

## problem

Needed a place for children to play

## solution

A wood chip-covered play zone installed and divided from adult patio by a berm

With their backyard patio in disrepair, weeds filling other areas, and their desire for separate areas to entertain adults and have kids play safely and happily, the owners of a suburban home in Weston, Wisconsin, hired designer Susan M. Murphy Jones for help. Her biggest challenge was to find a way to have space for each of the main functions despite the backyard's shallow 40' depth. She set up a large playground atop an 8" bed of ground wood chips by the property's rear edge, which would be a safe landing for children coming off the slide or falling off the swings. And she left no less than 6' to 8' all around, so children could run freely and find places to play with other toys. (The other choice for child safety would have been ground clean rubber mulch, but that was more expensive initially to purchase, she says.) To help separate the playground and entertaining areas, Jones designed a large berm in between, which she planted with catmint and accented with a single lilac standard and several hefty boulders. For continuity throughout the project, she ran additional concrete gray pavers as a soldier course to outline the new beds.

## \* KEY PLANTINGS

*Syringa meyeri* (Dwarf Korean Lilac <on standard>); *Nepeta spp.* (Catmint); *Spiraea spp.* (Spiraea) **ZONE:** 3

## \$ MONEY-SAVERS

Wood chips were used to surface the playground area rather than rubber, which is more expensive initially.

# safe PLAY

Separated by a planted berm, swings and slides get floored with a soft landing



## things we love

- ❶ **Playground** and entertaining area, to the side, abut each other, but each has its own sense of purpose and design
- ❷ **Midsized trees** make a privacy screen and also offer a cooling-off area for kids out playing
- ❸ **Planted berm** with color, texture and accent of large boulders that reflect the Wisconsin landscape

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