

Water Features – Perfect Additions to Any Setting

Water views are a prime real estate asset but, for those whose home doesn't front an ocean or lake, there is the option of a small pond or other water feature. The romance of garden ponds conjures images of breathtaking water lilies. Plus, the sound of running water is calming and relaxing, providing a back-yard oasis – something that is sometimes needed in our rush-rush world. A gurgling waterfall, a meandering stream, or fish darting beneath lily pads beckon one to unwind.

Along with fire pits, water features have been among the most sought-after elements in outdoor home design in recent years. But not everyone has the space or budget for lush mega-ponds with multiple falls, boulders, koi, and masterpiece-worthy water lilies. So, the concept has been downsized, with several options for introducing water elements, including falls so small they've spilled into a new category called pond-less. With a footprint of less than 5' by 5', you can still create quite an impact. Most of today's innovations are associated with technology that allows water to recirculate and create a constant flow, much like the devices that generate pond waterfalls.

The simplest way to import a water feature into a garden is with a free-standing piece, which means you get a "two-fer", because most are designed to double as garden sculpture. They vary in height and are crafted out of a variety of materials, including wood-look-alike bamboo or real or synthetic stone. Whatever water feature you choose, make sure it will be visible from inside your house so it can be enjoyed in multiple settings and weather conditions.

Consider the wide array of water features from which to choose, from the simplest and budget-friendly to very elaborate and expensive. Some of the more common types are: ponds/water gardens, garden fountains, pond-less waterfalls, retaining-wall waterfalls, bubbling-rock fountains, column fountains, vase fountains, copper-tree fountains, and basalt columns.

There are far too many tips to discuss here, but a couple that apply to any situation are:

- Choose an appropriate installation spot - Keep it away from high traffic areas to avoid damage to the fountain and to prevent accidents, especially if there are children playing in the area. Place it in a location where it will be displayed prominently and will also be protected from high winds.
- Make time for maintenance - Water features aren't just a financial investment, but also a bit of a time commitment. Ponds require the most maintenance to manage algae and such, especially if fish are introduced. Occasional draining and power washing is important for all water features. It is important to check the water level, especially in hot weather and if you opt to hand-fill rather than connect to your irrigation system.

So now, close your eyes and dream of that landscape which includes the soft sound of a water feature bubbling in the background while you relax in your outdoor living space. Know that a well-designed water feature can work wonders, even in the most minimal landscape. Enjoy!