



DESIGN SOLUTIONS

MAKING A
SPLASH

IN A SHADY, SLENDER WEDGE OF GARDEN BEHIND A PHILADELPHIA ROW HOUSE, THE SOUND OF FALLING WATER IS MUSIC TO RELAX BY.

A copper gutter, incorporated into a shade-providing arbor, carries rainwater from the nearby roof to a raised basin, where the water arrives with a satisfying splash. A recirculating pump keeps the water flowing when it's not raining.

BY DOUG HALL PHOTOGRAPHS BY ROB CARDILLO PRODUCED BY KELLY WAITS

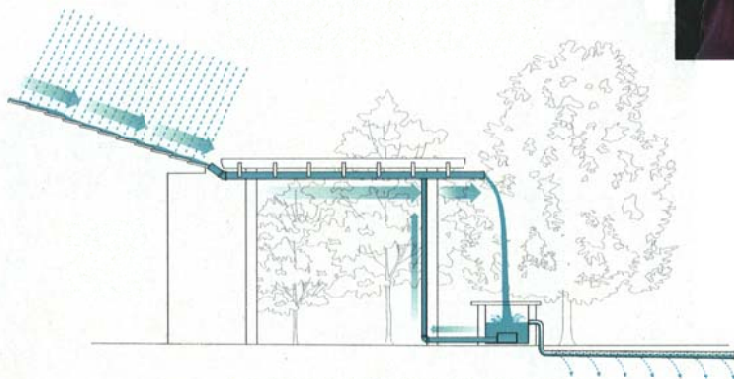
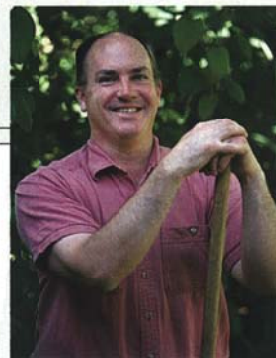


The restful sound of falling water fills the garden behind Karen and Edgar David's former home (now Edgar's office), helping to mask the noise of street traffic and other urban distractions. A never-ending stream of water cascades from the wood arbor into a square masonry basin. Visitors look up, puzzled at the fountain's hidden workings; arbors don't usually spout water, after all.

This arbor is different. Edgar, a landscape architect, designed the water feature with a dual purpose. Besides its aesthetic contribution to the 20x50-foot garden, the structure collects and stores rainwater for irrigation. Rain that falls on the roof of the house runs into a copper gutter, which channels it across the length of the arbor and lets it fall into the basin from high overhead. The basin is about 3 feet square with an exposed-aggregate coping that doubles as seating.

If a heavy rain fills the reservoir, the water overflows into a perforated pipe that zigzags under the garden. Rainwater slowly seeps into the soil, replenishing the groundwater supply, instead of disappearing down the nearest storm drain. >> on 80

"I enjoy the creative process of working with nature and the environment," says Edgar David (*right*). His water-conserving fountain (*above and below*) captures rainwater for use in the adjacent garden beds.





To keep the water flowing on dry days, Edgar placed a submersible electric pump in the basin. The pump draws water from the basin and sends it up to the copper trough by way of a plastic tube, which is hidden in a groove cut into one of the arbor's wood columns.

The water's music is a constant accompaniment to outdoor activities on a dry-laid brick patio. The patio is separated from the house/office by planting beds a few feet wide. This placement allows the garden to surround the patio; sit here and you'll feel immersed in nature. The arbor extends diagonally across a corner of the patio and bears a shade-tolerant vine, Dutchman's pipe (*Aristolochia durior*).

Several large trees keep the garden in near-constant shade. For this exposure, Edgar chose plants that are native to Eastern woodlands. Smooth hydrangea, sweet shrub, and deciduous azaleas bloom under the oaks. More than a dozen species of ferns thrive in the shady surroundings. And there are native wildflowers, such as mayapple, Jack-in-the-pulpit, and foamflower.

In a backyard space this small, the splash of water is never far away. That sound—and every passing shower—brings a smile to Edgar's face; it reminds him that he is saving for a rainless day. ♪

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The unusual water feature introduces movement and sound to the urban woodland garden. Edgar's choice of building materials—weathered wood, copper, brick, and exposed aggregate concrete—complements the informal setting. Shade-tolerant native shrubs and wildflowers are appropriate here too. "It's important to pick plants that are naturally adapted to the conditions of the site," Edgar says. "They make the best use of available nutrients and moisture."

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