

DOWN THE GARDEN PATH

MASTERS OF MAINTENANCE

LIKE HOUSES, gardens need to be scrupulously maintained or they quickly fall apart and end up looking like a mess.

There is a large estate garden on Vancouver's west side, for example, that cost more than \$700,000 to build but has been completely neglected since the last paving stone was tapped in place and the last shrub planted.

Now, only a few years later, the garden is overgrown and untidy and it has lost a great deal of its original charm. Pity. It does seem such a waste of energy and effort. Taking care of a garden is not quite as glamorous or thrilling as designing one — the art of landscape architecture and the skill in imposing distinctive planting themes always get the most attention in gardening circles. However, it keeps a beautiful garden looking great is not the artfulness or design, but the long-term commitment to quality maintenance.

Which means taking time and spending money to ensure trees and shrubs are judiciously pruned, lawns are properly fertilized, topsoil is topped and trimmed, flowers are regularly dead-headed and soil in beds and borders is regularly enriched with organic matter.

Steve and Richard Reid know all about this aspect of gardening and are very good at it. The owners of Aricca Landscaping, of Vancouver, they recently won two top prizes for their maintenance work in an annual professional landscaping contest run by B.C. Nurseries Association.

THE AWARD was for the maintenance of a unique, two-acre garden complex belonging to individual houses in Vancouver's Shaughnessy area. Presenting the award, Brian Reid, the contest's head judge, said the Reids had set a new standard for their industry. The house in the Shaughnessy area has its own private garden patio area but there is no pool, cabana and series of connecting paved paths that are common area shared by all residents.

Steve concentrates on selecting material and designing themes while Richard takes care of the pruning of shrubs and



Photos: RALPH BOWER/Vancouver Sun

KEEPING THINGS ORDERLY: Richard and Arree Reid won two top prizes for their maintenance work; Kazu Haraguchi captured grand prize in contest sponsored by Japanese gardeners association

trees and the maintenance of lawns. He feeds lawns fertilizer at least three times a year: 9-3-6 with moss killer in spring; 20-3-6 to give a healthy nitrogen boost in summer and 10-3-30 in early fall.

The gardens vary from a formal, geometric design with low, clipped box hedging and short granite walls to a more loosely planted, cottage-garden style full of blue salvias, dahlias, lavender, snapdragons and daisies. The cottage garden also has a few reliable perennials like hardy geraniums and *Iris siberica*.

Extensive use is made of plants in containers, from familiar favorites like tibouchina, topiarized California laurel and escallonia to more unusual choices like a Tasmanian tree fern, bougainvillea, smoke bush and spiral-shaped blue cypress. The ledge outside one kitchen window is simply and elegantly decorated with red geraniums in terracotta pots.

The choice of the summer flowers is conservative and dependable: petunias, dahlias, salvia, marguerites, pelargoniums, santolina, trailing artemisia and

coleus. What you won't see are marigolds, yellow or orange. The owners refuse to have them on the property. "They are just too ordinary," says Richard.

Shrubs and trees are well planted, provide pleasant shade areas, solid structure and balance to the over-all picture. Trees include dogwoods, Japanese maples, a dense bank of magnolia grandifloras, three superbly



STEVE WHYSALL

shaped Katsuras and possibly the largest English elm in Vancouver — its trunk measures more than six metres in circumference.

A tight planting of purple-flowering azaleas forms a hedge either side of a narrow flagstone path leading to the swimming pool and cabana area. The rest of the shrubbery depends for structure mostly on large and small rhododendrons, neatly clipped viburnum davidii and cedar hedges, and occasional clumps of bamboo, tolerated for screening. An eye-catching weeping birch behind the swimming pool has been pruned to give it a stylish fringe cut.

A problem facing the Reids is how to keep all four residents



Kazu Haraguchi (L) is the artist placing trees and rocks, including the coveted moss-covered ones, just so in Momiji Garden, under construction at the PNE. Rob Truyst photo

Garden a memorial to mistreatment

Two acres of Hastings Park transformed

By FIONA HUGHES

Dorothy Carney remembers unpleasant events that took place near Hastings and Renfrew. But her fury has subsided over the years, and she'll soon be able to look on that corner with pleasure.

