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For the passionate gardener

Vol. 16, Issue #5

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what's hot
2016

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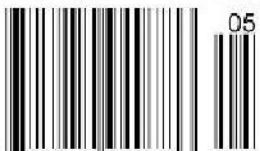
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VOLUME 16, ISSUE #5

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“After the Party”

Do up the Doorstep winner at Canada Blooms

By Tania Moffat



“Do up the doorstep” winning display at Canada Blooms.



The aim of the garden was to create a harmonious contrast in foliage, texture, flowers, berries and branching patterns.

In celebration of their 20th Anniversary this year’s theme for Canada Blooms was appropriately titled “It’s a Party”. Guests filled the Enercare Centre enjoying their first taste of spring as they strolled through acres of stunning and creative gardens in a dazzling display of colour, texture and fragrance designed by Toronto’s ambitious landscape designers, architects and builders.

Part of the annual highlights included Oaks by Brampton Brick’s “Do up the Doorstep Gardens” which challenged garden builder’s creativity within small spaces. This year’s winner was Lori Di Monte of Who Does Your Garden who partnered with Vitali Pozdniakov of Vital Gardens. Their display whisked you along on an imaginative and whimsical journey.

“We wanted the garden to be illusionary. The design had to pique your imagination and take you away from the rectilinear, formulaic predictable aesthetic. It had to be a fashion statement,” explains Lori.

Weary of plants being treated like pieces of furniture to provide instant gratification and firmly define boundaries, the pair decided to move away from a strictly controlled environment defined by perfectly clipped hedges. Using a less formal approach to partition space they were able to let plants preserve their natural growing habit and stretch out.

The aim of the planting itself was to create a harmonious contrast in habit, foliage, texture, flowers, berries and branching patterns. Button ferns (*Pallaea rotundifolia*), Boston ferns (*Nephrolepis exaltata*), ponytail palms (*Beaucarnea recurvata*), and Spanish canary ivy (*Hedra Maroccana*) offer a stunning contrast of foliage. They are accented with pretty primrose (*Primula vulgaris* Belarina ‘Kerblecrem’) and hellebore Ivory Prince (*Helleborus* ‘Walhelivor’). Grape hyacinth (*Muscari*), early bergenia (*Bergenia crassifolia*), Magnolia stellate and ‘Red Sprite’ holly (*Ilex verticillata*) complete the look.



Ferns, primrose and grape hyacinth peek out from beneath the raised path.



Helleborus 'Walhelivor'.

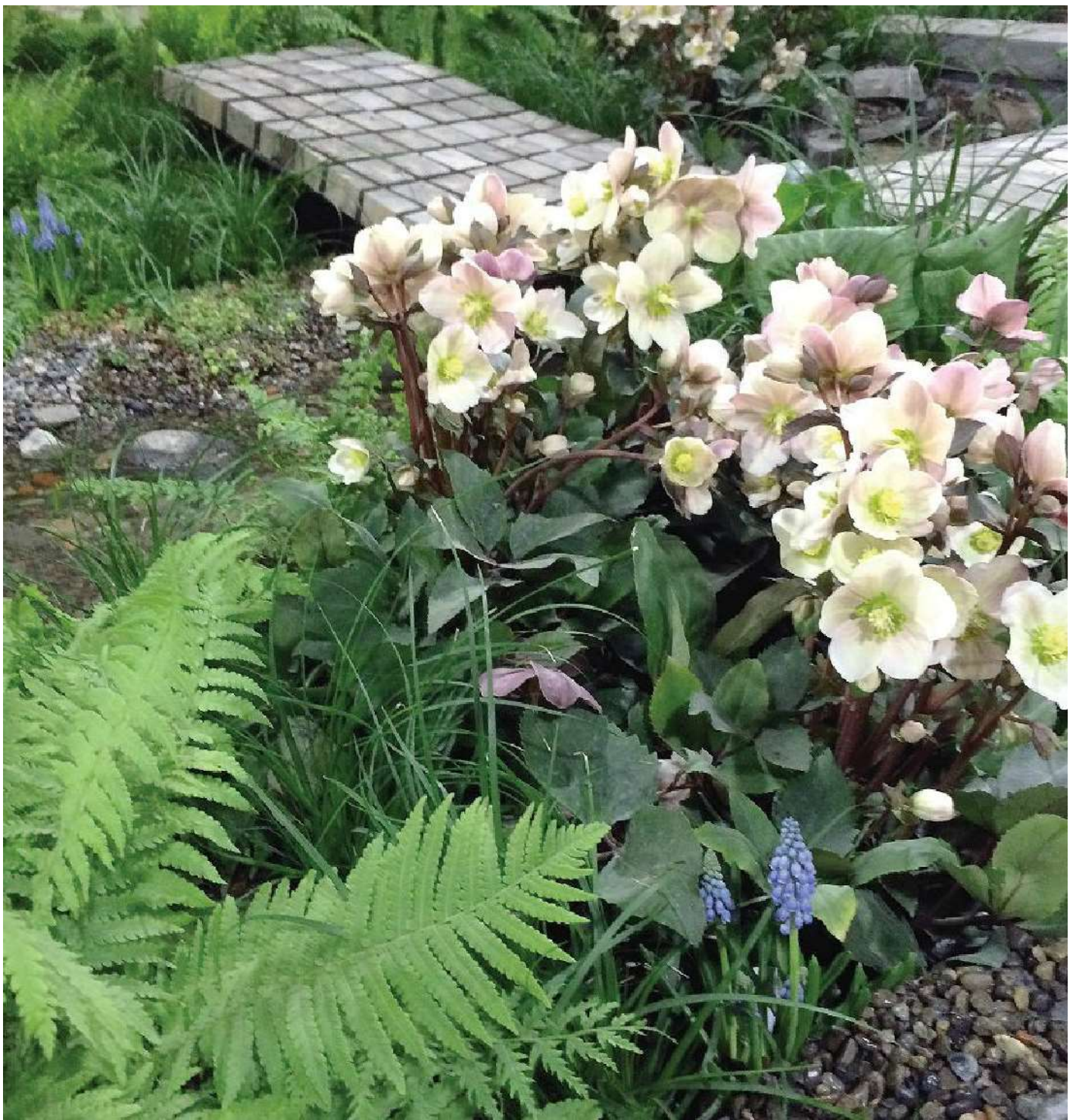
We love the magical way the pathway appears to wave and hover over the ground and foliage.



