



(above) Boxwoods, grouped in threes, surround the fountain. Limestone inserts in the path echo the limestone fountain. (left) Leonard Phillips and Mary Wennerstrom in their fall garden.



## A Small Formal Garden in the City

MARY WENNERSTROM AND LEONARD PHILLIPS

1410 E. Maxwell Lane

Though it may seem counterintuitive, the smaller the garden space, the more skillful the landscape design must be. Mary Wennerstrom and Leonard Phillips have a small residential lot in the city and have created a beautifully designed landscape that suits both their lifestyle and the architecture of their home. They have traveled frequently in Europe where they developed ideas for a traditional formal garden to be viewed from their back deck, a place they spend considerable time in good weather. Because the house faces a busy street, however, they wanted their front garden to be informal and to feature a variety of shrubs that would buffer the street noise.

Mary and Leonard both wanted the garden as a whole to look attractive in all seasons and to be low maintenance. They engaged Mother Nature Landscaping, as there were paths to be built and drainage issues to be addressed, as well as the design and planting of the garden.

Leonard knew that a classical garden plan using a relatively limited repertoire of shrubs would be appropriate for a formal back garden. He selected boxwoods for the hedges and to enclose the planting spaces because they require minimal trimming to look neat all year. To contrast with both the height and foliage of the boxwoods, tall columnar evergreens were chosen for the screening hedges that run along the two sides of the back garden. Their density allows privacy and provides a

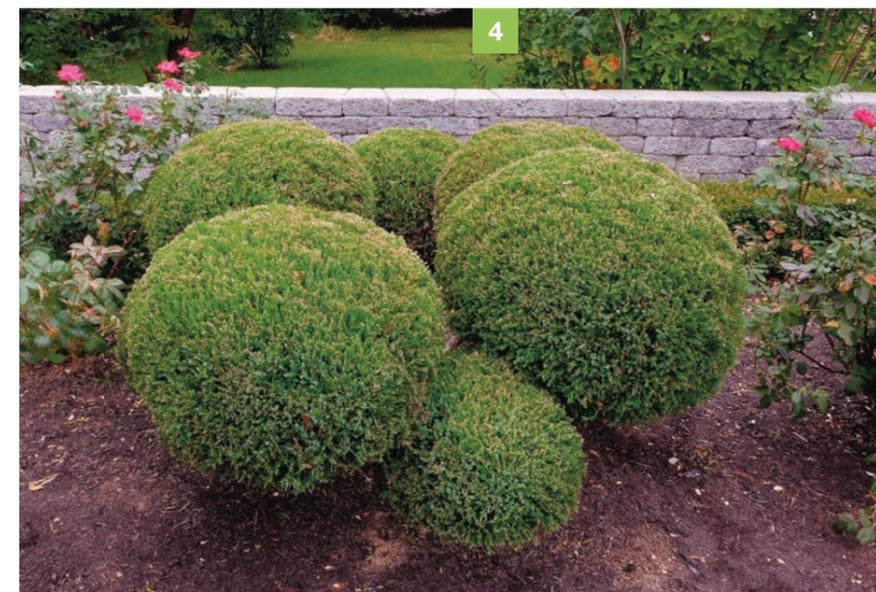
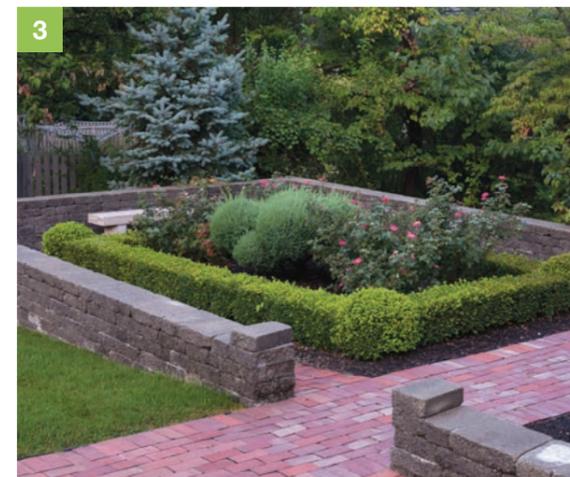
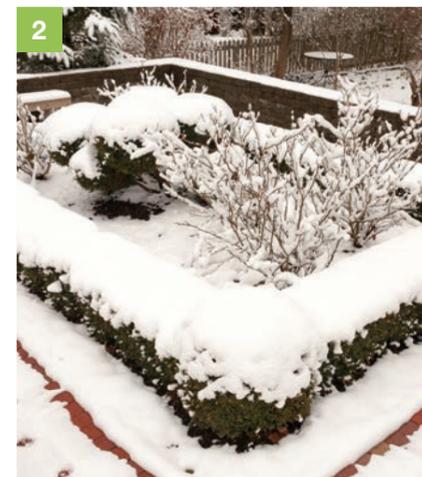
feeling of seclusion. A raised bed containing a combination of evergreens and perennials anchors the far end of the lot.

As one looks down on the garden from the back deck, the green lawn is divided into four segments by paths made of recycled brick. A charming stone fountain sits where the paths intersect and serves as the centerpiece of the garden.

Behind the garage is a delightful rectangular space—a small garden within the larger garden—that demonstrates the principle of enclosure in garden design. A stone bench allows viewers to savor close-up views of the boxwood-enclosed Knock Out roses. One boxwood hedge is even planted in a curve to provide extra legroom for occupants of the bench, and small rounded boxwood globes occupy each corner. The creation of enclosures, as well as vistas, has traditionally been an important principle in landscape design.

In the front of the home, a concrete wall was built with steps leading from the roadway. Some low boxwood and other dwarf evergreens are atop the wall with a row of hydrangeas behind them. Other shrubs such as rhododendron, our native ninebark, and abelia are used in the front garden, as are shade-loving perennials that shelter under a large deciduous tree. When deer come into the front garden, Leonard just turns on the sprinkler, which, he reports, seems to hasten their departure.

The simplicity of the design, the repetition of evergreen plants, and the restraint in not using too many different plants all create a feeling of organization and tranquility in this city garden at all times of the year.



1. The front wall, built with manufactured concrete blocks, buffers the garden from a busy street.
2. The enclosed garden, bathed in snow in winter, is bordered with a low wall.
3. Blooming roses add a splash of color in summer.
4. A clipped evergreen is the centerpiece of the enclosed garden.