

## Headline: 2018 Trends in Landscape & Garden Design

A new year brings a fresh start not just to the calendar, but to trends in design across the board. While landscape and garden design might not be on your radar thus far, now is the ideal time to strategize your space, and the following topics touch on a lush path to outdoor luxury that can add functionality, comfort and an aesthetic you'll be proud to show off.

### THINK BIG IN A SMALL SPACE

Today, if you asked Mary the contrarian how her garden grows, her answer would likely be “any way I want, thank you very much,” embodying the bold resurgence of small gardens that’s changing the concept of space-saving in a very green way.

With limited space, it’s key to ensure that every item present is pulling double, triple, even quadruple duty. Modern hardscaping can mean a concrete creation that works as a planter fed by water from downspouts while also acting as a curb edge and providing additional seating. Make part of it a fire pit, and you’ve got a lovely focal point the whole family (and guests) will enjoy without wasting precious space. Don’t dig the modern look? Acquaint yourself with a tried-and-true, timeless solution: containers. With some guaranteed to 20 below zero available, you can create different feels in your space depending on the seasonal selections you choose to showcase, such as Japanese maples, a popular urban garden fixture that can flourish for years in a container thanks to its slow growth.

### A FRESH LOOK AT AL FRESCO

An oasis isn’t just a long-forgotten band from the 90s. It can be the setting for an amazing meal with immersive appeal whether you’re relishing it with family or entertaining guests. Today’s outdoor dining options are getting further from the yesteryear trend of a concrete patio or deck directly behind the house, instead turning toward becoming retreats of their own. Though transporting food to and from might become more of a challenge, the feeling of sanctuary surrounded by greenery can be divine. Again utilizing the idea of containers but this time pairing them with in-ground plantings, surround the dining space to create a sense of enclosure. Consider special lighting, outdoor furniture and flooring, as well as adjacent entertainment space like a fire pit, and you’ll find yourself wanting to eat every meal in your new al fresco paradise.

### THE LOST ART OF ARTISANS

In an age of mass production and who-can-do-it-cheaper mentality, the inclination to seek out something made by hand often falls by the wayside but can make all the difference in your outdoor design in a stunning, unique way. Today, landscape design, carpentry and masonry are

coming together to create pieces that look like nature placed them thousands of years ago—not last week. Add drama around a pool with a natural stone archway, use a pergola to separate space, add shade and enclosure, even incorporate trellises that allow vines and climbing plants to trail upward, adding even more texture, color and depth to your outdoor escape.

#### SHARE YOUR OUTDOOR HABITAT

Habitat loss is not a new problem, but it is a worsening one. The damage done by urban and suburban expansion has affected not only bees and butterflies, but birds, frogs and turtles. You can do your part to combat habitat loss by taking just a few simple steps. First, consider growing seed-producing plants as well as those that yield berries. Cut down or cut out insecticide use, and replace a portion (or all of) your lawn. These are the three common trends seen today to give local wildlife a chance, helping ensure its presence will enrich lives for generations to come.

#### VARIETY: NOT JUST FOR SHOW

Gardeners tend to try new things, and with such a rich botanical world to work with, it's no surprise experimentation and function are finding their way into the backyard. Thanks to seed companies, seed swaps and the expansion of community garden use, growing your own food continues to be a draw for gardeners of all ages. But 2018's gardeners are incorporating not only the herbs, tomatoes and salad greens you'd expect, but unusual eats like cucamelons, which (you guessed it) are the size of a grape and feature a flavor similar to cucumbers, but sourer.

#### FOREGO THE FENCING

If you don't require the function of a fence to keep pets in or other rascals out, the appearance of enclosure courtesy of the correct plantings is becoming an attractive solution. Reduce street exposure and create separation without total seclusion using small trees like variegated giant dogwood and the slow-growing Japanese maple, adding a deep bed of plantings between the curb and lawn that can provide bursts of color and a welcoming feel that's fun.

#### 'TIS THE SEASON...FOR GARDENING ALL YEAR 'ROUND

Snow lovers can't have their way all of the time, so when the fluffy stuff isn't covering the ground, what's around? Dreary, drab, sad landscapes are giving way to seasonal plantings that can dazzle even in the dormant season with striking color. By choosing plants and combos that bring hardiness, hue and texture together, gardeners are successfully scoffing at Mother Nature's chilly efforts with minimal effort and minimal plants. Simply select deciduous shrubs or trees that feature colorful or peeling bark, add evergreens that transition color in winter, and early bloomers that provide a pretty pop of late winter flowers.

## GET OUT, ABOUT & INSPIRED

Poets have their muses, but for gardeners, inspiration is coming in the form of an in-person visit this year. Gardening tours and trips, whether you're able to leave the country to explore or not, can afford views of both public and private gardens visitors might not typically have access to, accompanied by other like-minded gardening enthusiasts. In fact, some travel companies specialize in garden destination packages to England, Ireland, France, Italy and New Zealand as well as nature trips to botanically diverse areas including Cape Town, South Africa and Costa Rica. Those seeking a garden tour closer to home are taking advantage of the Garden Conservancy's Open Days program, which provides access to over 300 private gardens across 18 states. Open Days events occur from early spring through late fall.

Garden and landscape design, well executed, can deliver endless enjoyment not just for the gardening guru, but for the family, friends (and wildlife) that share the space. Whether growing your own edibles, making the most out of a small yard or transforming meals into an airy experience, you're sure to find that 2018's trends are moving in a direction that improves quality of life in myriad ways.