The path is made from reclaimed 4x4s.



A shock of red berries pop up from a bed of ferns.



The combination of greenery and flowers enhance the fairytale like feel of this garden.

“We let the planting present itself as the non-plant elements shaped the space. Originally we had planned to use white tulips but they were too harsh against the ivory coloured door and soft pink wall. The rich creamy-white primulas and muted pink hellebores were a perfect substitute,” says Lori of the process. The entire process took them a week of planning and assembling materials offsite and 12 hours of onsite building.

Unique aspects

Project partner, Vitali, had installed

a unique wooden path in his home 15 years ago using reclaimed 4x4s cut into six inch cubes and then laying them down, cut side up. The wood aged beautifully and suited the whimsical feel of the garden. He sold the house a number of years ago and by a fluke, before she knew Vitali, Lori ended up becoming the gardener for the new owners. Immediately taken in by many of the features of the garden she fell in love with the path. By a strange coincidence they first met each other at a mutual client’s

property last fall and started talking about the gardening industry. It was then that they discovered that Vitali was the previous owner who had crafted the path she adored so much.

Vitali agreed to help out with the Canada Blooms project and the pair decided to recreate the path using reclaimed 4x4 as pavers, and so the illusion began. “We didn’t want a straight path. The path was built offsite. By using flexible plywood as a base we were able to create a bend in the path and mounted the stained

wooden blocks onto the plywood,” says Lori. The magical path appeared to float above the ground, leading to but not touching the door. It served a dual purpose as path and bridge with a creek running underneath. It became the focal point and most talked about element in the garden.

With a limited space of 10 feet by 10 feet the ‘creek’ was an ideal way to incorporate the use of stone into the garden. Using pea gravel, small boulders and rocks gathered from the water’s edge of Lake Ontario they were able to use various sizes of stones from large to tiny and blend them into the planting.

The door, generously supplied by Brian Knapp at Contex Design in Toronto, was the perfect match for this whimsical garden. The antique arch topped door and frame, suitable for display as art or as faux interior doors, retains much of its original hardware. The door exhibits extraordinary craftsmanship and attention to detail in their raised and fielded paneling. The beautiful patina and French ivory coloured surface added a touch of romance with a gently billowing curtain blowing out of the slightly ajar door.

European Beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) branches created a woodland canopy over the entire garden which captured the eyes of passersby. A privacy screen was placed on either side of the doorway. One screen utilized horizontal boards of clear cedar while the other had coloured plastic inserted into the frame.

Originally the name of the garden was “R Way to Garden” – revitalize, reclaim, relax were listed on the sign under the title, but as the whimsy and illusionary vision began to take place another name soon surfaced, “After the Party”. The slightly ajar door seemed as if it were accidentally left open as a party goer left feeling a little light-headed, their eyes perhaps playing tricks on them – is this the scene of a dream or reality?

Real or imagined, this doorway captured the imagination of the judges who voted that it was a scene worthy of the Do up the Doorstep Award. Congratulations Lori and Vitali!

To find out more about their work, contact Lori Di Monte of Who Does your Garden at 416.258.9428 lori@whodoesyourgarden.com or Vitali Pozdiakov of Vital Gardens at vitali-here@gmail.com.



Contrasting textures of greenery.



The path is one of the most interesting aspects of the garden.



A peaceful pond completes the look.