

# Celebrating the Small Back Yard

Written by Gloria Hildebrandt. Photographed by Mike Davis.

**G**ARDEN CELEBRATION is the name of the installation at this year's Canada Blooms that won the Most Imaginative Garden award, presented in the name of *Niagara Escarpment Views*. It was designed by Jacob's Gardenscape of Carlisle.

"I wanted to create a very peaceful garden in a typical back yard," says principal Neil Jacob Obach. "The goal was to create simplicity in the garden."

The result was a rectangular space bordered by fencing and panels, softened by trees and flowers, surrounding a sunken pea-gravel patio, defined by arbours at each end. There was a Zen-garden atmosphere because of the gravel stones, and a Japanese influence to the wall panels. Obach, who came to Canada in 1999 from the Philippines,

enjoys including an Asian influence to his gardens.

Obach exhibited many ideas for others to consider. His creative use of gabion baskets and panels showed that they are not just for big construction projects. Gabion baskets became a low retaining wall along both sides of the patio.

"You can plant in the baskets," says Obach, indicating the grape hyacinths in moss among the stones of the baskets. "I want to give the idea that it's something people can do. Alpine plants can grow in small amounts of soil. The idea is to make pockets of soil in fabric pouches and add plants." He also pointed out that bricks can go inside gabion baskets, forming a wall within a retaining wall.

Gabion panels were used to break up the monotony of the horizontal wood



▲ Neil Jacob Obach of Jacob's Gardenscape designed the Asian-influence Garden Celebration.



▲ Garden Celebration won the award for Most Imaginative Garden at Canada Blooms this year.





▲ Horizontal fencing, gabion panels, and a row of cedars bordered by Golden Calex held in place by gabion baskets, formed a focal point.



▲ Gabion baskets filled with rocks formed a retaining wall. Grape hyacinths were planted in soil pockets among the rocks.







The garden's structure emphasized straight lines, with horizontal fencing and arbours, creating a modern look as well as an Asian touch.

fence. Most of the panels were filled with the same pea gravel as the patio surface, but central sections were filled with glass shards or tiny white shells, turning the panels into works of art.

Plantings in the borders showed both repetition and variety, as well as symmetry. A central row of cedars formed a side focal point. At their feet were Golden Carex plants, providing a variegated colour contrast. On either side of this row was a collection of a crab apple with Daphne bushes at the base, all bordered by burgundy heuchera, also known as coral bells.

The four corners of the garden, edged in boxwood, offered deeper beds for plants. In one stood a Japanese maple with a small, hardy

Clumping Bamboo in front of it. An opposite corner featured a Weeping Hemlock and a pink rhododendron.

The garden's structure emphasized straight lines, with horizontal fencing and arbours, creating a modern look as well as an Asian touch.

Jacob's Gardenscape offers design and creation services to provide whatever the customer wants. Obach says he has to please the owners, but there might be a small Asian element in each of his gardens.

**Neil Jacob Obach wishes to thank his garden donors and helpers:**

- Clean Slate Lands Masonry
- Dennis V&D Deck Company
- July Salvador, 1st Choice Irrigation and Lighting

◀ One corner bed featured a Weeping Hemlock and a pink rhododendron. The gabion panel shows a central section filled with white glass shards.

▼ Bricks inside a gabion basket can form a retaining wall for small materials.

