

## LANTA Landscape Awards 2008

### Landscape Features, Residential, Water Features

Receiving the original call from an existing tree maintenance client inquiring if we were able to design and build “a small pond, with a few trees ... and some kind of waterfall of some sort?”, the owner of our company (Gerard Fournier) inquired as to how big the pond would be, and how many trees was the client thinking about? The answer came as a bit of a shock: “Oh, the pond should be about 150 feet by 250, a couple of hundred trees and shrubs should be good for a start, but you’re going to have to come up with an idea for the waterfall, because my wife and I just don’t have any idea!”

What ensued? A three year, multi-phase construction project with over 120 caliper and potted trees planted, several hundred shrubs and perennials, 240 tonnes of native sandstone and glacial erratic rocks trucked in and placed, three massive 6,000 gallons per hour waterfall pumps, a pond liner the size of most residential lots, and thousands of native and hardy pond and wetland plants planted to naturalize an industrial earthmoving project into a healthy wetland ecosystem.

Construction started in the dry autumn of 2006. The pond was originally a “borrow” pit for material to construct a second driveway about a quarter mile to the north of the acreage property, connecting the acreage to the nearest highway. The low spot resulting from the borrow pit was perfectly and efficiently straight sided to fit the adjacent road, and little could be done with the shape. The waterfall design evolved from the lay of the land though. With a nice hill facing the rear (and main) entrance of the estate home, this allowed the waterfall to arise from the east and flow west, towards the house, bringing with the flow continual good luck to the owners, according to some “feng shui” sources.

Tree planting was in October of 2006. Several varieties of native and hybrid poplars frame the waterfall and ascend the hillside, integrating with the distant vista of the lofty tops of the neighbour’s trees. Sharp-leaf and other native willows and birches are planted closer to the water’s edge, their ideal environment. Purple leaf, multi-stem Schuberts also grace the pond bank, for their reflective and contrasting colours and their bird-friendly fruiting habits. Blocks of conifers, complimentarily shaped and coloured Colorado Blue Spruce and Ponderosa Pine will provide welcome wind relief shelter from the north, and ascend to the top of the hillside, thriving in the sandy soil and hot sun.

To the south, native white spruce, a few more native black cottonwoods and a row of Colorado spruce echoing the existing shelterbelt of Swedish aspen co-mingle with the blazing golden autumn glory of Siberian Larch.

Excavation of the upper pool and pond and installation of the liner took place in November of 2006. Good thing, because spring of 2007 saw six or seven feet of water in the previously dry

holes! Spring of 2007 also saw the planting of shrubs, perennials and the wetland plants enabling the transformation of the roadside excavation into a wetland ecosystem.

The project was a complete success, attracting hordes of native songbirds, pond-life such as frogs, ducks, swallows and dragonflies, and providing perfect habitat and room for many trees to grow and thrive for decades to come. The owners love their pond and it has become the focal point of their property. It is the favourite morning walk, the after work chill-out area, a space for quiet contemplation and enjoyment of nature as well as the perfect play area for adventurous grandchildren and stage for family get-togethers and even a picturesque wedding backdrop last summer.

In 2009, For Trees Company received the Landscape Alberta Award of Excellence for this property in the "Residential Landscape for Water Features" category.

