

Fence Me In ... continued from page D16



A pear tree in bloom flanked by a blooming camellia.



A magnificent tulip magnolia burst into bloom.

4. Ask and get in writing the materials that will be used. Will the fence be redwood, Douglas fir, pressure treated, metal, chain link, or something else? How deep will the posts be set? (Two feet or more is best.) How much concrete will be used? If using wood, are the posts to be set eight feet on center with 16-foot top rails? Where will gates be placed? Is the wire galvanized welded? Is there an up charge for the longer lasting black or green vinyl coated wire?

5. What is the experience and expertise of the crew

who will handle the job?

6. How soon can the fence be started and completed?

7. Does the company contact the utility companies or is it the obligation of the homeowner to know where pipes, cable, electrical, and gas lines reside? If it is the homeowner's responsibility, call 811 to schedule a free inspection.

8. Is the leftover debris recycled? What happens to it?

9. Is there a warranty and, if so, how long?

10. When is payment due?

Costs vary widely between companies. Most fencing companies quoted an additional \$2 a linear foot for the upgrade to the green or black vinyl coated wire while another company quoted \$5 a linear foot. Some companies offered discount coupons; others were willing to negotiate within reason based on client needs. The key is to know exactly what you want and ask for it. Although a wood and wire fence could last 25 years or longer, warranties for the pressure treated posts and kickboards tended to be 15 years and gates one year. Other than special order items which required a deposit, payment for the structure is due upon completion, according to the companies I interviewed.

Once you have installed a redwood fence, should it be left natural, stained or painted? Collins indicated that this is a personal choice, however, staining or painting will extend the life of the wood because it will be better protected from the elements, especially moisture.

I watched C & J's crew chief, Lopez, with his six man crew as they were unloading trucks, digging post-holes, hauling bags of concrete, cutting wood and erecting the fence. Every person was on his game, non-stop working until the job was finished and the area cleaned



A spectacular white tulip stellata magnolia adds brilliance to the landscape.

and cleared. Depending on the size of the job, a crew consists of two to four men, with a few more usually arriving the first day to unload. Lopez's crew were so impressive that I asked Collins if all of the 12 crews run by C & J were equally as hard working and diligent. He responded that because C & J is a family-run business, each crewmember is hand picked, resulting in a pride of ownership mentality. Many times they hire siblings of a dedicated worker. Lopez, an eight-year veteran of C & J, brought his two brothers on board.

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