

THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO SMALL-SPACE GARDENING

A Landscape Architect's Advice for Maximizing Your Small Backyard

How Joshua Ruppert of Lifescape Colorado turned a shallow yard into a private patio perfect for entertaining.



Jessica LaRusso

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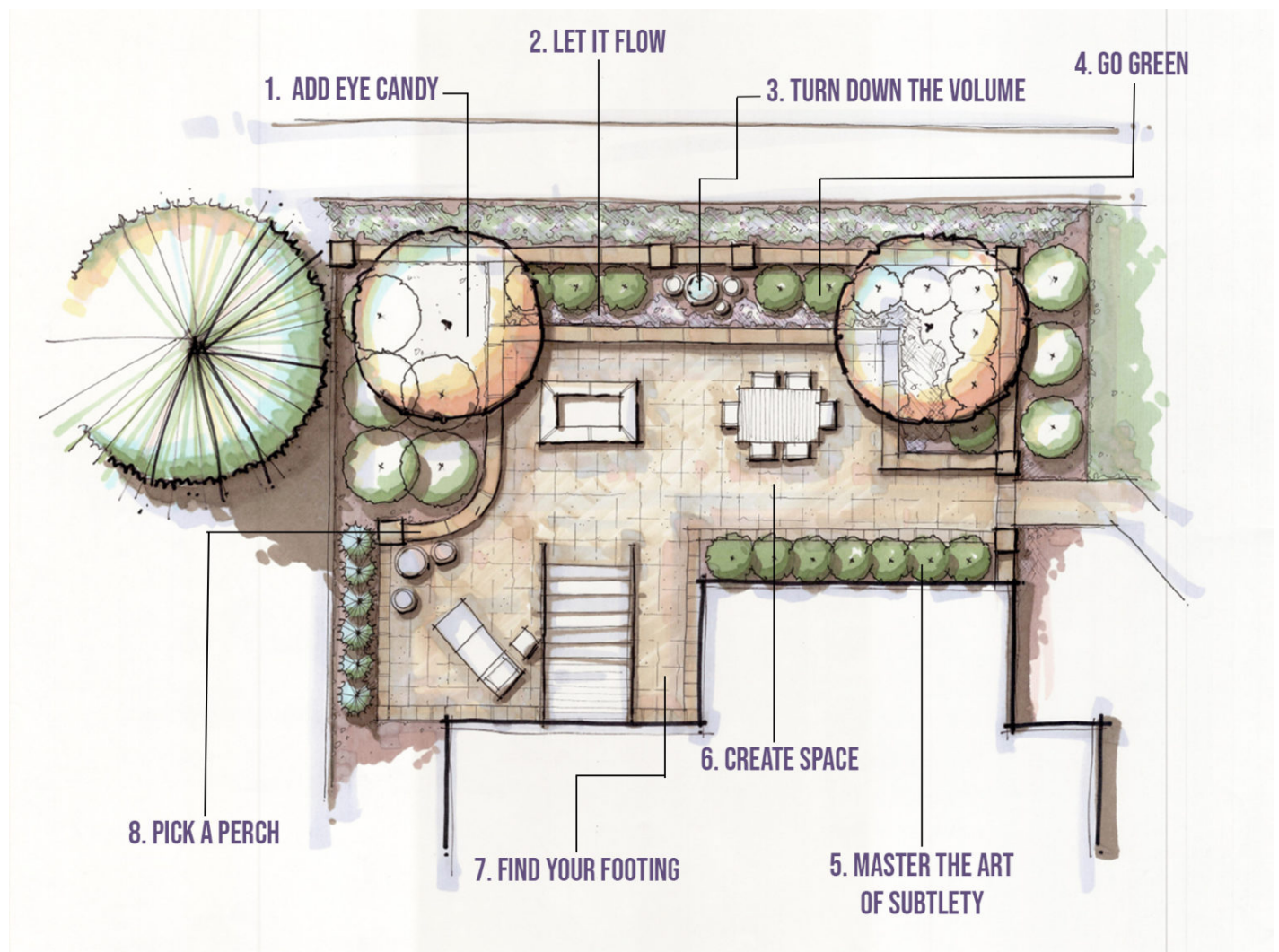


Illustration courtesy of Lifescape Colorado

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In Denver's most desirable neighborhoods, large yards can be tough to find—compelling homeowners who want outdoor living space to get creative. That was the case for a Park Hill family who called upon Joshua Ruppert of **Lifescape Colorado** [<https://lifescapecolorado.com/>] to help them turn a shallow yard into a private patio perfect for entertaining. “It was really shady, so the little lawn wasn’t really growing,” Ruppert says. “We wanted to make it more useful.” Below, his plan to do just that.

1. Add Eye Candy

An ornamental Eastern redbud tree lends vibrancy to the outdoor space in the spring with its pink-purple flowers. Ruppert selected the variety for its fairly thin canopy because the patio was already heavily shaded by mature trees.

2. Let It Flow

Ruppert took care to include proper drainage when installing raised beds with retaining walls—and you should too, to prevent water from collecting and sitting inside.

3. Turn Down the Volume

The trickle of water from a fountain helps mask traffic noise; a 6-foot-tall masonry wall, constructed with bricks sourced to match the original Craftsman home, also addresses the noise—and blocks the view of its source.

4. Go Green

Evergreen boxwoods flank the fountain and create a verdant feel year-round, while elegant, shade-tolerant Endless Summer hydrangeas line the wall.

5. Master the Art of Subtlety

Shrubs with variegated leaves, including the Ivory Halo dogwood Ruppert used here, provide toned-down hues that don't overwhelm the space.

6. Create Space

Ruppert recommends reserving at least a 12-by-12-foot area for a small dining table and chairs.

7. Find Your Footing

Belgard's Lafitt pavers have a natural look and require less maintenance than concrete and mortar (which can crack) or stone (which has to be sealed).

8. Pick a Perch

Low walls double as extra seating for parties. (Ruppert suggests building them 18 inches high and around 12 to 14 inches deep.) The fire pit is set slightly lower—around 14 to 16 inches high—so guests can kick up their feet.



[\[/byline/jessica-larusso\]](#) Jessica LaRusso [\[/byline/jessica-larusso\]](#)

Jessica LaRusso is 5280's managing editor.
