

Decorate outdoors

From pots and patterns to statues and tables – eye-catching décor is a must, even in your garden.

By Beatrice Moore-Nöthnagel • Photographs Elza Cooper and Sally Chance

{ 1 } Pots

We all remember the potted plants of days gone by, says Nancy Gardiner in her book *Easy Gardening*: straight rows of plants in clay pots and tin cans arranged on the veranda. Today there are so many more options available: pots, urns, hanging baskets and window boxes in all kinds of materials that can be used to create any style or mood.

In his own garden in Pretoria, landscaper André Kruger of Garden Bleu has separated the entrance to the garden with a row of potted lemon trees, each on its own low pillar. “I believe the repetition of certain elements adds rhythm, and rhythm creates tranquillity – hence the duplication of the same pots on identical pillars.”

He says it's easy to achieve a similar effect but remember to always choose pots of the same shape and size rather than different ones, otherwise it can quickly have the opposite effect and turn into visual chaos.

Tip In a small garden especially, containers with attractive and interesting shapes are a boon, writes Nancy Gardiner. They serve as a decorative element as well as housing all sorts of plants, from trees and shrubs to annuals and even herbs and vegetables.

[STYLE CONSIDERATIONS]

Make a concerted effort to match containers with the style of your house: contemporary with modern, classic with a stately home.

- Plant up a hanging basket with climbing nasturtiums for an quaint cottage garden look.

- A row of standard shrubs in tall pots is a fitting welcome at the entrance to a modern home.
- For an Asian look, plant bamboo in glazed pots decorated with Asian motifs.

Source *Easy Gardening* by Nancy Gardiner

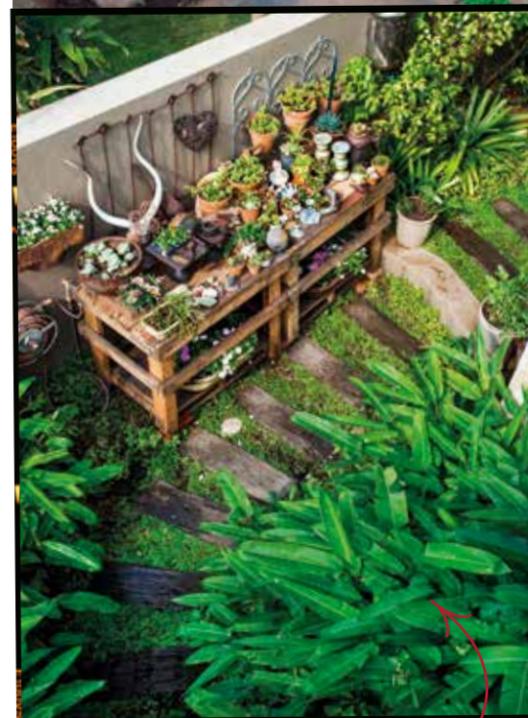
Design André Kruger



{ 3 } Holding patterns

Different textures and colours add interest to the garden. Geraldene has combined pavers, railway sleepers, different coloured pebbles, tree rounds and groundcovers on her garden floor (left) with great success.

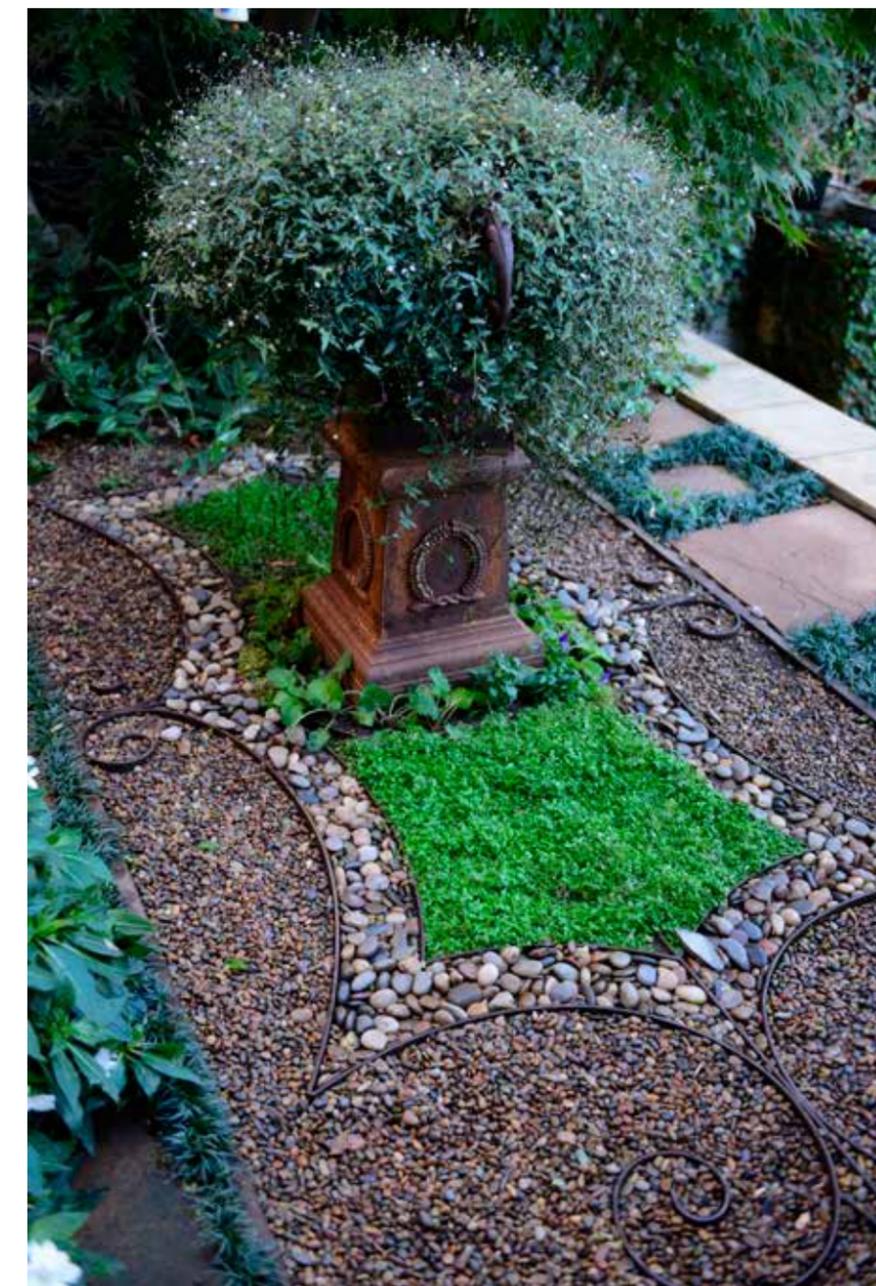
Helga du Randt's small garden in Pretoria (below) boasts an outdoor 'Persian carpet' created with an iron framework specially designed for her by André Kruger of Garden Bleu. The framework forms the inside lines of the 'carpet' with pebbles in different shades of brown and grey, softened by *Mentha requienii* in-between. An ornate container planted up with lush *Euphorbia* 'Diamond Frost' in the centre adds the finishing touch. >>



