waterwise gardening help to prevent unnecessary waste and to ensure clean

water for future generations.

Waterwise gardening is not synonymous with xeriscaping. Xeriscaping is the term used for landscapes that have extreme periods of dry weather (xeric climates) as in the American Southwest. Waterwise gardening is appropriate for mesic climates, like ours, and includes: the collection of rainwater, an establishment of proper maintenance techniques and the selection of appropriate plant species, to create healthy and sustainable landscapes. City Farmer Waterwise Garden demonstrates these principles and was built to address water conservation issues as they pertain to landscape. It is a public resource, providing information to everyone.

The Waterwise Garden was designed and installed by Ross Waddell. It officially opened in 1997 and was developed in conjunction with the City of Vancouver



Arcrostaphylos columbiana, photograph by Judith Cowan

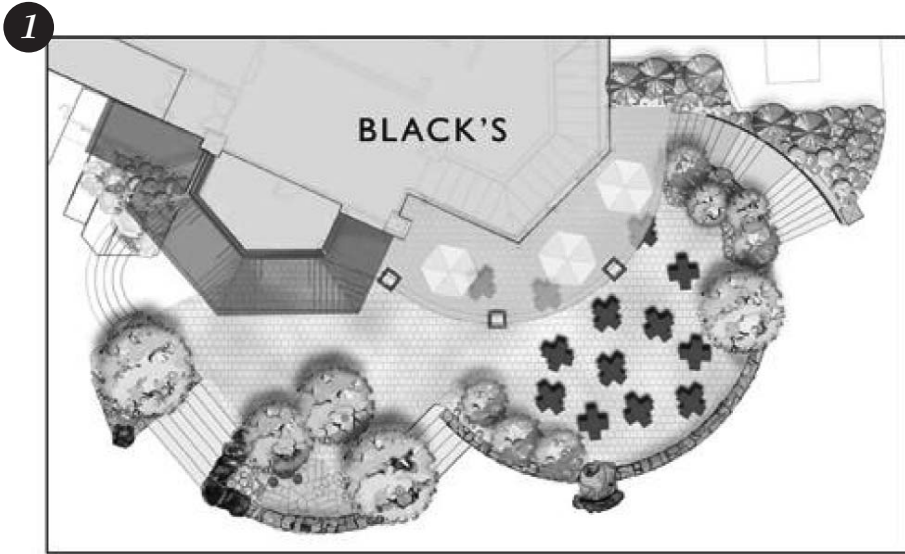
Water Works design branch. This boulevard garden lies adjacent to the railway tracks and community gardens at the intersection of Maple and Sixth Avenue. Principles of waterwise gardening are displayed on interpretive signage

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CSLA Professional Awards

The Canadian Society of Landscape Architects Professional Awards are presented for outstanding accomplishment in landscape architecture at the national level. Awards are given in the categories of Design, Planning and Analysis, Landscape Management, Communication, Research and New Directions of Professional Practice. Congratulations to all of the award winners.

Thanks also to Tim O'Brien for his service as a Juror for the last two years.



