

Real MONEY-SAVERS Small WONDERS Low-water OPTIONS

2012  
COUNTRY  
ALMANAC  
NO. 150

# BACKYARD SOLUTIONS

DREAM BACKYARDS FROM PROBLEM SPACES

MAGICAL  
makeovers +

135  
amazing  
spaces


BEST  
PLANTS &  
MATERIALS  
FOR EVERY  
REGION

low cost,  
HUGE IMPACT

transform patios • shade • bare spots  
paths • slopes • side yards • walls







try this:  
PLANT dwarf  
tree varieties to  
balance scale

# SMALL spaces

**PRIORITIZING A WISH LIST** is paramount when square footage is low. Instead of trying to include everything possible, pick your favorites and think on a smaller scale. The payoff? Limited landscaping leaves more money for materials that can **MAKE YOUR TINY TERRAIN SOAR** ▶

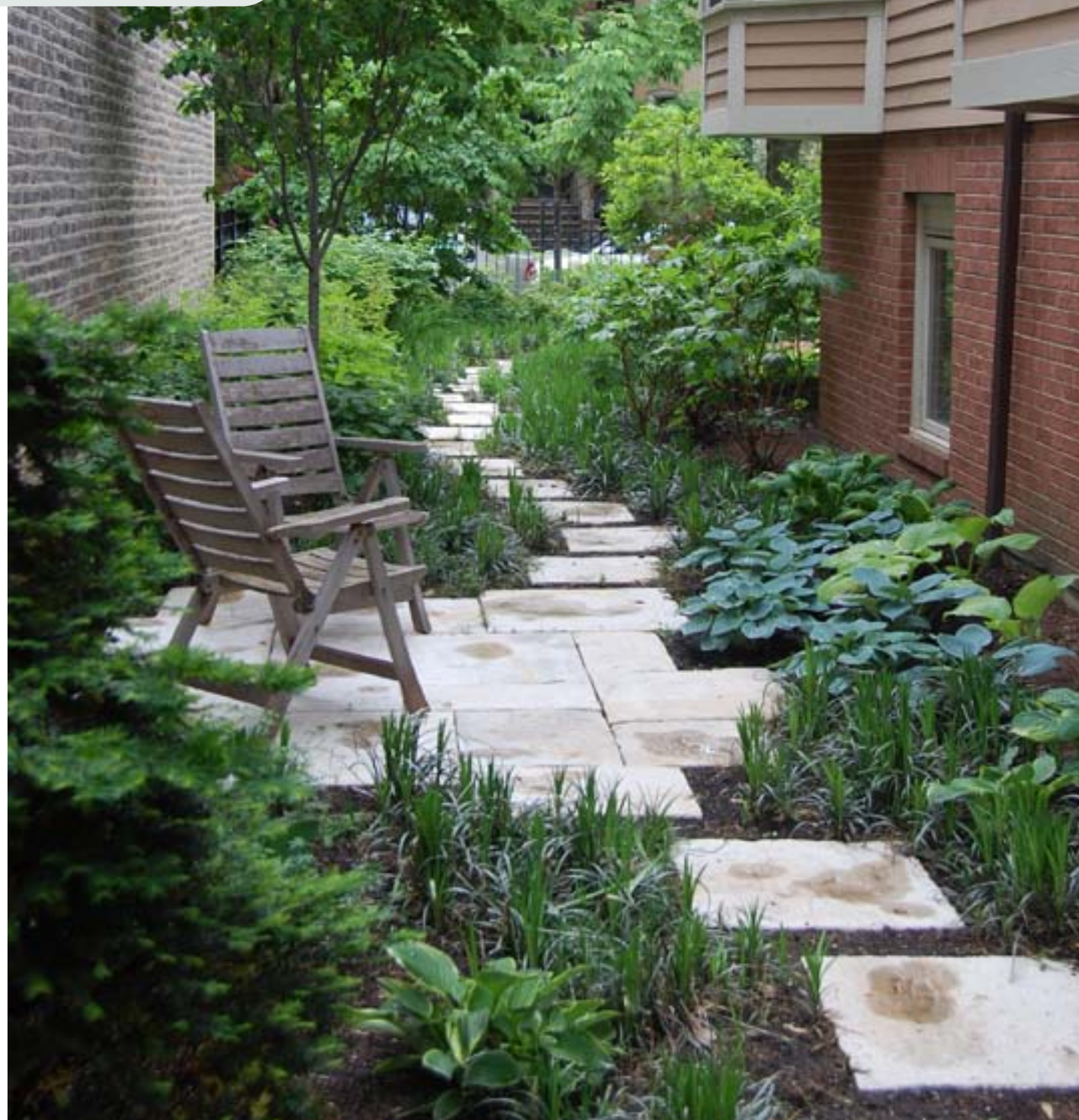


## problem

Small city lot with a very shaded side garden needed visual interest to link front and back yards

## solution

Space treated like its own garden with shade-loving, textured plants and a meandering path and mini patio



# COOL corridor

Side path connects front and back yards with a shaded garden in between

The Victorian-style house in Chicago's urban Lincoln Park neighborhood had no private spots to sit outdoors. Landscape architect Stephen Prassas transformed a small, narrow side yard, which is naturally screened by walls, into a pathway with a destination contained within it. His design consists of a meandering path of large Unilock slabs fringed by liriope, which stop at a mid-way point, form a small sitting area, and continue on to the back. Since the path isn't used daily, Prassas felt steppingstones would work well; they're not ideal for high traffic since they can be tricky to walk on and are hard to clear when snow collects. To add more visual delight, Prassas focused on shade-loving plants such as hostas, oak-leaf hydrangeas, and a larger single-stem serviceberry tree as an accent.

