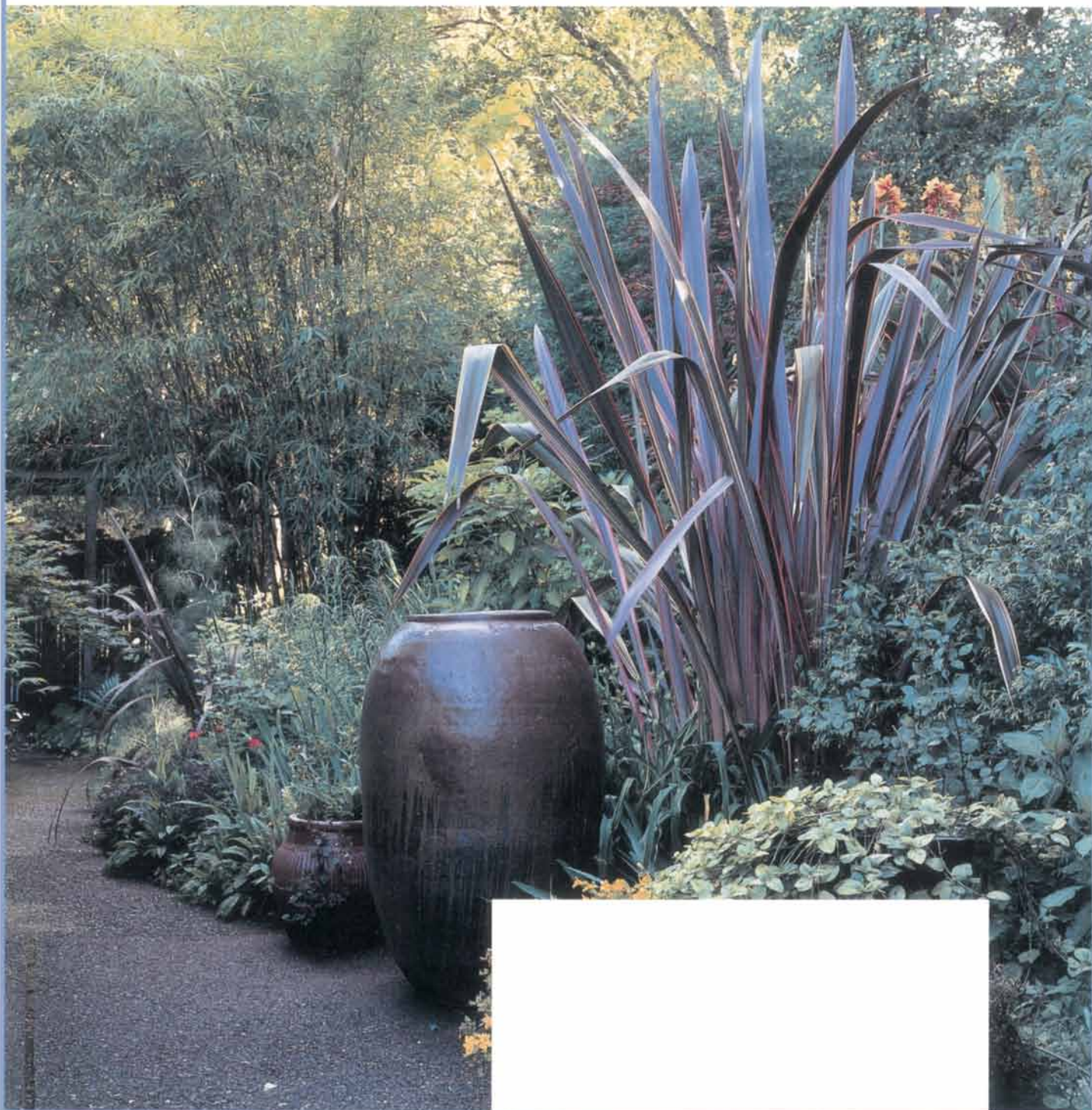


GARDEN DESIGN AWARD WINNERS

INSPIRING GARDENERS FOR 100 YEARS

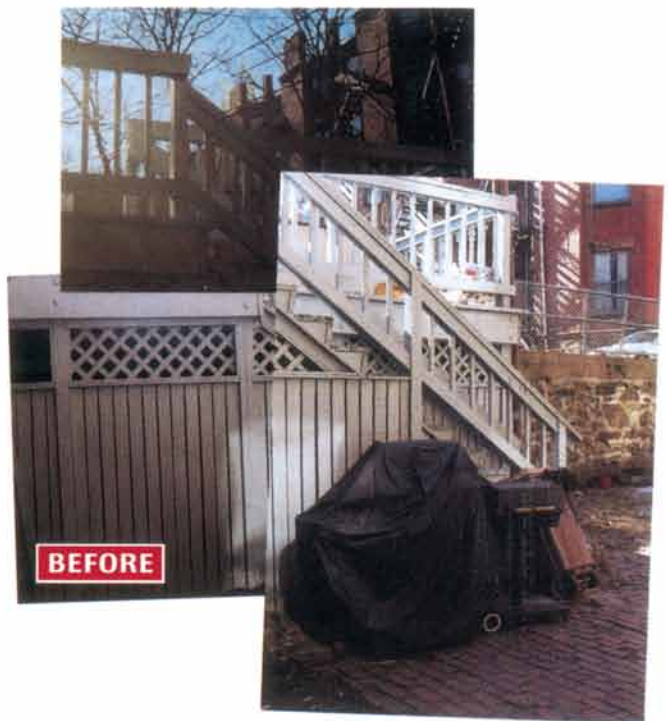
Horticulture

GARDENS • PLANTS • DESIGN • IDEAS • TECHNIQUES | APRIL 2005





More for the Northeast



Conversations:

Lucia Droby, Executive Director of COGdesign

THE COMMUNITY Outreach Group for Landscape Design (COGdesign) is all about relationships—relationships between designers and the underfunded organizations the group serves; between those clients and their dreams; and between community members and their environment. As the nonprofit's executive director, Lucia Droby plays matchmaker in these relationships, pairing clients with end goals, designers with clients, and all parties with the benefits that come from pro bono landscape design.



