

Sunset

Small Backyard Secrets

INSTANT
PATIO
EASY WAYS
TO ADD
IMPACT

120

INSPIRING IDEAS
TO REMAKE
YOUR BACKYARD

GETTING STARTED

Landscape designs for entertaining, retreats, families

DO IT IN A DAY

- Make a raised bed
- Lay a path
- Build a slate patio

PLANTING PLANS

Grow no-fail herbs and flowers

Display until May 12, 2008
Sunset.com

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SMART USE
OF PLANTS AND
STRUCTURES
MAKES A
SMALL LOT
SEEM LARGER

SOOTHING ILLUSION

THE NARROW GARDEN behind Larry and Elaine Barney's house in South San Francisco is so inviting you hardly notice its awkward dimensions: The backyard is just 12 feet deep and 45 feet long. A huge retaining wall dominates one side.

To minimize the imposing effect of the wall, landscape designer Katey Mulligan started by dividing the yard into two outdoor rooms. On one side is a patio and seat wall, both paved with slate. The other "room" is paved with gravel and accented with mossy rocks, scattered to look as though they've tumbled down from the retaining wall.

To conceal the wall, Mulligan planted layers of greenery. Shrubs, vines, and perennials create a woodland backdrop. River birch, Japanese maple, and mayten trees add height; their airy branches allow precious sunlight through.

To further screen the wall, Mulligan erected a redwood arbor among the trees; it frames a bubbling fountain. At the other end of the garden, Mulligan erected a door, made from rough-hewn recycled redwood, against the retaining wall at the wall's highest point; it gives the illusion of a destination on the other side.

DESIGN Katey Mulligan, Liquidambar Garden Design, San Francisco (www.liquidambar.biz or 415/613-5976)

SMALL-SPACE INSPIRATION

The gently curving front edge of the planting bed adds a sense of depth to this very shallow backyard

SMALL-SPACE INSPIRATION

Think tall: The arbor erected in front of the retaining wall adds dimension and vertical interest