



ART IN THE GARDEN

What we call garden art today has drastically changed from the elaborate art that graced gardens of earlier civilizations.

The gardens of ancient Roman, Chinese and Egyptians were a place of solitude, a place to reflect. Their gardens were a sign of their wealth. Within the magnificent gardens were fountains, decorative statues, water features, bridges and other works of art which kept the interest of those who visited.

In the Renaissance period, well-manicured topiaries along with mythological statuary found their homes amongst boxwood and rosemary hedging. The topiary became popular and talented gardeners spent hours sculpting fanciful shapes from various shrubbery and trees.

I think it is safe to say that today, our gardens are still our number one go-to area where we can find peace and reflection. They are often the only place where someone without special training can use their creativity as a designer and artist. When thinking of garden art...think of it as jewelry...a little extra pizzazz...items that will reflect your personality or fantasies.

Garden art does not need to be expensive. Nor do you have to purchase it in a store. I like to resurrect old iron junk and place it into the backdrop of my colorful pollinator garden. The contrast of rough verses delicate and a variety of textures and mediums add interest.

If you are fortunate to have a spacious garden place your art to lead visitors and create moments of surprise. Having different "garden rooms" allows for a wide variety of art. If space is limited you just need to be more mindful as to placing your art. It does not matter what size your garden is, or what is in it as long as you are happy with it. This is your garden and art is so personal!

Decorating your garden can be as simple as stacking flat rocks into towers, lining pathways with inverted colored wine bottles, mosaicking a few colorful stepping stones through some ground cover, use an old metal bucket or birdbath to heavily plant a landscape of succulents...that is also art. Functional art such as brightly painted "tuteur" or weathered trellises can be used to guide your climbing plants.

You can use whirly-gigs, archways, wind chimes, statuary, painted rocks, water features, a sentimental ceramic piece, that sculpture you made in high school, or various other repurposed items to add curiosity and excitement to your space. Think out of the box. Don't overanalyze your items, just place

them where the spot most resonates with you. If you decide you don't like that location then move it somewhere else. Be flexible.

In my garden I have a variety of art. Some of the pieces are metal and can withstand the sometimes severe Sierra Nevada winters. Others I have to store inside, especially the more delicate items and cement pieces, so they do not crack. Some of the larger, heavy pieces of art I cover with tarps for protection from the elements.

So the next time you clean out your garage, think twice about what you throw away as it might feel perfectly at home amongst your flowers. Just remember, there are no "rules" when it comes to what you decide to decorate your garden with. Just go for it, be bold and have fun!

Cyndy Brown-Carlson, Tahoe MG