



PROPERTY LINE

Tear that fence down!

How two San Francisco homeowners created their own private park

BY JULIE CHAI | PHOTOGRAPH BY THOMAS J. STORY

GOOD FENCES make good neighbors—or so the saying goes. But for Tana Powell and Patricia Fripp, the opposite is true: The two women live next door to each other in a neighborhood where the houses are high and narrow and the lots small. So they tore down the fence between their

backyards to create a 50- by 50-foot shared space.

Although Tana and Patricia paid for their own plants, they split the costs for design, installation, and maintenance. But landscape architect Jay Thayer gave each side of the garden its own patio, and made

sure nothing immovable (a tree, say) sits on the actual property line; if either of the women sells and the new owner wants the fence rebuilt, both houses will still have fully functional backyards.

DESIGN Jay Thayer Landscape Architects, San Francisco (jaythayer.com)

RIGHT: JAY THAYER (2)

BEFORE A fence separated the two yards; the spaces on both sides were too narrow to use comfortably.



AFTER The plantings scattered throughout (blue fescue, dwarf mondo grass, and phormiums) unify the combined yards, as do a flagstone path and a dry creekbed. ■

 **MORE CREATIVE MAKEOVERS:**
[sunset.com/
small-gardens](http://sunset.com/small-gardens)