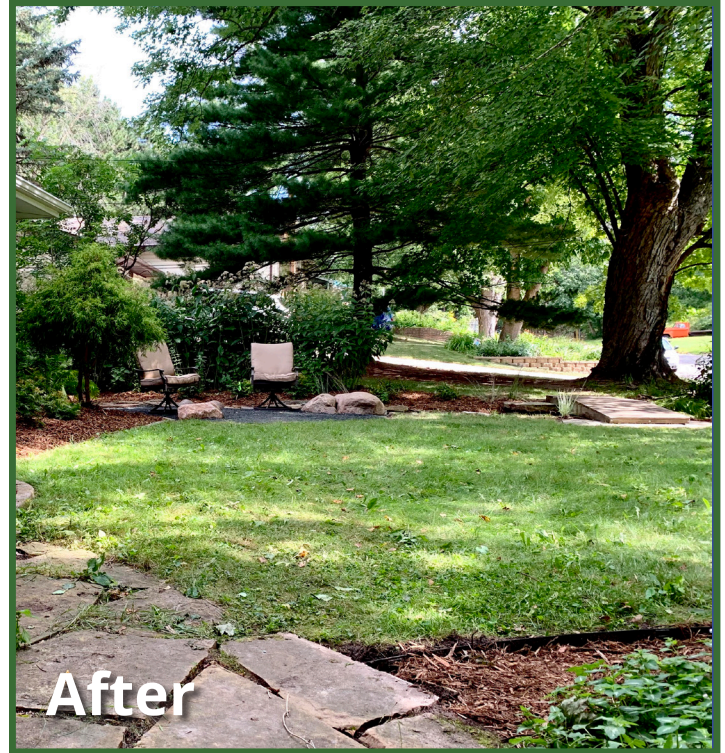


Back to Nature in St. Paul



Client Overview

In 2015, Sunny Didier was considering selling her home in East St. Paul as an ugly house because her yard had become what her friends called, “a jungle.” She was overwhelmed with spring clean-up and struggled to find a company that could help her do it, while respecting her desire to continue nurturing it as a natural habitat.

Challenge

Sunny and her former husband had a 10-year plan to get her half acre manicured yard back to nature in the shade of Norway pine, White pine, Red Maple, Birch, and Ash trees in very good health. She hired yard services who took one look and told her they couldn't help her. Sunny says, “I wasn't living up to the promise of the property.”

Solution

The couple worked to build a pond, and a dry stream bed for overflow, and replanted their backyard with native grasses and flowers. A grant from the University of Minnesota brought a professional eye on building rain gardens. They won a Landscape Environment Program Award for their efforts. Plans were disrupted when the marriage ended, but Sunny was determined to achieve the original goal of a totally

Solution continued

natural space, so she kept working to bring her previously manicured yard back to nature with a focus on creating a wildlife habitat.

A referral to Minnehaha Falls Landscaping resulted in an introduction to owner and soil specialist Russ Henry. Russ said, "This yard is beautiful!" Sunny thought, "This is my person!"

Russ Henry and General Manager Chesney Engquist educated Sunny on the plants, and demonstrated the "chop and drop" method, leaving cut pieces in place as natural mulch, which is healthier for yards and animals. They also left some weeds because they're valuable to pollinators. Work has been done to create a bee safe lawn that will be in full effect next summer. MFL Landscape Architect Tom Kerby designed a Zen Space with a 10-foot diameter space with big boulders and a few grasses, perfect for sitting and soaking up the sights and sounds of a natural habitat.

Results

"Minnehaha Falls Landscaping got my yard under control, and they will be part of my life for as long as I own this house," said Sunny Didier. "They're knowledgeable and responsive, got things under control, and taught me to be a good steward of my environment." Sunny says Russ Henry and his team are happy to make changes, and don't shame her when she wants something they don't recommend. "They helped me understand that natural habitat requires maintenance," says Sunny. "I didn't understand what that maintenance was, and now I do."

"Minnehaha Falls
Landscaping restored
my faith in my house
and my yard"

- Sunny Didier

