

It's a Wonderful Outdoor Life Landscape

With property values escalating, more homeowners are transforming their backyards into a garden oasis instead of buying a cottage. It's a lifestyle trend that landscape designer Patrick Callon is promoting in his garden, It's a Wonderful "Outdoor" Life Landscape.

The long, 40-foot-wide display is typical of many smaller properties. "This works well with the really confined lots you have in the city," Callon says. "When you put it all together as a package, it is the intimate small backyard setting."

Bordered by a low stone wall, the 1,000-square-foot garden brims with leafy deciduous trees and evergreens with splashes of colour provided by spring tulips, daffodils and hyacinths. Dogwoods, privet, Japanese maples, cypress and creeping juniper provide unusual colours and texture through their foliage.

Focal points throughout the wheelchair-accessible garden, which is sponsored by Fisher Landscape and Golf Supply, include a screened 10- by 12-foot sunroom with a cedar shake roof. Designed by Beyond the Screen Door of Huron Park, the sunroom provides visitors with an ideal vantage point from which to view the exhibit.

A large pond, built by Upper Canada Landscape and Renovations, is surrounded by plants nestled into natural stone. Other outdoor living areas include a modular fireplace manufactured by Oaks Concrete Products and a pergola that shelters a patio, allowing for intimate entertaining opportunities.

Callon says more homeowners are extending their living areas from the indoors out. "They're spending a huge amount of money on improving their backyards and they're staying there for a great length of time," he notes. "If you can't extend your living space outside, you're really not getting the bang for your buck when you buy your house."