

LANDSCAPE DESIGN

Tips and ideas to help your landscape look its best

Story and photos by Mark Carter

A Container Water Garden in 5 Easy Steps



As a landscape designer it's very important to seek out, keep up with and explore new trends in design and landscaping. Some trends are slow to build in popularity and some are a hit almost overnight. Some trends become mainstream and others fade away. Here is a trend that is both "hot" and "cool"; I think it has and will continue to stand the test of time and I wanted to share it with you.

CONTAINER WATER GARDENS

Container water gardens are a growing trend but, their history and use goes as far back as ancient Rome and Egypt. For good reason I think. Water is the stuff of all life. Container water gardens not only add the element of water to any space, they also add a personality that no other element can touch. A colorful container

with a bubbling fountain and gorgeous foliage and flowers can make almost any area "pop," transforming even the most drab place into a cool and inviting oasis. In most cases, container water gardens are not a replacement for a larger water feature, they just add that "*je ne sais quoi*" that we are all looking for.

The deck and/or patio are perfect spots for a container water garden. It will add the elements of water, sound and motion to the space and the plants will enhance any containers or decorations on display.

But don't stop at the obvious. The locations and possibilities that container water gardens provide are almost endless:

- How about one at the front entry to the home? How inviting is that? Blows the old welcome mat out of the water.

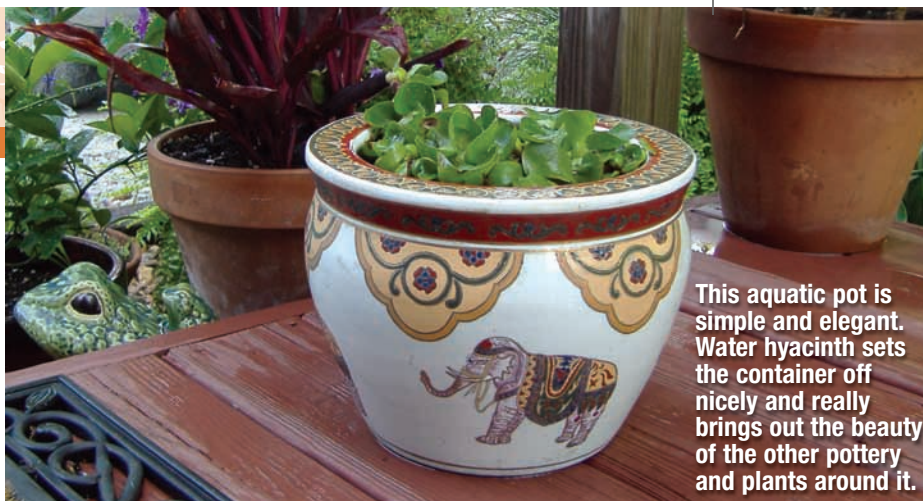
- Adding one as a focal point in an existing border or perennial garden can really change and invigorate a tired or overlooked area in the landscape.

- How about on the screened porch or sunroom? I recently added a nice water bowl with a spitting fish and a few aquatic plants to a table in my sunroom at home and I am not kidding when I say that it TOTALLY transformed the room. I love it!

The really cool thing is that there's a container water garden for every place, taste, style and budget and the possibilities are endless.

It's easy to get started: First ask yourself a few questions:

- Where will you put it?
- What are the colors nearby?
- Will it have a pump and fountain for sound and motion?



This aquatic pot is simple and elegant. Water hyacinth sets the container off nicely and really brings out the beauty of the other pottery and plants around it.

This is a container that I turned into a water feature/fountain. It's an old olive jar sitting over an in-ground, buried container that houses the pump and is covered with gravel. Simple, low-maintenance and very inviting! ►

Marks Top 10 Aquatic Plants for Containers

1. Society garlic
2. Pitcher plant
3. Corkscrew rush (Photo below) ▼
4. Slenderleaf false dragon head
5. Lotus
6. Joseph's coat
7. Star sedge
8. Fiber optic plant
9. Aquatic 4-leaf clover
10. Marsh fern



- What size and shape container will best fit the size and scale of the area?
- Will it be simply water and plants OR will you add a statue or ornament to the display?
- Will I add some washed or polished stones?
- Can I add a goldfish? (Yes!!)

Now, after you've answered these basic questions...

GET STARTED!!!

It doesn't matter whether you're a novice gardener and want to give water gardening a try, or you're a full-fledged master gardener and pond expert looking to add a touch of water in an unex-



pected place around the house and garden; a beautiful container water garden will do the trick. Another great thing about a container water garden is that their easy to put together and maintain, a big plus for today's busy gardener.

My friends, I hope this basic introduction to container water gardening has peaked your interest and will increase your enjoyment of your garden and outdoor spaces. Once you have one, don't be surprised if you see other areas where another would fit in perfectly. I think they are like potato chips, ONE ain't enough.

Here's to living the life abundant. ♡

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An easy DIY container water garden

Step 1

Find an attractive pot or container to use. A glazed, solid pot usually works best, but you can seal the drain holes of a conventional pot if you wish.



Step 2

Wash and install some decorative gravel.



Step 3

Arrange your aquatic plants in a pleasing manner using the "Thriller, Filler and Spiller" method of arrangement.



Step 4

Install an attractive fountain, bubbler or spitter, and disguise it with plants and a pump cover, if necessary. Possibilities abound. Many fountains and spitters come with a pump, if not, a small fountain pump will work fine.

Step 5

Place your new Container and plug it in... Enjoy !

