

## WAY TO GROW

## Way to Grow in Orinda

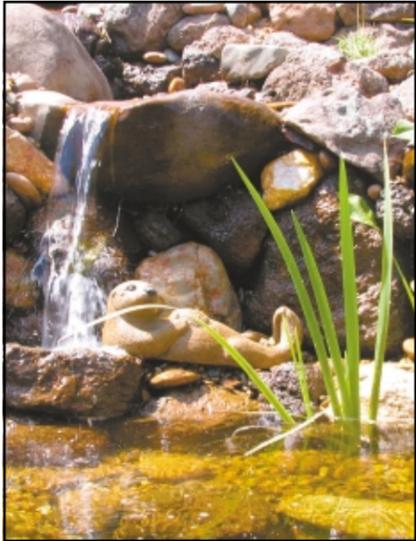
### Garden Decorating to Reflect your Sense of Style & Personality

Steve & Cathy Lambert



Garden ornaments add personality, style, and whimsy to your garden as an embellishment to existing natural materials or as a focal point of their own. Often, however, the first image that painfully pops to mind when you hear the words "garden ornaments" are the pink flamingoes that Uncle Phil proudly displayed or Aunt Louise's collection of garden gnomes. Just as people have different styles of home decor, tastes in garden accessories also vary greatly.

For centuries, gardens have been used as outdoor galleries for displaying collections of sculptures and other works of art. Adding ornaments to your garden allows you to express your artistic taste with art of your own creation or with found objects that have captured your eye and beckoned to be placed in your garden.



STEVE LAMBERT

This serene pond is watched over by two solid brass heron lights that actually act as a deterrent to wild life that might attack the fish swimming beneath these calm waters.

There are many styles of garden ornamentation, but the most common are natural, classical, modern/minimalist, Asian, and whimsical. All of these classifications have a wide variety of items from which to choose. When choosing a decoration for your garden, ask yourself, will it complement the plants and the theme of my garden? Does it fit with the style of my home? Combining too many styles can make your garden look like a poorly organized yard sale. It just won't work to have a classical fountain statue of a urinating boy placed next to your pond with

a Japanese pagoda sitting on the opposite side.

All types of garden décor are available at your local nursery, the garden section at Target, and in the multitude of garden catalogs, which provide lots of temptation for adding accessories to your garden. Here are some ideas, both old and new, for adding a unique personal touch to your outdoor environment.

Gazing balls are a popular choice to embellish your garden. Gazing balls work well in a traditional or English country style garden. They were very popular back east, where most gardens are of a traditional style, long before they started showing up in West Coast gardens. In fact, when Steve was young, his grandfather Ted had a silver gazing ball in the center of his extensive Connecticut flower garden. This mirrored globe reflected back a rainbow of color from hundreds of dahlias, gladiolas, and roses. As a child, this gazing ball added a kind of magic to the garden. Steve has fond memories of himself and his brother amusing themselves by making faces into the silver ball, which provided a funhouse mirror image.

In 1996 when we began creating our own Orinda garden, that magic was recalled with the addition of a rosy-purple gazing ball which has since sadly been lost to a hard-hit wiffel ball. Gazing balls are now available in many colors and materials including steel (a better choice if you have a Little Leaguer using your yard). There are even multi-colored, solar gazing balls that can be enjoyed by adding a whimsical glow to your garden after dark.

Gazing balls can be added to classical, whimsical, or modern gardens depending on the color and material of the ball and type of stand you choose. We once installed a grouping of stainless steel balls in varying sizes laid on a gravel pad in a modern, minimalist garden. We have also floated gazing balls in a very formal styled pond and added one to a child's fairy garden placed on an ornate wrought iron stand.

Adding an old, rusted antique object to your garden can give it an old-world feel and this works well with traditional or romantic garden styles. Antique objects add interest to the eye and serve as a great heirloom conversation piece.

One of our clients had been hauling around (through several moves) a beautiful rusted, wrought iron gate that he had

salvaged from a dumpster at a large Piedmont estate. His wife was threatening to have it hauled away until we mounted it to two 6 X 6 posts as a backdrop to their garden, and then planted two chartreuse elderberries behind it. The combination of the rusty, elaborately detailed gate with a background of bright chartreuse foliage is truly breathtaking, especially when lit up at night.

We have installed many antique lanterns for clients over the years. There is always a way to add new life to an old fixture with low-voltage wiring techniques. One client hung six old brass lanterns in the branches of an oak tree. Another returned home from Mexico with an old Christian cross lantern that we wired with several small lights instead of using candles. Some of the other more interesting antiques we have installed in gardens include: old millstones as fountains; a 300-year-old Buddha; an ornately carved Indian temple door, and a

large brass gong that hung at one end of a pool and could be enjoyed in the pool's reflection at night.

It's taken Steve years to admit that he finds some antique garden gnomes acceptable in certain gardens when appropriately placed. Gnomes have been placed around the garden since the 1400s.

Truth be told, we have two antique gnomes placed near our front door. We almost lost a client recently when we mentioned this fact. After completing her project, Steve snuck an antique gnome onto a rock in the center of her pond's waterfall. That gnome is now named Steve.

There are literally tens of thousands of different fountains available for today's gardeners. These garden ornaments can add both a focal point and the pleasurable sound of running water to your garden. One of our favorites fountains is a custom made, 14-foot hot tub with a glass tile back

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