

SOUNDS OF SUMMER

Summer can be a time of **quiet** reflection and relaxation. In Toronto, we often complain about how noisy the city is. Now is the time to listen to the sounds of your garden and block out the excess city noise. Hearing the birds adds to the enjoyment of being outdoors. Ideally you would like your garden to be a quiet sanctuary for nature and its inhabitants: birds, bees and butterflies. The more native plant material you have in your garden (the less asphalt) the more inviting it will be for beautiful birds all year long. You may not realize this but gardens in all shapes and sizes can help replace lost natural habitats. Some native flowering shrubs that I would recommend to attract birds into your garden include: highbush cranberry (*Viburnum trilobum*), Cornus alternifolia (Alternate-leaved dogwood) or Canada elderberry (*Sambucus Canadensis*). Plant these shrubs and the lovely winged creatures will find your garden inviting.

Wind and water provide the garden with subtle yet peaceful background music. Consider plants as wind instruments. Position conifers (pine, spruce or hemlock) near your bedroom window and listen to the wind echo through the needled branches as you drift into dreamland.

The wind rustling through the ornamental grasses in your garden can create sensational sounds. Some ornamental grasses to heighten sound interest include Little Bluestem (*Andropogon scoparius*) or Maiden Grass (*Miscanthus sinensis* 'Gracillimus'). Use ornamental grasses near water features to create a more naturalistic setting.

The sound of water is an essential element to any garden. Water elements perform music of all different speeds and rhythms: bubbling, splashing, dripping or perfectly still for the sound of silence.

While working, eating, or relaxing, the background sound of trickling water can stimulate discussion in a quiet setting, enhance the enjoyment of a delicious outdoor lunch, or add a calming influence to a hectic day.

Sound, although a subtle sensory element alters the way a landscape is experienced. Think about changing your garden experience to incorporate nature's sound diversity. Your landscape can magnify nature with whispers of wind, water and wildlife.

Marilyn Pomer is a landscape designer for Greenscape Designs in Toronto where she continues to search for innovative garden ideas to share with her clients. For more ideas about garden design please contact Marilyn at (416) 910-6273 or marilyn@greenscape.ca