SITE PLAN

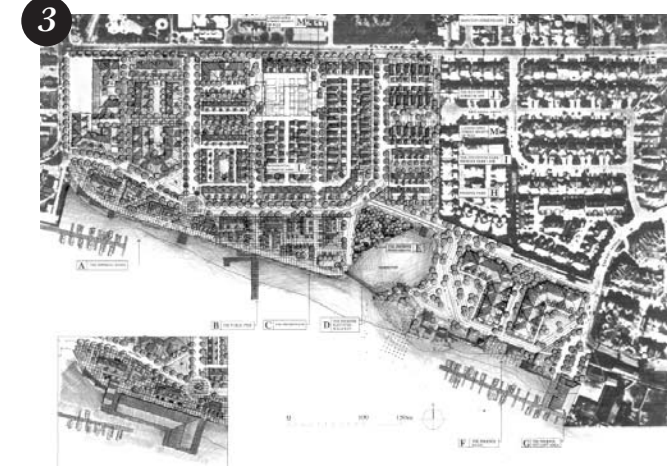
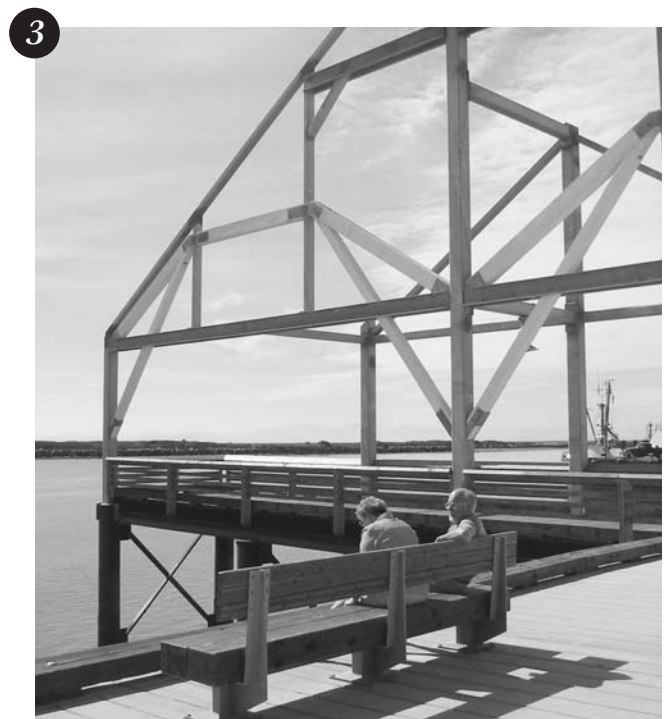
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CITY FARMER - CONTINUED FROM PAGE SEVEN

set among spires of camas lilies and underneath broad canopied cascara trees. Native plants are used in the garden to express the ecology of our region and to portray the beauty of indigenous plant communities. The garden is divided primarily into two zones. The first includes hot and dry water-shedding sites, planted with species such as Hairy Manzanita, Beach Pea and Nodding Onion. The second zone includes shady, water-receiving sites, with species such as Oregon Grape, Deer Fern and Soopolallie. These plantings represent ecologies within our biogeoclimatic zone.

Rainwater Collection

Plant foliage intercepts rainfall and a variety of plant heights ensures that raindrops are captured and held before falling to the ground. Terraces follow the slope of the land to slow the speed of rainwater runoff. Rainbarrels, designed by the City of Vancouver Water Works Department, collect runoff from roofs to provide an irrigation source during periods of dry weather. Any overflow is directed to a perforated drain line which allows water to percolate slowly into the groundwater

table. Pathways of permeable paving are also set on two layers of gravel to allow water to seep into the soil.

Plant Selection

Waterwise gardening is responsive to seasonal change and includes plants that thrive in periods of both inundation and drought as well as plants that have little dependence upon supplemental water, once root systems are established. A variety of perennials, bulbs, groundcovers, shrubs and trees are used to create a species-diverse native plant garden. As the garden matures and creates more shade; planting successional species is required to adapt to the changing microclimates.

Maintenance

A regular schedule of care can control exotic invasives and prevents the establishment of a large seed bank in the soil. Planned competition is achieved by omitting plants that vigorously compete with one another and by using species in associations that coexist harmoniously. For example, Coastal Strawberry and Kinnikinnik combine to form a lush, evergreen, water-thrifty alternative to lawn. The garden is watered



Blechnum spicant, photograph by Judith Cowan

sparingly, as roots that have to search for water grow deeper to survive through extended periods of drought.

Principles of waterwise gardening respond to local conditions of climate, rainfall, topography and successional plant associations. By observing the natural landscape and working sensitively, we may attain a deep awareness of processes that shape our surroundings. Not only may we create an improved environment for our plants; but also a healthy environment shared by everyone. ●

Judith Cowan is currently redeveloping City Farmer's Waterwise Demonstration Garden. For a specie-diverse native plant list, please visit www.cityfarmer.org.

