

ENJOYING THE GREAT OUTDOORS

BY DANIEL G. JACOBS MANAGING EDITOR

WITH AN AVERAGE 265 days of sunshine a year, it's no wonder these homeowners wanted an outdoor space to enjoy their Carson City, NV, home. But with summer temperatures averaging near 90° F., a livable space meant incorporating mature trees with a new back yard.

Outdoor Environments of Nevada got an unexpected assist when the homeowners decided to renovate the residence.

An extension took the home deeper into the back yard and, essentially, eliminated the existing landscaping, says Sara Anderson, owner of the 5-year-old, Reno-based firm.

The project was completed in two phases, beginning with the back yard, which was basically dug up during the addition to the home.

"They ripped all of the grass out of the back yard," Anderson says. "There

After a home renovation destroyed the Russell residence yard, Outdoor Environments went to work and earned two awards for redesigning and rebuilding the front and back yards.

was a lot of construction and demolition. There's also a dry creek that runs through there. We installed grass that flowed in and over the dry creek. We wove the grass and the beds through the dry creek."

The company also installed lighting in many of the 30- to 35-ft. trees providing shade in both the front and back of the home.

The work earned the company the Nevada Landscape Association's (NLA's) 2008 President's Trophy. The

Outdoor Environments saved the mature trees in this construction-disturbed backyard (right) and added a patio and turfgrass (above).

more than \$100,000 project, which covered about an acre also earned Outdoor Environments the NLA's lighting award.

But it wasn't easy. Construction of the





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home addition wreaked havoc on a lot more than just the grass.

"The back yard took us a month because we had to build small walls, design drainage and the patio, and run all-new irrigation," Anderson says. "It was time-consuming. It's easier to start from scratch. When you're trying to redo stuff it's more time-consuming."

Outdoor Environments installed a large water feature in the back yard. Eight employees worked on the project — the back yard in the fall of 2007 and the front yard in the winter of 2008.

In addition to grass, Outdoor Environments installed irrigation systems in the front and back of the property (Carson City gets more snow, 22 in. per year, than rain, 12 in.). One difficulty was meshing what remained on the grounds with the homeowner's desire for a livable space in the back yard.

"The back part of the property was planted, but it wasn't utilized," Anderson says. "We used the shade so in the heat of the summer the client has a nice, cool patio area. We used the (existing) orchard with boulders and herbal plantings. But there's also patio area with full sun."

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This dry creek bed gave the Reno, NV-based landscape company an attractive landscape feature, which delighted the homeowners.



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The biggest challenge was the level of integration required. Outdoor Environments had to harmonize the existing environment with a variety of new features.

"It was bringing those elements all together," Anderson says. "They have large existing trees, 30 ft. to 35 ft. tall.



A new irrigation system in the front and back yards helps keep the turfgrass green and growing — that and Reno's average 265 days of sunshine a year.



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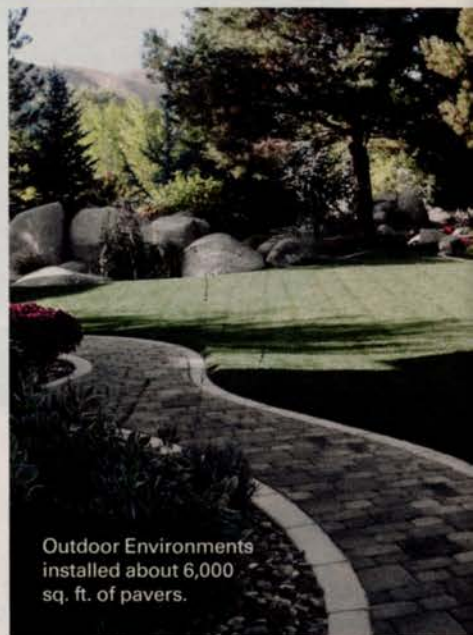
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Outdoor Environments installed about 6,000 sq. ft. of pavers.

It was utilizing all the things that were there and incorporating new plant materials, grass areas and patio areas, while making the yard function in a different way."

Included in the many elements in this project was the installation of a new driveway, which Anderson subcontracted. That part of the project entailed ripping out asphalt and installing 6,000 sq. ft. of pavers.

"The driveway took us three to four weeks," Anderson says.

While the back yard required the bulk of the changes, Outdoor Environments also addressed the front yard.

"We put in new sprinklers in the front," Anderson says. "There were only two planters that we changed out there. The rest of it we left remaining.

"We only changed out the things that really needed to be taken out and replaced." LM