

Student collages.



Peter Hinrichs leads site analysis and mapping in Winthrop Sq., Boston.



COG Designers Teach Boston Homeowners

During fall 2008, COGdesign provided a team of landscape designers for a new Master Urban Gardeners program for low and moderate income homeowners in Boston. The Boston Natural Areas Network (BNAN), which has been offering rigorous garden training to community gardeners for 13 years, adapted their curriculum to the residential landscape and asked COGdesign for design instruction support. According to Marlo Pedroso, BNAN Stewardship Manager, COG's designers "brought great strength" to the program.

In preparation for the first design session, the Boston-based homeowners were directed to create a collage of garden images which they loved. The collages became a starting point for thinking conceptually and identifying preferences of colors, forms, furnishings, and styles.



Landscape designer Peter Hinrichs taught a day-long session in site analysis and preliminary 'mapping' of the landscape. The 28 workshop participants, under Peter's guidance, practiced measuring and mapping in Boston's Winthrop Sq., adjacent to the BNAN classroom. The class then strolled through the nearby Greenway gardens, discussing the effectiveness of paths, berms, and plant material.



Students were next asked to conduct a sensory exercise in their home landscape. At the request of landscape design instructor Maria von Brincken, students were to choose a priority place at home, sit there with eyes closed, and experience the sounds, smells, wind, and light. During class, Maria asked students to describe something they liked and something they disliked about their priority place, resulting from their sensory study. She encouraged students to appreciate the emotional impact of a well conceived outdoor space.



Maria von Brincken discusses design concepts with students.



To help students grasp design concepts in a limited amount of time, Maria suggested that students consider their personal landscape as a room, with all the elements of an interior space, including walls, floor, ceiling, furnishings. She and the students brainstormed what some of these elements might consist of – in the outdoors.



Design coaches followed up the classroom discussions by working with students in small groups, helping them individualize concepts for their own space. The design coaches suggested plant materials and helped students refine their ideas. By the end of the final design class, students were excited by the possibilities of planning and implementing improvements in their home landscapes.

Design coaches with students.



Ginnie Norman (standing)



Anna Ozols (right)



Gabrielle Whitcombe (standing)



Susan Marsh (second from left)



Susan Balleza (right)



Ellen Forrester (left)



Dale T. Wilson (standing)



Sally Muspratt (orange shirt)