Where once thousands of Japanese-Canadians were forcibly crammed into small confines like animals, part of Hastings Park will soon be an oasis of verdant serenity with tranquil creeks, gentle waterfalls, azaleas, and momiji (Japanese maple trees).

Carney predicts the finished two-acre garden will be "gorgeous," a far cry from how she'd describe her experience there 50 years ago.

In 1942, Carney (nee Omoto) was taken from her Kitsilano home with her parents, and forcibly moved to Hastings Park Assembly Centre, a former livestock building converted into a detention centre. Her internment followed the surprise Japanese attack on Pearl Harbour, Dec. 7, 1941.

The Canadian government responded placing the Japanese population on Canadian soil (estimated at more than 20,000) in internment camps. On March 4, 1942, Hastings Park was under the control of Canadian military authorities. In all, some 8,000 Japanese and Japanese Canadians passed through the park, with the number of people on the site reaching as high as 3,866 in September, 1942.

"Everybody should know what happened," Carney said.

Beginning Aug. 21, Pacific National Exhibition visitors can find out what happened to Carney and other Japanese-Canadians by exploring the Momiji Garden. The garden celebrates the triumph of the Japanese-Canadian community and the freedom all Canadians enjoy. It was specially planned for the former in-

ternment grounds.

"While I think it's necessary to acknowledge the attitudes of the past, it's more important to recognize that the proposed Japanese Garden is an affirmation of our freedom as individuals now and for the future," said Henry Wakabayashi, chair of the garden project.

The garden, a community project initiated in 1992 by the Japanese Canadian Citizens Association and the Vancouver Japanese Gardeners' Association, is 60 per cent complete. The associations have raised \$415,000 of the \$550,000 needed to complete the garden. Organizers are trying to raise the remaining \$135,000. Carney was one of the last

internees to leave Hastings Park. She eventually rejoined her family who had been earlier moved to the Slocan Valley, Oct. 31, 1942. Hastings Park Assembly Centre was shut down soon after.

"I think it's wonderful what

they're doing," Carney said. "We have to thank the immigrants who are doing this garden."

The garden will be open year round and is free to the public. Call 251-7771 to make a donation.

happy with the maintenance of the common areas. While one owner enjoys tightly clipped, formal hedges and orderly flower beds, another prefers to see shrubs left to grow a little wild and borders permitted a more free-flowing, romantic look. A laurel hedge surrounding one of the homes gets pruned a leaf at a time because the owner does not like to see the freshly cut stems.

Spring is the most colorful time in the gardens, when more than 10,000 bulbs burst into bloom and the rhododendrons begin to flower.

The Reids would like to have the gardens complex included on the annual VanDusen Private Garden Tour in spring because the picture is so impressive.

Meanwhile, a little way down the street, there is a \$300,000 garden

that has just won Kazu Haraguchi, of East Wind Landscaping, the grand prize in the sixth annual Sumi Awards landscaping contest run by the Vancouver Japanese Gardeners Association.

Haraguchi won the prize for the large estate garden he has spent the last three years building for a new Shaughnessy resident from Hong Kong.

THE GARDEN has two distinct areas: a natural, Japanese-style pool garden with hand-placed stone shaded by a fine ornamental maple; and a formal English rose garden with square box hedging and a clematis-covered archway that frames a view through the garden to a piece of statuary.

Between the two garden areas there is a slate patio area and a large lawn bordered on the house side by a rockery.

Again, it is the exceptional standard of maintenance that keeps the gardens looking so grand. This garden also won grand prize for maintenance in the Sumi Awards for Ken Kusumoto's Garden Service, of Vancouver.

Other winners in the Sumi Awards include Oriental Gardening and Landscaping, of Surrey, Yoshi Landscaping, of Vancouver, Mikasa Garden Service and Northwest Gardening Service, both of Vancouver.

Other winners in the BCNTA awards were Woods Landscapes, of Burnaby; Allgreen Landscaping, of Burnaby; and Gardenia Landscaping, of West Vancouver.