

TAUNTON'S

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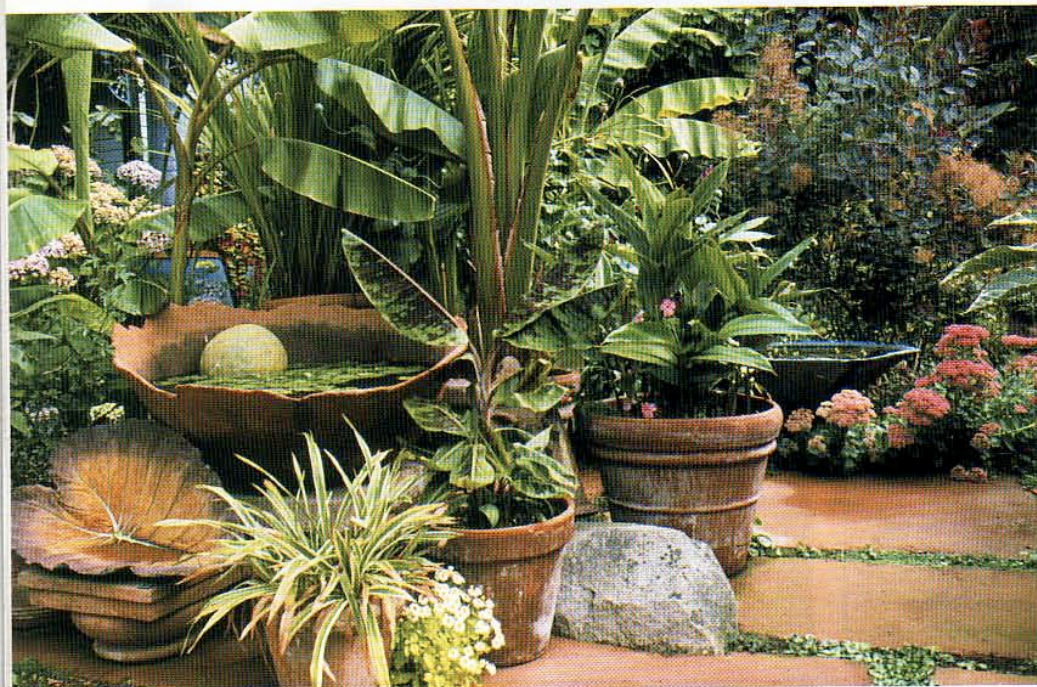


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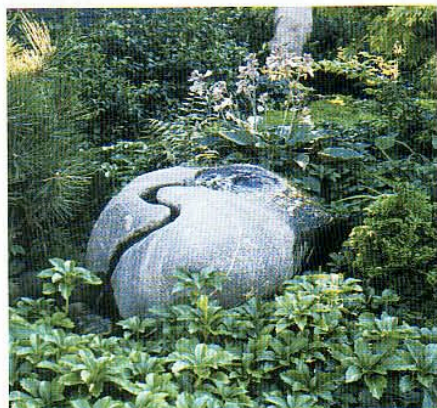
▽ Garden Architecture

Simple Ways to Add Water to the Garden



A simple yet elegant carved-stone bench incorporates a shallow circular birdbath at its wide end. Set at the edge of a lawn, the bench (above) is backed by shrubs and perennials that create a feeling of safety and comfort for people and birds alike.

Create harmony between water features and surrounding elements. The simple, leaflike forms of concrete basins designed by Little and Lewis (left) blend beautifully with terra-cotta pavers. Pots of lush foliage plants echo the form of the basin, while bananas and other tropical plants provide an inviting backdrop.



A smooth, rounded river rock makes an elegant fountain amid a ground-cover planting of pachysandra, hosta, and small shrubs. The fountain above, designed by Walt Rickli, features a small pool and stylized stream that flows over the edge into a reservoir, where the water is recirculated.

A water feature can add vertical structure. This concrete pillar (right) features a fountain in the shape of a bird spewing water from its beak. Topped off by a terra-cotta pot filled with cacti, this focal point is flanked by tall tropical plants.



I once thought having a water feature in my garden would require a major investment of time and money, as well as a lot of space. I was wrong. When I finally added a small pool to my city garden, I opened the door to an enchanting world that delighted my senses and enriched the garden's design. Like a mirror, the glassy surface of a still pool reflects the blue sky and shifting patterns of clouds. Water ripples with the slightest breeze and sparkles in sunlight. The sound of moving water is always soothing; it is especially refreshing on a hot day.