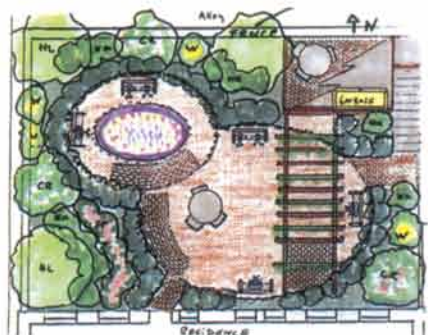
Lucia Droby

The process begins when a community group—such as a school, neighborhood, house of worship, or service organization—notifies its own need for landscape design,

and contacts COGdesign. “Usually they’ll have something in mind,” Droby says, “but they don’t know the steps for getting it in place.” Through an application, interviews, and community meetings, COGdesign helps the client identify all of the design details it needs. Droby describes a recent project, a group residence for elders, as an example: “The landscape needs to be one that gives residents opportunities to be outside in privacy, or with family visitors, or with neighbors. It needs to be handicapped-accessible and low maintenance, but provide hands-on activity for those residents who want it. It also needs to take into account climatic issues.”

Once a client’s dream is defined, Droby sets about matching the client with a designer. She circulates project information through the COG network of student and professional designers. Interested designers respond, and Droby begins a round of applications and interviews with them, before finally selecting the best person for the job.

“Sometimes I think of myself as the mother hen and the designers as all my little chicks,” Droby says, and it’s with a mother’s



The residents at this Pine Street Inn home in Boston saw their dreams become reality with the help of COGdesign and designer Sally Muspratt.

DESIGN & PHOTO CREDIT: SALLY MUSPRATT



More for the Northeast

EVENTS



APRIL 1-3
**A Breath of Spring
Flower Show**

Swanzey, NH
www.hcsservices.org/flowershow/

APRIL 2
Spring Meeting

Connecticut Botanical Society
New Haven, CT
www.ct-botanical-society.org

APRIL 3
Brockton Garden Show

Brockton Garden Club
Shaw's Center, Brockton, MA
508-942-7535
www.bostongardens.com/bostongardens

APRIL 3
Field Trip: Spring Wake-Up

Weetamoo Woods, Tiverton, RI
New England Wild Flower Society
508-877-7630
www.newfs.org

APRIL 8-9
**Great Gardens and
Landscaping Symposium**

Perennially Yours/Northeast
Show Promoters
New York State Museum,
Albany, NY
www.pyours.com

APRIL 9
**Opening of the
Victorian Rose Garden**

Rhode Island Rose Society
Roger Williams Park, Providence, RI
www.rirs.org

APRIL 9
**Spring Gardener's Day:
"Gardening in Small Spaces"**

Blithewold Mansion, Gardens,
and Arboretum
Bristol, RI

Conversations

(continued from page A6)

pride and caring that she describes them. "They're some of the most generous and intelligent people I've met. They do all this pro bono—but we do hope they get something important back." To that end, COGdesign—which started out in 1995 as a student organization at the Radcliffe Seminars in Landscape Design (now the Landscape Institute of the Arnold Arboretum)—provides designers with real-world experience and projects to add to their portfolios. Droby notes, though, that the designers aim not to receive, but to give. "We've found they do it because they want to use their skills in a way that contributes something important."

But what is the importance of COGdesign's services—aren't there other, more basic needs that should be met before anyone thinks about landscape design? "You have to start from where you are," Droby says. "If I were a scientist, I'd try to help the world through developing medicines, to improve health. If I were a teacher, I'd help the world through educating and caring for children, to improve our future. I'm neither of those things; but I can contribute my skills as a landscape designer." She notes this is the philosophy of the COGdesign community of designers.

And COGdesign clients benefit not just from the end result of a lovely landscape—



Getting Involved

If you are a landscape designer, a member of a community group in need of landscape design, or a gardener looking for volunteer opportunities, contact COGdesign.

Through the mail:

COGdesign

14 Buxton Lane

Waltham, MA 02451

By e-mail: info@cogdesign.org

By telephone: 781-642-6662

COG Clients

COGdesign serves community groups that are underfunded for landscape design. Potential clients fill out applications and provide support materials, such as photographs and site maps, to help COGdesign determine their eligibility and begin the design process. Current and past clients include the Ayer (Massachusetts) Historical Commission, the Boston Housing Authority, the Boys and Girls Club of Middlesex County, Massachusetts, and the Pine Street Inn. For a full list of clients and projects, visit www.cogdesign.org.

they are empowered through the process itself. "We are a design organization," clarifies Droby. "We basically give the client a kit, a toolbag, with which to attain their dream. We give them a site analysis, hold meetings for community members, develop a concept, and provide cost and maintenance estimates. Then they actually put it in the ground." The empowerment lasts long past installation day. "Access to strong, growing, beautiful things can benefit one's life," Droby explains. "A well-designed landscape makes you feel better about yourself. It reduces stress. It makes you more able to confront the challenges of your life."

—Meghan Lynch

TOP LEFT: RICHARD SHAW