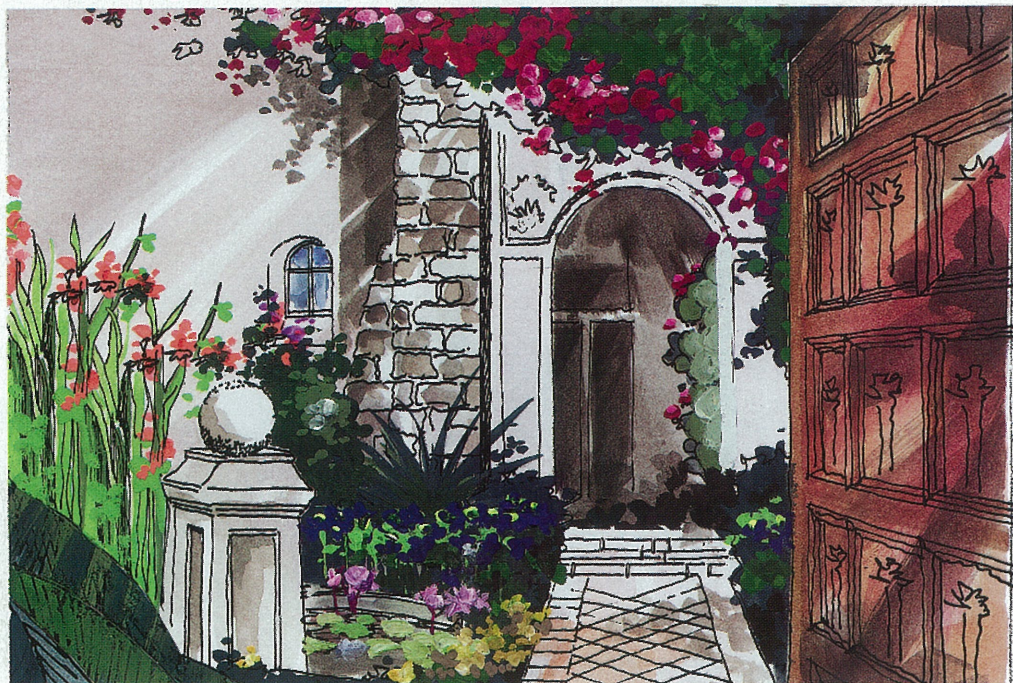




# water works

*I would like to add a simple yet unusual water element to my courtyard. Can you give me some ideas?*



Text by Troy Bankord • Illustration by Clint Miller

**W**ater features don't have to be large or extravagant to create a soothing effect in the garden. Even filling the natural depression of a flat stone with water makes a subtle, organic statement in the garden, on a patio or in a courtyard.

Here are some other ideas:

- A simple water feature can be made using a watertight pot or other vessel filled with water, stones and plants such as Louisiana iris, water lettuce and water hyacinth. Or, a shallow container can be filled with water along with pebbles, chiseled or tumbled glass, or crystals such as selenite.

- To add the calming sound of running water, a pump must be used. Almost any item—such as a glazed pot or a concrete or metal pipe—can be adapted for use as a water feature, as long as it has a hole in the bottom or is big enough to hide the pump inside. If you are going to place the pump outside of a container, begin by digging a hole in the soil that will accommodate the pump and filter. Cover the area with a rubber liner; then place the pump and filter inside. Next, cantilever a grate over the hole, and place the vessel on top of the grate. Finally, work the pump's pipe up through the hole in the bottom of the vessel. Use stones or large pieces of tumbled glass to cover the grate, rubber liner and pump.

- A sphere, boulder or stack of flagstone can be cored or drilled through the center, and water fed through the hole.

- A water wall can be created by angling a sturdy surface downward and outward. Consider installing a sheet of corrugated galvanized metal within an iron frame, or mortaring bricks, blocks, stones or tiles on an angle.

- To add a tropical feel, accent your water feature with vegetation. Try grouping plants with varying heights, leaf textures and shades of green. Good choices include umbrella plant, assorted bamboo and bicolor iris. The canna lily possesses a large, lush leaf; papyrus has feathery seed heads that add softness. Massing one variety of plant, such as horsetail, with its reedlike nature, creates a clean, dramatic and linear statement. Wedelia can be planted between boulders, pipes and other tight spaces. Ornamental grasses lend a gentle, serene feel near water.

Other plant options to consider are cast-iron plant, liriopse, rhapsis and sago palms, mondo grass, shrimp plant, mimulus, and tropical bird of paradise for shadier areas. Wand flower, daylily, nolina, *Hesperaloe funifera*, heavenly bamboo, ruellia, Phoenix ro-bellini palm, bamboo muhly and Russian sage are good choices for sunnier locations.

As you plan your water feature, keep in mind that any water element will require cleaning and maintenance. 🌿

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