

Thoughts from the Garden
by
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“More than just plants”

Designing a garden space is more than just about the plants. Sure, you need too have sun loving plants in a sunny area and tall plants to the back so they don't shade others. But adding an artistic touch and actual art will bring focus to certain areas and can frame your garden so it becomes more appealing. European formal gardens use geometric shapes like rectangles, circles, spirals, and triangles to separate or frame portions of the garden. Brookgreen Gardens in Murrells Inlet, S.C. does this and adds sculptures to the mix. The statues become focal points around which the garden is designed. A garden fence and gate, a garden path, an arbor or gazebo are all structures to support and focus attention on certain areas of your garden. Pathways can lead guests on a journey to different sections of your garden. They can be grass, mulch, gravel, stepping stones, brick or stone. Arbors support vines like clematis or climbing roses and can be a gateway to another beautiful vista. A garden fence provides a great backdrop for perennials, annuals, and vines while the gate beckons you to go further. Patios, benches or a garden swing can give people great viewing opportunities as well as a chance to pause and soak in the richness of nature. A water feature like a waterfall, pond or stream adds another element of nature to your garden as well as an opportunity for a greater variety of plants like water lilies, carnivorous plants, cattails and Japanese iris. The water will attract animals like frogs, turtles, dragon flies and anything that needs a quick drink on a hot dry afternoon. These water features can be “Do it yourself” or put in by professional landscapers. Bird baths and fountains are a little easier and help bring wildlife closer while creating beautiful sounds to sooth visitors to the garden. A bridge over the water is nice to look at, fun to walk over and can indicate leaving one place behind and embracing something new. Whimsical features like a fairy garden and animal sculptures make it fun for children and adults alike. If you want to see and hear the invisible wind, wind spinners, pinwheels, and wind chimes add to the sights and sounds of your backyard oasis. Other fun garden decorations can be found wherever plants are sold. Just make sure that you don't overdo it and detract from the natural beauty you worked so hard to display. Above all, a garden is a space to be enjoyed. Make sure you have a view from your house as well so you can enjoy every season weather you're inside or out.

While you're out looking for ideas, stop by the Farmers Market at Gordon Road and Rt. 3. I'll be there with other Master Gardeners May 4th and 18th as well as every Saturday in June, July, and August to help with gardening ideas and planting information.

Till the next time, happy gardening.