

WATER FEATURES

Planning for a water feature is something to consider when you have a garden. A water feature brings life to any garden regardless of size whether it is a pond or a waterfall or a wall fountain. A garden with water becomes more animated, romantic and tranquil all at the same time.

Viewing Pleasure

I would site the water close to where people are sitting or within a major sight line of the dining or lounging area. For interior viewing especially during the winter months, I would consider placing the water feature near a large window on the main floor so it can be viewed all year round. Remember one of the most attractive qualities of water is the sound so keep it within listening distance for maximum effect.

The trick to making a pond seem as though it belongs in the garden is to integrate the existing or man-made contours of the land around it and have the plantings coexist with it.

Sun or Shade

Is the proposed site in sun or shade? The majority of flowering aquatic plants require full sun conditions – at least six hours a day of direct sun. Although, there are a number of shade foliage plants like hostas and ferns that look magnificent trailing into the water. Siting a pond near a tree offers a lovely reflection of leaves cascading in the water; however I must warn you of two things to consider. Collecting leaf fall from the tree into the pond will need to be done routinely. Decomposing leaves in excessive quantities release a lethal methane gas and can have a detrimental effect on fish health. Also, the underground root system of a nearby tree may present a challenging issue for pond excavation. A three hour excavation job can

easily double in time if there are roots to dig through.

Big or Small?

The ideal pond size should be appropriate to the scale of the house and garden. Mark it out with a hose or a few stakes before you begin your excavation. Keep the pond away from the fence or property line by at least three feet if possible. If the pond is too small the water will heat up too quickly in the summer and be problematic for fish. The ideal pond depth for growing water lilies and stocking goldfish is between eighteen to twenty four inches. Japanese Koi require a water area with a minimum of nine feet in length and a larger depth of three to five feet.

Years of enjoyment – that's my persuasive reasoning for including a water feature in balcony gardens, country gardens or small city gardens. Pond kits have made it easier for the do-it-yourself landscaper to install a water feature. PVC (polyvinyl chloride) flexible liners can be draped into the hole easily without the hassle of pouring concrete. The secret to a sensational water feature is to make it look like a work of nature and an integral part of your landscape.

Marilyn Pomer is a landscape designer for Greenscape Designs Inc. If you have any questions or comments please email Marilyn at marilyn@greenscape.ca