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The ELITE Awards
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The ELITE Awards



Photos courtesy G. Michael Butler

Use of Color

This category is unique in that two awards are given. Finalists are posted anonymously on ALCC's website and social media to be voted on by the public for People's Choice award.

Judges' Choice

Rocky Mountain Custom Landscapes, Inc. | Tree Tops



Photo courtesy Rocky Mountain Custom Landscapes, Inc.

The Vail client wanted thick, vibrant, and productive gardens to soften the hardscapes of the cascading water. They wanted gardens that blended into the surrounding wildflower areas to help anchor their parcel into the natural landscape, to use the gardens closer to the home for ornamentals, and to harvest their own organic produce.

A variety of colorful, drought-tolerant plants with staggered bloom times allowed maximum color throughout the season. Edibles were chosen based on cold hardiness, short-season maturity and productivity. Steep sloping gardens surrounding rock and shallow soils were planted with rhizomatous ground covers to help stabilize the soil and complement the stones. In addition, plant selections were also chosen for animal resistance to reduce the amount of damage and replacement.

Plant choices and utilization of garden spaces created a beautiful and bountiful outdoor space to enjoy while strategically reducing the overall footprint of such substantial plantings.

People's Choice

Environmental Designs, Inc. | Hilltop Club at Inspiration



Photo courtesy Environmental Designs, Inc.

Environmental Designs, Inc. (EDI) installed and maintained seasonal color beds and containers for the clubhouse facility at Hilltop Club in Aurora. The client wanted to "wow" HOA members and establish the clubhouse as a community-focused center. Plant material was carefully chosen by EDI and the design done in coordination with the association manager. Planters were strategically placed in hardscape areas and small plant beds provided a courtyard feeling for gathering.

Fall and winter interest components for seasonal color containers included autumn installation of dwarf conifers, mums and flowering kales. During the season EDI replaced plant material to ensure the best look. The team established and managed an irrigation program schedule to ensure reliable results for future installation and visited the site several times a week, if necessary, to ensure plant health.

Judges score each entry, and the top three entries are finalists for the People's Choice award.

The ELITE Awards Finalists

Design/Build Project Budget over \$150,000

Environmental Designs, Inc. & Marpa Design Studio | Two Forms



Photo courtesy Environmental Designs, Inc.

The client wanted protection from the sun, privacy from nearby hiking trails, space to relax and entertain and a place to showcase a beautiful sculpture. This Boulder property, located at the bottom of a steep mountain slope, was flooded in 2013, and the landscape decimated.

The new design incorporates swales and other flood protection devices. Boulders were set and plantings placed for privacy. Existing hardscape components, including the swimming pool, were repaired and refurbished. The Two Forms sculpture is now showcased in the courtyard. Protection from intense sun exposure allows the client to relax or entertain while enjoying the outdoor kitchen, fire feature, hot tub and pool.

The Longmont clients had a new home in a new neighborhood with a very spacious lot. They wanted a modern minimalist design with multiple functional areas of activity in the outdoor landscape that aligned with the flow, scale, and aesthetic of the home's architecture. And they wanted a stylistic solution to create privacy outside the master bedroom.

View corridors within the home align with parts of the landscape as the design flows from the inside out. Flow patterns of the kitchen connect to the dining terrace and fire pit outside. Sculptural cedar screens provided privacy for the view corridor of the master bedroom. Berms installed in the back helped create more intimacy by bringing the modern outdoor environment closer to the home.

Design/Build Project Budget over \$150,000

TLC Gardens, LLC | Contra Verde



Photo courtesy TLC Gardens, LLC

Landscape Construction

Western States Reclamation, Inc. | Chatfield Reservoir Reallocation



Photo courtesy Western States Reclamation, Inc.

The project reallocated 20,600 acre-feet of water from Chatfield Reservoir for an extensive stream and wetland habitat restoration and revegetation plan consisting of beaver dam construction, planting over 150,000 deciduous and evergreen trees, shrubs, wetland plugs, willow stakes and cottonwood poles. Seed mixes with hydraulic mulching were spread on 359 acres of wetland and upland environments.

About 100,000 square yards of erosion control blanket were installed and the project harvested trees from the site and assembled 8,600 linear feet of logs for stream stabilization. The planting plan consisted of native plants, trees and wetland species.