No garden is too small for water. You don't need to install a pond; any water-tight vessel can be transformed into a water garden. Appealing options include kettles, urns, glazed pots, and stone troughs. Millstones make attractive fountains, and there are many distinctive carved-stone and concrete fountains and basins, available from art

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galleries, specialty garden shops, architectural salvage centers, and even antiques shops.

Water also creates opportunities for a new kind of gardening with a specific group of plants—aquatics. Even the smallest container can be filled with decorative water plants like sweet flag (*Acorus gramineus*) and mosquito ferns (*Azolla* spp.). In larger basins or ponds, add drama with colorful tropicals like elephant ears (*Colocasia esculenta*), swamp lilies (*Crinum* spp.), and cannas (*Canna* spp.), as well as traditional water plants such as irises, water lilies, spike rushes (*Equisetum* spp.), and hardy canna (*Thalia dealbata*).

Another benefit of water gardening is that wildlife flocks to water like obsessed gardeners to a rare-plant sale. Dragonflies dart through the garden on



A small, rectangular pond creates a dramatic transition from a formal, sunny garden to the relaxed informality of the shaded woodland beyond, in the author's former garden. The pond, lined with concrete steppers, is filled with elephant ears and sweet flag.

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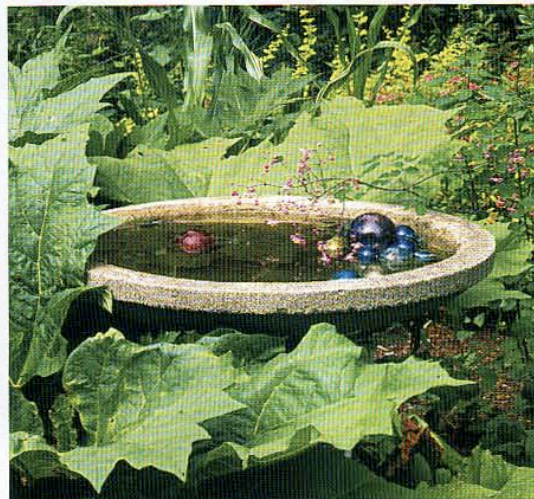
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A small pump will add the sound of flowing water. A whimsical face spurts water into a concrete basin, accented by an oak-leaf hydrangea (*Hydrangea quercifolia*).



A simple birdbath brings the light of the sky down into the garden, as colorful glass floats shift with the whims of the breeze (right). In contrast to the small, smooth orbs, the huge crinkled leaves of ornamental rhubarb (*Rheum palmatum* var. *tanguticum*) add focus to this scene in the center of a circular garden room.

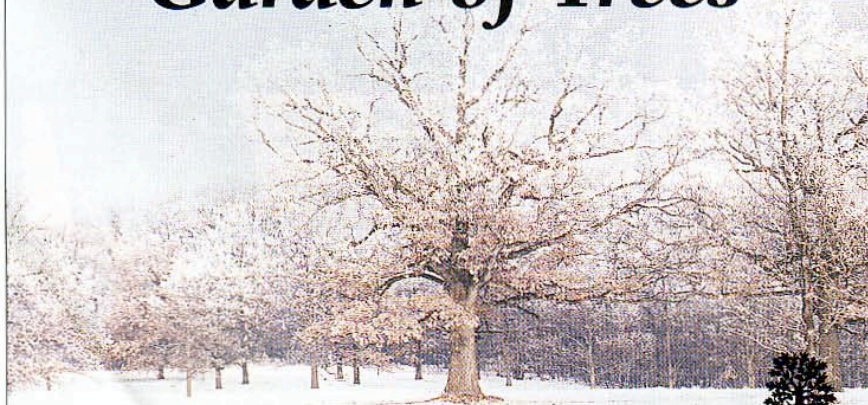
gossamer wings, and frogs lull you to sleep with their curious serenade.

Use your water feature as a focal point in a garden bed, or at the end of a vista. Place a basin where you can view it from a window, surrounded with contrasting plant forms. Try a simple reservoir of still water or add a bubbler for sound and motion. I added a small pump to my pool to mitigate the roar of traffic along the busy street that bordered my former garden.

You can also float glass balls on the water's surface to create moving sculpture and dancing reflections. Water features are magical, whether you choose a simple birdbath, a still reflecting pool, or an ornate fountain.

—C. Colston Burrell, author of *Perennials for Today's Gardens*, tends his troughs, basins, and pools in Free Union, Virginia.

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