



Stylish Slope

WHO: Lee and Beth Baumgardner

WHERE: Mercer Island, Washington

WHAT: A hardscaped courtyard greets visitors at the front entry to this stylish home.

FEATURES: A terraced entry with a contemporary waterfall pacifies a harsh slope. Layers of colorful plantings, including hostas, ferns, and small shrubs, soften the hardscape and reduce its mass.

CHALLENGES: "The lot was so steep you couldn't even walk up it from the front," Lee says. "It was an overgrown lump." Enter Lisa Pfeiffer, garden designer,

who helped solve the problem beautifully. Terracing the site provided room for plants, foot traffic, and parking. The fountain disguises a requisite retaining wall. The lot is small, but the house is large, so attention to scale and right-size plantings were crucial.

THE BEST PART: Lee wanted no lawn and no maintenance; Beth wanted a garden of billowy color and fragrance. They both got what they wanted, plus the front court provides a place for entertaining.

TIP FOR GARDENING IN TIGHT SPOTS: "Use lots of evergreen groundcovers," Pfeiffer says. "This helps when planting in layers, and it's another way of creating a sense of more space."

Photographer: Andrew Drake