

My Big Fat Garden Reno – January 9, 2014

Rebecca Last, Master Gardener intrigued the Greely Gardeners Group with the title of her talk “**My Big Fat Garden Reno**”. Rebecca (centre) is pictured with Elaine Routledge (GGG Speaker Coordinator) and Lee Nickerson (GGG President). In fact, Rebecca's garden is not big compared with many of the gardens of our GGG members, but the work that she has put into her garden over the years has been astounding. Her talk was very informative, especially for anyone contemplating a make-over of their own garden or even for those planning a garden from scratch.



The presentation began with a step by step series of questions and decisions to be made before any renovation is begun. Questions such as how do you want to use the space (entertaining, family space, or refuge), how much do you want to spend and how much time do you want to devote to gardening? These and many other questions were posed to help the process of deciding what to do.

Knowing the garden as it currently exists in terms of soil type, shade and sun, existing features, micro-climates, and prevailing winds are examples of environmental factors that should be know as well.

Taking stock of what you already have what you want to keep and what really has to go is another step. Scoping out and designing what you would like to see and whether it is a quick fix or a long term project is also important and has implications for cost. Finally, whether you want to do it all yourself or have some or all of the renovation done by a professional landscaper is another choice that might have longer term implications for ongoing maintenance.

Rebecca led us through many of the decision steps using the example of her own garden, what she kept, what she added and what she has subsequently changed again in later years. It is an ongoing process and a garden is never really finished but moves towards an image that one has in mind. During the course of her presentation Rebecca noted that her garden is certified under the Canadian Wildlife Federation, Backyard Habitat Certification Program. If you are interested in acquiring this certification for your own garden the following website provides the details:

<http://cwf-fcf.org/en/do-something/challenges-projects/get-certified/>

Rebecca noted that if you are building something permanent in your garden or adding to your home, be sure to check the necessary licences and permits needed. Details can be found at City of Ottawa website: <http://ottawa.ca/en/residents/laws-licenses-and-permits/building-and-renovating>