



The minimalist patio becomes the focal point of this room.



Planters can bring greenery to even the smallest of spaces.

Gardening From the Inside Out

by Regina Cole

When Gerald Pomeroy created an informal dining room in a Beacon Hill home, he took his inspiration from the outside. The interior designer flanked a small table with two wing chairs and placed them in a window bay. He played up the view of tree branches and evergreen shrubs with drapery fabric chosen to accentuate those natural elements.

"We framed and enhanced the exterior," he said. "Everything in that room was driven by the design of the curtains."

City dwellers craving greenery and blossoms have more gardening options than they might think. In fact, even if there is no ground to dig, there are opportunities to make nature the star and to create focal points using growing things. According to two Boston interior

designers, it is a matter of strategic use of space, which, after all, governs all the design decisions of footage-challenged urbanites.

"It's all about softening the hardscapes, the brick and concrete that surround us," said Paula Daher, an interior designer who has created delightful spaces, including gardens, for her urban clients.

"The lucky ones will have a little bit of land, but even when there's none, you might place a beautiful bench or a planter where you can see it from your window," she said.

"They had a tiny brick space, not big enough for a car," explained Daher, referring to a recent project. "We placed two tall, slender pots before a brick wall and attached fishing line to the brick wall. Now the plants climb on the wall and, from inside, you can see something growing

there in all seasons, even in winter."

"Keep in mind that urban spaces have multiple uses," said Pomeroy. "Homeowners in the city have to make the most of the square footage they have."

"Sculptural is the term I would advise for urban gardens," he added. "They should be very minimal because the space is minimal."

Daher points to the wide windowsills of Boston's older homes.

"You can garden on windowsills, growing herbs in the kitchen, for example. Or, you might put just one planter by the front door so that you have color welcoming you as you come home," she said. "Either way, you can change the plantings seasonally, or as often as you want."

Homeowners in high-rises without windowsills can garden with potted trees, Daher added.

"If you do have a little outside space, a piece of outdoor furniture, an indoor-outdoor rug and white billowing fabric to cover the fire escape can make for a very urban, very chic area," she said.

"Sculpture and fountains don't need light, but we associate them with gardens," Pomeroy said. "Place them strategically and don't overdo, especially if the space is small."

He stresses the importance of keeping an urban garden manicured and groomed.

"Most important," Pomeroy added, "are balance, proportion and scale, especially in small spaces."

Daher points out that even a northern exposure in an urban environment does not rule out gardening possibilities.

"Moss gardens don't need sun," she said. "And, they are all the rage right now."

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