

9th PLANET Award brings Hoffman Landscapes into their own Solar System

Wilton - Hoffman Landscapes, Inc. was honored with 2 Merit Awards this year from the Professional Landcare Network's (PLANET) 42nd Annual Environmental Improvement Awards Program. The Wilton, CT-based landscape firm won a Merit Award in two categories: Residential Design/Build for a Wilton residence and Residential Landscape Management for a Westport property.

This makes the ninth PLANET award for the 25-year old landscape company, including Grand Awards in 2008, 2006 & 2002 as well as a Merit Award in 2001.

PLANET's 4,500 members nationwide, demonstrate the association's commitment to creating and preserving the natural beauty of the landscape.

Creative solutions reap fantastic results

The company's first nominated project was a challenging pool renovation and new construction of a "car barn" to house an antique car collection in Wilton, CT.

The property was maxed out on building space so the landscape designer was charged with the task of finding ways to eliminate and re-design areas around the property that counted as coverage under the town's building regulations.

Using landscape techniques and natural materials, such as native stone and timber (as opposed to man-made synthetics), enabled the overall design plan to avoid being counted under the town's building code. Additional challenges included keeping the connection between the car barn and existing driveway to retain the "old carriage road feel," as well as working around the owner's prized heirloom rose collection.

Solutions included removing the home's existing timber deck reducing building coverage and replacing its functionality with a new stone patio. A variety of native plantings, including viburnum, inkberry, American boxwood and other landscape elements add the finishing touch.



Both deck and concrete pool terrace were replaced but retained functionality by using landscaping materials such as native stone retaining walls and techniques not included in the town's building coverage code.

Helping a 50-year legacy endure

"The guiding garden design principle was to have four season interest in a natural setting," says David Schrang, Director of Property Maintenance on the firm's Westport project. Their work on the property encapsulates a half-century love story and is a "living" example of the rewards the homeowner reaped from skill and ingenuity.

Over 50 years ago, the owners purchased the 1-acre property. Elevation changes and bountiful plantings throughout the years turned the family's 1950s pre-fab into a timeless, modern home. Sheri Forster of The Scottish Gardener was credited with her landscape design on this property. Today the property boasts majestic sugar maple and sweet gum trees, towering hemlocks, white pines, red-twig dogwoods and many varieties of shrubs.

Hoffman's maintenance on this project began in 2007. Per the homeowners' wishes, the company found many ways to enable the homeowner to continue enjoying her property on a daily basis despite her advancing age. "This was a case where teamwork between the homeowner, the garden designer and the Hoffman maintenance crew really paid off," says Schrang. "We installed new hand rails and

stone seating areas in strategic places, to allow her to easily walk the property at any time. In addition, these new rustic elements were all designed to fit seamlessly into the property's "natural look" so you don't even notice them yet they are functional and aesthetic."



As the homeowner ages, Hoffman's maintenance crew is asked to go the extra mile by providing upgrades around the property. Walkways were made more easily passable and sure-footed by resetting the original natural stone pavers in wider, level courses of small stone to provide confident footing. Masonry seating areas of large stones or dry-work seating walls were also added.

