

Untroubled Waters

Commune with plants and fish with container ponds.

The closest thing to a water feature in my garden is the big blue water jar I use to fill watering cans. I tend to blame the omission on a lack of time, rather than a lack of interest in a possible role for water; but I must admit I've seen enough problems with ponds and cascades to make me think twice about building one. A spate of recent garden tours have reminded me, however, how many quite simple ways there are to bring the delights of water into the garden.

Three very different water features I visited — a sophisticated koi pond, a water jar and a sizable above-ground pool without filtration or moving water— have more in common than meets the eye. All share attributes that make them appealing while at the same time evading a common problem: how to keep critters from eating the fish and messing with your water plants. Their special appeal comes from the fact that you can walk right up to them and the water surface is near your hands and eyes, bringing you closer to the fish and water plants. And all three are critter-proof by virtue of their depth.

A koi pond that fascinated visitors on this year's Eugene Symphony Guild tour



porary garden of Buell Steelman and Rebecca Sams, owners of Mosaic, a garden design and construction company. Their garden's infrastructure features metal fencing, fine stone work and lots of gravel. The exposed vertical sides of the tank look at home in this setting and discourage raccoons, while allowing you to get up close and personal with water plants and fish.

Beyond the pea gravel terrace that supports this tank, you descend to another graveled area adjoining a minimalist orchard and a veggie garden. A wonderful visual break from the pale, precise stonework and gravel surfacing is a tall, brown stoneware jar full of water. Too high and smooth for the most ambitious small mammal to scale, it puts a fragrant water lily right where you want it, under your nose.

Still-water pools and jars like these make acceptable homes for small fish that should prevent your water project from becoming a mosquito breeding ground. They can also accommodate many kinds of plants. Water lilies, most desirable of aquatics, actually prefer still water, and steep sides are better than sloping sides because they help keep the water cool.

A wonderful visual break from the pale, precise stonework and gravel surfacing is a tall, brown stoneware jar full of water.

was set behind a brick retaining wall, part of a garden makeover designed and constructed by Guy Gargiulo. Not only can you walk right up to the water's edge, but the height of the wall allowed for a pool that is unusually deep for its size without requiring heroic excavations. Ponds of similar surface area often use prefabricated liners that are not deep enough to deter predators: the sides should be vertical to a depth of about two feet to keep fish secure from raccoons and herons.

Not everyone wants to keep animals out of the water, of course. Water is an essential element in making good backyard habitat. Wildlife-friendly pools have shallow beaches where birds and butterflies can drink and raccoons can wash their food. Shallow containers with sloping sides serve the same purpose, and containers that serve only as a water supply can be small enough that they are easy to turn out and clean periodically.

Why not have one or two bowls for wildlife, and still indulge a yen for water gardening?

A free-standing galvanized stock tank full of water might not be everyone's idea of a good time, but it's a perfect fit for the contem-

In a deep container, water-lily pots or baskets should be supported on a stack of bricks or blocks to bring them within a foot or two of the surface. The exact distance depends on the size and vigor of the water lily. Dwarf ones are best for tubs, jars and smaller ponds. Check under Ponds in the yellow pages for places that sell fish and aquatic plants (and this year there's an aquatic plant vendor at the Lane County Farmers' Market). The sellers can advise you what is best for your set up. For a nice vertical accent, don't overlook dry land plants that are happy standing in a few inches of water, such as canna lilies, papyrus and certain irises.

On a practical note, Steelman and Sams pointed out that if you use tap water to fill your pond or water jar you should wait at least a week for the chlorine to dissipate before you add any fish. They also reminded me that still pools require oxygenating plants to keep fish happy, and that ceramic jars must be emptied each winter to avoid breakage from freezing, so you will need an indoor tank if you want to over-winter your plants or fish.

Rachel Foster of Eugene is a garden writer and consultant. She can be reached at rfoster@efn.org

Raising the Standard in Aesthetics



- **Skin Care** including Ultrasonic Facial (a topical alternative to Botox) Cleansing, Acne, Anti-Aging

- **Waxing**
- **Makeup**
- **Permanent Cosmetics**

Call 334-7789

Services by students are discounted!
NW Aesthetics • 2371 Oakmont Way • www.estheticnw.com

Mad DuCKling Children's Theatre



With Support from the the ASUU.

Join us on the lawn of the Robinson Theatre on the UO Campus! Limited free parking is available. Discounts are available for groups of 10 or more.

All shows begin 11am
\$4 tickets for all ages

E.B. White's
Charlotte's Web
July 6-10 and 13-17

For information and reservations call

346-4192 UNIVERSITY OF OREGON

smile

EXHAUSTIVE RESEARCH proves that there is more to life than money, power and history...



LIFE IS GOOD

Mazzi's

Amazon at Hilyard



ONE NIGHT ONLY
WED., JULY 14
VIDEO SUPERSTAR
BRANDY LYNN BANKS
SHOWTIMES AT
9PM, 11PM, 1AM



\$3.00 Lunch Special 12-2pm • \$4.00 Dinner Special 5-9pm

2165 W. 11TH AVENUE ♥ EUGENE ♥ 683-6021
Monday - Friday 12-2 Saturday & Sunday 2-2 www.hotbody.com