

An Artful Touch for Your Garden

Just as you choose art and ornaments for the interior of your home, objects and structures can make a garden feel inviting and personal. Lawn and garden ornaments make that defining statement that sets your landscape apart.

While design elements and plant choices contribute to making a garden feel comfortable and coherent, the restrained use of ornaments and furniture plays an equally important role in creating inviting and distinctive areas within the garden. Statuary, furniture, rocks and containers are all elements that can add a finishing touch to your garden.

Themes create continuity in your outdoor art collection. The theme of your garden can be as unique as you are. The word 'theme' appears often in garden books, but few of them devote much space to explaining what it means. Theme can have many different meanings when applied to a garden. A theme can showcase a favorite element: orange flowers or birds. It can illustrate a concept: the evanescence of Spring. Then again, it might evoke a mood: peaceful or contemplative. Or it could refer to some favorite place or artistic work: echoing Tuscany, or paying tribute to a certain Mozart sonata.

People make gardens for different reasons, and one of the keys to creating a garden that pleases you is to figure out why you're creating that garden in the first place. The reasons will lead you to your own theme.

Whether your garden is formal or informal, repetition fosters unity. Make sure most, if not all, the elements you choose for your garden repeat the theme. Statuary should fit into your theme, whether it's classical or whimsical. Site statuary where it can be discovered; create a sense of mystery and surprise in your garden by tucking a special ornament within your planting beds or at the bend in a path.

Furniture should reflect the architecture of your house and the type of landscape you have created. To enhance the feeling of an outdoor room, place your furniture on a hard surface like paving or gravel. You won't have to move it when you mow your lawn and you can use one of the new types of outdoor rugs to anchor the space and create an intimate seating area.

Rocks add a natural note to your garden. Group rocks together in clusters of three or more. Bury at least one-third of each rock in the soil to create the effect of a natural outcropping. Japanese gardens are world-famous for the subtle, effective placement of rocks within the landscape. While it takes an expert to create an authentic Japanese rock garden, you can use rocks to create a focal point with some muscle and experimentation.

If you use containers stick to all one color or style of pot. Group your pots together for more impact or space them equally and plant them identically to create rhythm and repetition. A popular trend is creating small water features from garden urns or large pots. Many local garden centers carry kits to convert your favorite pot into a water feature.

Objects in the garden are a personal expression of the gardener. You choose these ornaments because they will make you and your guests feel as at home in your outdoor rooms as you do in your indoor rooms.