

The last beauty spot of the year for 2011 is awarded to Cathy Sweetser of 9913 Broadview Drive.

There are different considerations when picking a beauty spot for autumn than for other seasons. In spring, it is all about the first blush of color, buds beginning to open, the promise of something more. In summer, it is about the lush, full-on bloom of splendid color and foliage presenting in all its glory.

Autumn has a beauty all its own. If you happened to drive down Broadview earlier in the month and saw the large Japanese maple in the center of Cathy Sweetser's yard, you know what I mean. The tree was still full of its leaves then, and the colors were magnificent: blazing golds, oranges, and reds. Truly a sight to behold!

But as we all know, the leaves have fallen and we are left with barren trees. Some might suggest that the beauty is gone. I beg to differ. It is the simple, neat, clean design of Cathy's yard that makes it ideal for this autumnal honor. Drive by and take a look:

The Japanese maple sits in the center of the yard, surrounded by a bed bordered with rock. Notice the interweaving of the twigs and branches, how they create an intricate web offset by the thick roundness of the well-developed trunk. I suggest viewing it as you might a sculpture in a museum. Focus on the different shapes, textures, and balance, and the way the light hits it and moves through the branches.

Let your eyes roam. The left side of the yard is anchored by a large pine tree at the foot of the driveway. Behind it, further up the driveway, stands a dogwood tree that has lost its leaves for the season. See how the texture of the branches provides both a juxtaposition with the green of the pine and hemlock and a point of connection with the Japanese maple.

The right side of the driveway by the house is lined with a bed of juniper as ground cover. Again, the eye is tantalized by the play of texture and color: the pot full of purple mums, a dog statue that sits on the front stoop, the dried heads and wispy stems of a patch of coreopsis.

The bed right in front of the house has a huge mound of plumed grass that adds some softness to the corner, and the rest of the bed is lined with bushes whose green leafed branches reach out in all directions, adding a bit of whimsy to the overall picture.

Finally, let your eye continue to the right side of the house: The floppy, spiky, deep green leaves of the yucca play off the color and texture of the privacy fence and compliment the hemlock tree that anchors the right side of the property.

The asymmetrical use of color, shape, and texture to achieve a design of balance and beauty make this yard a winner. Congratulations, Cathy. Your yard is a work of art!

Respectfully submitted,  
Jennifer Judelsohn for the CCH Garden Club