

ARTISTIC EXPRESSIONS IN THE GARDEN

You don't need to win the lottery to incorporate art in your garden. An art piece can happily mesh into any landscape regardless of size and budget. It can have beauty, function and humour. Half the fun is looking for that perfect piece of art; the other somewhat more challenging part is placing it.

Material

Garden art can be anything from a homemade mosaic to a sculpture or mobile. Broaden your idea of what art is. It can be anything from ornamental light fixtures, boulders, garden furniture or a decorative pillar. Even a specimen plant can be considered an art piece with a changing form that varies with the season. For example, the corkscrew hazel (*Corylus avellana 'Contorta'*) looks more like a sculpture than a plant in the winter with its attractive gnarled branches. Natural local materials are my preference for art when I design landscapes as it blends in with the surroundings to make it appear as though it was always there. The art piece does not have to be expensive; some of the best finds are at garage sales or roadside markets outside the GTA.

Design Guidelines

Experiment with colours, materials and textures but make sure the art work can tolerate extreme temperatures (snow, rain, ice, humidity)

Think about how it will look under different light conditions and make it visible from a multitude of view points inside and out
Remember the trick is to make the art piece and garden one unit. As if the art piece grew out of the ground (not always easy)

Finding the right size art work is critical to fit in with the scale of the garden; nothing too imposing or dominant.

Use your garden art as a fun and interactive element. The look but don't touch rule does not need to apply

Placement

The placement of a work of art is just as important as the art piece itself. Ideally, you would like to be able to see the art form in all the seasons and observe its changes. The focal point, being the place where the eye rests, is usually the primary function of the art work. It can also mark a path, divert your attention from less desirable views or subdivide a long garden into sections when placed correctly. Of course, the art work always serves as a conversation piece and something memorable for your garden!

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