

VERTICAL VICTORY_ WALLFLOWERS IN HALIFAX

JUDY LORD WITH SUE SIRRS

ONE DAY IN EARLY FALL, Sue Sirrs of Outside! Planning & Design Studio cycled over to take one last lush picture of THE WALL, the 93 m² (1000 ft²) living wall installed in the spring of 2010 on the front facade of the new Centre for the Built Environment at Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC). How had it fared after two summers and one gruelling winter facing the worst weather Halifax had to offer? Halifax Harbour is subject to multiple freeze-thaw cycles, hurricane force winds, 65° temperature shifts, salt spray and frozen fog. Completely coincidentally, Sirrs came upon a class using the wall to learn about biodiversity, and as she snapped away, a bird landed on the wall. "It sang its little heart out," said Sirrs, "and I was overwhelmed. Bees buzzed between the asters and the native clematis, neither of which we intentionally planted. They must have self-seeded or come in the native soil. It worked!"

The wall is the result of a creative collaboration between Sue Sirrs and Tim Amos, Landscape Technician in the Horticulture Program at the college. Students in the NSCC horticultural program propagated and grew all 15,000 plants and planted the wall. To fully appreciate its progress, readers can look back to our Fall 2010 issue, which illustrates



the brand new installation of the first permanent exterior living wall in Eastern Canada. The WALL had been three years in the planning, since existing products did not meet NSCC's unique site conditions. Some 85 plants and multiple irrigation systems were tested, with 23 species ultimately included.

THE CSLA 2012 CONGRESS WILL BE HELD IN HALIFAX IN SEPTEMBER. PHOTO SUE SIRRS.

SUE SIRRS is principle of Outside! Planning & Design Studio in Halifax, a small firm dedicated to leading-edge work in environmental planning and landscape architecture. sue@outsideplanning.com

BOULES ROSES _ LA VIE EN ROSE CLAUDE CORMIER + ASSOCIÉS INC.

WHAT BETTER THAN 170,000 pink balls suspended high in the air to enliven Montreal's Sainte-Catherine Street East as it transformed for the summer into a pedestrian mall? The plastic balls, in three different sizes and five subtle shades of pink, were strung together with bracing wire, and from May 24 to September 6, some 1800 strings crisscrossed the street and stretched through tree branches at varying heights.

Claude Cormier + Associés Inc. created a delightful range of spirited motifs, some dense, others open and airy. The balls, shaped of recycled plastic by a Quebec company located in the Beauce, were strung on wires, bagged individually and stored in the particular sequence of colours and sizes. Local elementary school pupils helped mount the wiring grommets on each ball. Finally, a team of eight people using two bucket trucks erected 164 posts in ten intense days, tightening wires and hanging strings as the Village's bar and restaurant owners opened their sidewalk patios, and the first pedestrians enjoyed the temporary pedestrian-only zone.

For a full 1.2 km, the artificial pink foliage modulated and played with the light as pedestrians ambled the length of the installation. Commentators on the Aires Libres 2011 Facebook page applauded. "BRAVO! BRAVO! BRAVO!" posted one. "It's fantastic advertising for our living environment in a great Montreal neighbourhood," said a resident. "Our international pride... Bravo!"

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