

Beauty & Serenity

No longer the prerogative of those with large gardens and enormous bank accounts, water features are fast becoming a pleasure that can be enjoyed and afforded by all

A place of peace and tranquility. Relaxing sounds, reflecting light.

This calm elegance comes with the hottest trend in landscaping – water gardens. Water is one of the most fascinating elements in a garden. Whether it is a still pond that reflects everything around, or a gentle whispering fountain, it holds an attraction for everyone who views it.

Water features bring comfort into any space. In today's rushed world, stepping into a water garden is a release of stress. Landscape designers are quickly catching on to this and offering water features as part of their regular services. There are even new products to make the task of creating and maintaining water features less of a headache for those do-it-yourselfers.

The secret to building a successful water feature is to spend quality time planning and designing the whole project. From choosing your site to cleaning up, attention to detail will bring impressive results.

Ponds bring a breath of fresh life to any site. There are basically two types of ponds: a formal pond with a hard edge of brick, stone or tile; and an informal pond designed to blend in with nature. A pond provides a relaxing atmosphere, sound and movement. Ponds also supply the joy of wildlife. Not only can you add fish, but dragonflies, frogs and birds also will be attracted to your pond.

Fountains create a magical, dynamic effect. Choosing the right pump and accessories can ensure your fountain will delight all who view it. There are four main fountain patterns: geyser – good for an open and breezy site; bell jet – good for a small, formal pond; single spray nozzle, for creating a bold, dynamic effect; and fountain jet, a simple no-fuss spray that looks good in any pond. Pumps and filters are used to create a simple, gentle rolling motion as well.

Bog gardens are quickly gaining respect. Bogs are a practical way to create something beautiful out of a flaw. An area on your site where rainwater drains and erodes the lawn is the perfect spot to create a bog garden. Add rocks and water-loving plants and watch a garden appear that will bring beauty and wildlife.

Container gardens are perfect for those who don't have the space or time to care for a large water garden. These can be created in barrels and tubs and include all the same elements as a large feature. From plants to fish, a small container garden will brighten any area.

One of the key pleasures of a water feature is that it provides a wonderful environment for planting. Water lilies are the most popular, but many others are gaining recognition. There are countless varieties that will thrive in a pond — from annual to perennial, large to small. Floating plants are an easy choice because they require no planting. Underwater plants help deter algae and will help keep your pond clean. Plants also will provide much-needed shade to prevent evaporation.

Fish will bring joy and excitement to ponds. Large or small fish will thrive given enough space and nutrients. Goldfish are tried and true beauties, but koi are becoming more frequent from the rise in Oriental ponds and gardens.

Routine cleaning, plant and fish care are necessary in keeping the entire feature in good condition. Following a good maintenance schedule will make the process go smoothly from season to season.

A water garden is sure to bring calm to any landscape design. The rhythm of the moving water and the soothing sights will take you away on a mini-vacation.