{ 2 } Table talk

A table where you can take cuttings, transplant seedlings or perk up tired plants is a must for passionate gardeners. Geraldene Downey Paton of Durban says this is where she loves to potter with her plants on a Sunday morning or sit and read. “I love making something out of nothing. This table actually consists of two crates we picked up somewhere. The table is always a conversation starter because we can see it when we sit and socialise with friends on the stoep,” she says.

The ornate steel work, suspended pots and horns on the wall complete the picture. Even a rusty watering can and old enamel mug have been used as plant containers among her collection of terracotta pots.





{ 4 } Living walls

A bland wall has been transformed into living art thanks to the evergreen ticky creeper (*Ficus pumila*) which creates the perfect backdrop for an ornate iron gate and shelves brimming with a range of potted plants. “We discovered this gate in Deneysville in the Free State and it works perfectly against the wall,” says Geraldene. It makes an ideal display rack for her collection of hearts, beads, a cross and two buck horns.

Shelves are just the ticket for a garden where space is limited – use them in alleyways or wherever you need floor space for other items. They don’t need to be wide – even 20–30cm provides enough room for quite a few pots and garden décor.

Tip If you want to create a living wall with décor accessories, ticky creeper is probably your best bet as it grows so flat against a wall. You can easily hang objects over this creeper, or even in-between if you’re willing to regularly cut out gaps. Always seal vibracrete walls first with a product such as Plascon Brickseal as the powdery surface of these walls makes it difficult for the plant’s suckers to adhere against it.

{ 5 } One man’s trash...

Furniture such as large dressers and dining chairs need not be limited to inside the house. Geraldene, an avid collector, has travelled the length and breadth of South Africa, picking up those items people no longer want. This dilapidated cupboard was discovered in Rosendal in the Free State; it’s the perfect piece for a focal point against a boring wall in her courtyard as the blue immediately catches the eye.

In addition to terracotta pots of different sizes on the shelves and even in the drawers, the dresser is surrounded by bird cages, hearts, vintage garden tools, old plates, teapots and even a tractor seat. Displayed on the floor in front are old Winterton loaf pans containing different herbs – Geraldene’s favourite element.



{ 6 } Statues

A statue adds that something extra to a garden – it can be an imposing show-stopper or something subtler that blends in with the plants. This Marieke Prinsloo statue in Helga du Randt’s Pretoria garden creates a beautiful focal point and is positioned so that it can be properly appreciated when you sit on the stoep.

Although this statue is a valuable work of art, less expensive statues can have the same impact. Ordinary cement weathers beautifully and gradually develops a lovely patina.

If you’re considering a statue, keep it simple. As with any artwork, you must choose something that you love, something that speaks to you. Place it at the end of a pathway or alleyway or in the middle of a wall. Make sure it is softened by surrounding plants and a green backdrop.



{ 7 } Water features

Fountain water spouts are the perfect opportunity to have fun and to think creatively. Whether they are antique taps, lions’ heads or fish, you can give free rein to your imagination. Three cranes in various sizes in Geraldene’s garden transformed a simple water feature into something special. “The fountain is visible through a glass window as soon as you walk through our front door,” says Geraldene. “It’s really magical. It creates a sense of depth and draws you into the space.”

Cement and steel are a good combination and work well with water: the algae that grows on cement creates a rustic effect, while steel weathers beautifully outdoors. 🏠

