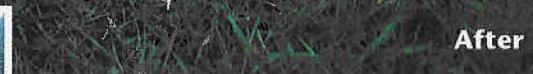
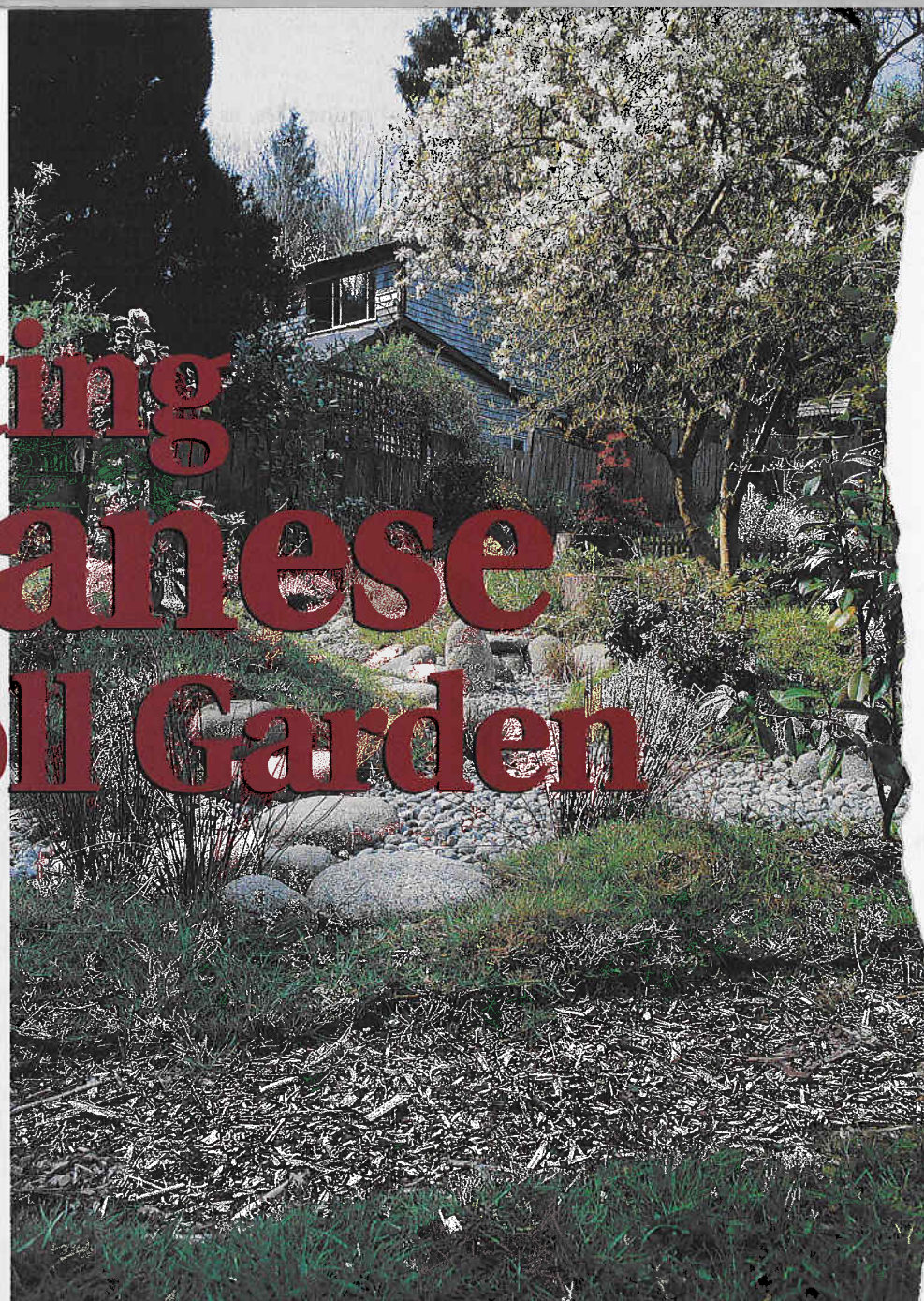


Creating a Japanese Stroll Garden

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TEXT AND PHOTOS

While it is perhaps stretching my mind to believe that there are fairies at the bottom of my garden, I do believe there is magic. I bought my little cottage on Bowen Island because I fell in love with its garden. At first sight this wild rambling English style garden with wisteria around the kitchen windows and old-fashioned pink Abraham Darby roses brought tears to my eyes. Much of the quarter acre garden was seriously overgrown, but right in front of my kitchen were two organized raised beds for vegetables. Misguidedly I thought I would work it into shape in no time, but with an unexpected bad back this was not to be.

After a year of experimentation and much trial and error, it appears more unkempt than ever. At this point magic



A wild rambling garden is transformed into a low maintenance contemplative space.

arrives in the shape of my friend Dorothy (whom I have not seen in more than a decade), and her landscape designer husband Yoshihiro Kawasaki, a Japanese leprechaun of a man. Trained in the princi-

ples of Japanese landscaping at the Kyoto School of Art (in the city where most of the remaining classical gardens of Japan are situated), he had designed gardens in Japan, the United States, Australia and India. Having just moved to North Vancouver from Kyoto they are eager to get their hands into B.C. soil.

They visit and show me photographs of Yoshi's work. After I lament on my



Bricks aren't a traditional Japanese building material (left) but were used to create a fan-shaped patio overlooking a waterfall. Selecting the rocks to represent Buddha and his five disciples (bottom) was an almost meditative event.

high maintenance garden, we wander into the jumble of fall dying flowers, while Yoshi assesses the site carefully. Taking into consideration the light and soil conditions plus my needs, Yoshi suggests that the lower part of the garden would be a natural for *kaiyushiki* or a contemplative stroll garden.

Japanese stroll gardens were first constructed in the 1600s and have curving pathways that lead you through a miniature landscape composed of hills, rocks, a stream, mosses, ferns, small trees and plants designed to create peace and tranquility. Traditionally, flowers are not emphasized in Japanese gardens as they can be too distracting. However, flowering shrubs such as azaleas, rhododendrons, camellias, wisteria and kerria are used to bring a sense of colour. The idea is to create simple elegance, so that as you stroll you can pause at any moment and a new aspect is revealed to you. This idea draws on Zen philosophy's idea of suggestion rather than completion, *mie-gakure*. It is designed so that you feel one with the environment.

Multiple Design Elements

At our second meeting, I am presented with designs on paper and given a cost estimate. In the details I see miniature paths, a dry waterfall laid out with rocks and a stream and pond filled with pebbles. There are mounds representing hills and an island in the pond. Shrubs, miniature trees, bamboo, grasses and ferns complete the scene. To create a unique feature and to use some bricks I want incorporated, Yoshi has placed a small circular focal point near the waterfall to represent Sarnath in India, where the Buddha gave his first sermons. Bordered with the bricks and filled with pebbles, six rocks symbolically represent Buddha and his five disciples. Yoshi designed this garden to fit into a space of approximately 16

