



# lush life

*Our garden is mature, with lots of trees and other greenery. We love the lush look, but it's rather boring. What can we do to add some interest?*



Text by Troy Bankord • Illustration by Clint Miller

**A** lush landscape is a good backdrop for a dramatic garden setting. Combined with items that wow, mature plantings can be part of an exciting, artistic paradise.

Think big when selecting accent pieces for your yard. Large-scale outdoor furniture with overstuffed brightly colored cushions invites relaxation. Likewise, outdoor sculpture can be a whimsical addition. Following are more ideas for creating impact.

- Seek out pots with interesting texture or color, and plant them with such shapely plants as sago palm, *Aloe ferox*, *Agave rupicola*, *A. weberi*, slipper plant (*Pedilanthus macrocarpus*) or purple fountain grass.

- Never underestimate the value and benefit of outdoor lighting. Countless effects can be achieved, depending on the fixture and wattage used. Consider incorporating lights that cast shadows, highlight texture and showcase items of interest.

- The addition of a mirror or artwork framed by trees or large plantings can serve as a focal point in an outdoor room.

- Color enlivens any space. Select a simple palette of white and gray to evoke soft, cool style. Or try such energetic hues as deep red, bluish-purple or orange.

- Intimate ramadas and cabanas adorned with swagged draperies and woven ceiling fans add dimension to a garden space. For even more impact, elevate the structure to create a dramatic focal point.

- For continuity, carry the angles or curves of your home's architecture onto custom garden gates, iron fencing and trellises. Soften a trellis with passion or bower vines, and keep them pruned to maximize the visibility of the ironwork.

- Even a simple water feature can make a statement. A pump attached to swimming pool plumbing can send water shooting into your pool via copper lines tucked into nearby plantings. For another type of water feature, try covering a tall wall with slate, tile, pigmented stucco or stainless steel sheeting. Water flowing down the front or pouring into a pool charges a space with energy. For added excitement, include a gas line in a water feature to send flames shooting upward.

Keep in mind that less is more when it comes to setting a dramatic stage. Your eye must be stimulated, but also have a chance to rest. 🌿

*Principal of T.M. Bankord Inc., Troy Bankord is an award-winning Valley landscape contractor, as well as an environmental and interior designer.*