## \* KEY PLANTINGS

*Amelanchier x grandiflora* 'Autumn Brilliance' (Autumn Brilliance Serviceberry); *Hydrangea quercifolia* (Oak Leaf Hydrangea); *Rhododendron* 'White Lights' (White Lights Rhododendron); *Liriope spicata* (Lily Turf); *Hosta* 'Blue Angel' (Blue Angel Plantain); *Aruncus dioicus* 'Kneiffii' (Kneiffii Goatsbeard); *Syringa reticulata* (Japanese Tree Lilac) **ZONE:** 5B

## \$ MONEY-SAVERS

They used Unilock pavers rather than flagstone, which saved more than \$2,500. Unilock also offers the advantage of being very durable and available in different sizes and colorations.

## things we love

- 1 **Pavers look like natural stone** but are actually manmade
- 2 **Lush feeling of garden**, despite a lack of flowers, thanks to its being filled with greenery and texture
- 3 **Shrubs and the curving path** make the space feel private, despite its running right off of a public sidewalk

DESIGNERS: Stephen Prassas, RLA, ASLA, Prassas Landscape Studio LLC, Chicago, IL, [prassas.net](http://prassas.net), 773-879-9048 PHOTOGRAPHY: Stephen Prassas

maximizing city  
SPACES

## WHAT TO CONSIDER

City gardens are a challenge since they're typically small, so every bit of land—front, back and side—should be maximized.

**PRIORITIZE:** City dwellers must hone their wish list. If they need room for kids to run around, then an open area should be set aside. If their top wish is an area to entertain, they might be wiser to create an indoor-style lounge. "I recommend multi-purpose spaces and furniture," says Prassas.

**PRIVACY:** As a screen, consider going up vertically with a trellis or pergola and vines. Also consider some type of water feature. "It doesn't have to be elaborate but can be a spout for some white noise," Prassas says.

**PLANTING:** Pick hardy plants, like hydrangeas, which tolerate less moisture and air to roots. In a snowy area, look for alternates to salt, which isn't good for plants.

