



Small Yard, Big Dreams

We met the Hansen's in the spring of 2018. They had just purchased a home in Riviera, Cochrane, and as typical of a new development home, were faced dealing with a weed-ridden, muddy postage stamp of a backyard. With only 1200 square ft. to work with, the wish list included a deck, fire-pit and patio, a water feature, trees and plantings with a flagstone

pathway circling around to the front yard. Careful and artistic utilization of space would be required to make the wish list work.

We spent an afternoon in the yard with a can of spray paint drawing and re-drawing the design until we found something that worked. Sometimes it can be hard to visualize how spray-painted lines translate into landscape design lines, but the homeowner had the advantage of looking directly down on the backyard from an upstairs bedroom and was able to see the layout just like she was reading a drawing. With the design and budget settled, we began the deck, fire-pit, patio and tree planting in the Fall. Everything, to an extent,

was built all at once to maximize efficiency and to take advantage of the large crew we had at our disposal. For example, as the deck was being built, we had employees roughing in the patio and pathway. They then placed seat boulders around the patio, utilizing matts so the machine wouldn't disturb the completed base work; this could be viewed as backwards, however, the boulders required the same basing material as the patio required so it made sense to install both bases at once.

After the heavy work was complete, we planted trees behind the boulders along the fence line. While this also may seem backwards, the tight working space meant an increased risk of damaging the new trees if we had left the heavy machine work until after they were planted.



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Landscaping a home can be a very personal and subjective process. Sometimes what looks good on paper may not feel right in real life. Our way of working through this process is ensuring constant communication back and forth with the homeowner making sure that what is in our customer's mind is properly translated to the yard. This meant pausing before the, "point of no return" to ensure, for example, that the path layout was what she wanted in the excavation stage before we put down gravel and pavers. Or, ensuring the seat boulders were placed correctly before installing something in front of them, which would have made them more difficult to move if she

changed her mind. For some this may seem like a painful process but we view it as a fun way to get to know our clients; to really know what their likes and dislikes are, and at the end of the project see their satisfaction as being a major part of the creative process.

We succeeded in completing all the backyard hardscaping that fall, and in the spring of 2019, amid mud and weather delays, we completed the backyard pond and plantings. We were also able to landscape the front yard with decorative rocks and shrubs... no grass; our clients were quite adamant that they would not be purchasing a lawnmower to cut 100 square ft of lawn!

This yard is truly one of a kind, and now that the plants are becoming well established, it is only getting better with time!

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