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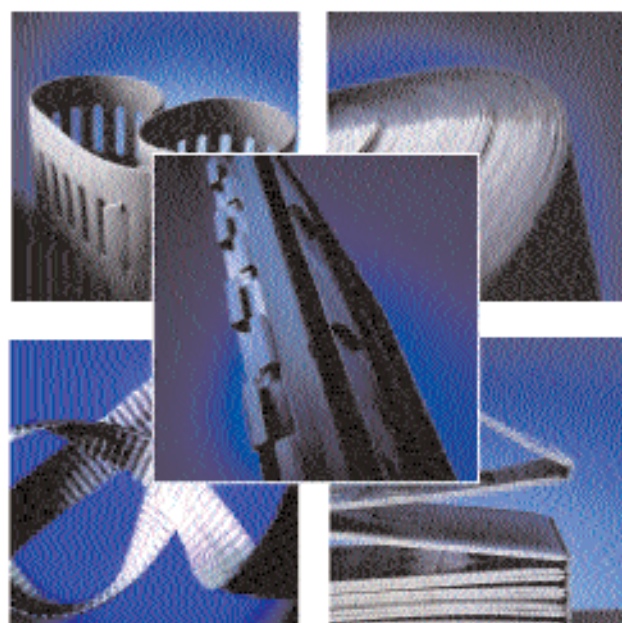


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Left to Right: Moura Quayle, Patrick Mooney, Art Cowie, Jeff Philips, Ron Rule, Don Barron, Doug Paterson, Greg Smalenberg, Alan Duncan and Jane Durante. Photo courtesy of Don Barron.

CSLA College of Fellows

There are 26 Members of the CSLA College of Fellows who are also Members of the BCSLA. In keeping with the tradition that Andrew Wilson began in 1999 the new BCSLA Board of Directors met with a number of the Fellows in June. As usual the discussion was wide ranging and lively. Topics included: CSLA structure, the LARE, education, demographics and the future of the profession. Pictured at the left are several of the Fellows who met for dinner prior to the meeting with the Board. ●



BRITISH COLUMBIA SOCIETY OF LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTS

BCSLA Calendar of Events 2004

September 9-11	IFLA World Congress, Taipei, Taiwan
September 23-24	BCLNA CanWest Hort Show Vancouver Convention & Exhibition Centre
September 23-25	CLARB Annual General Meeting, Philadelphia, PA
September thru November	<i>Walk Ways</i> : BCSLA Members Project Exhibition Surrey, BC
September 28	BCSLA Board of Directors Meeting
October	BCSLA Board of Examiners Fall Sitting
October 9	LARE Candidate Order Deadline (December 2004 Sitting: Sections C and E)
October 20-21	Canadian Urban Forest Conference, Kelowna, BC
October 26	BCSLA Board of Directors Meeting
October 29 - November 2	ASLA Annual Meeting & Expo Salt Lake City, UT
October 31	2005 Sitelines Annual Updates Submission Deadline
November 10-12	Greenbuild International Conference & Expo, Portland, OR
November 23	BCSLA Board of Directors Meeting
December	BCSLA Festive Season Party
December 6-7	LARE Candidate Sitting (Sections C and E)
December 21	BCSLA Board of Directors Meeting
December 31	BCSLA 2005 Membership Dues Payable
December 31	BCSLA Mandatory Continuing Education Form Submission Deadline

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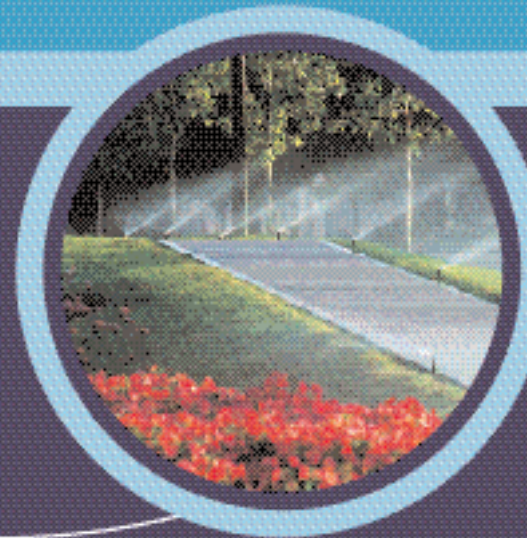
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