



MNLA Industry Awards

RESIDENTIAL LANDSCAPE DESIGN & INSTALLATION OVER \$60,000



### House on the Hill

The grill area patio was designed for several people to talk and cook around the movable grill. Enough space for a bisque set, and quick access into the downstairs portion of the house for other amenities. A Serviceberry is strategically located to provide coverage from the sun during peak hours. While a large Heritage River Birch, is placed on the corner of the house as a vertical element to the height of the house, and gradually draw the eye down to grade level.

The larger hardscaped area in the backyard was designed as the main attraction. This area was to be functional as well as aesthetically pleasing, as it is in full view of the upstairs windows. The main elements involved split patterns on the pavers to define distinct usage areas, and an upright fireplace. The fireplace was requested by the client and became the element the rest of the landscape was built around. The direction of the fireplace opening was chosen to allow for any viewers on the deck to also enjoy the aesthetic.

The retaining wall design choice was caused by the placement of the house on the property. The site is on a higher elevation than the rest of the neighborhood. The builders and client decided upon revealing the lowest floor with an entrance to the backyard. To do so, they cut the grade, creating steep slopes for the rest of the backyard. We addressed this issue functionally with two retaining walls, creating terraced planting beds. The upper terrace also cuts down the slope to a safer gradient for mowing equipment

As of now, the backyard space has few shade elements until the landscape trees reach maturity. The pergola provides respite from the sun during morning and noon usage. The flagstone walkway beneath the pergola provides standing or seating options to relax and enjoy lunch breaks while outside. The pergola, as well as a shade piece, provides aesthetic value. It takes architectural cues

from the house and places them into the landscape. The pergola has a modern aesthetic, with the use of the powder coated steel posts and unique plank attachment, that creates a strong contrast to the rough, natural facade of the paver patios.

Plantings choices had to meet certain requirements. First, had to be selected from species with contained growth. A type that showed consistent results through ours, and our growers, to require little to no trimming. Second, to provide color or interest through all seasons. In addition to the first requirement, some choices had to be made. Many species we selected are cold-hardy and evergreen, so they provide color year round. But to add interest, specific types were chosen for their dormant look in fall and winter. With the lack of deadheading occurring, these will provide interest when forgotten. Third, to be hardy in conditions of negligence. The last criteria, the plant species had to contend with local deer. The property is surrounded by heavily forested lands, with frequent deer tracks appearing on the clients property. The criteria further decreased the selection of plantings. We utilized MSU Extension's research on the subject to help with the selection.

