

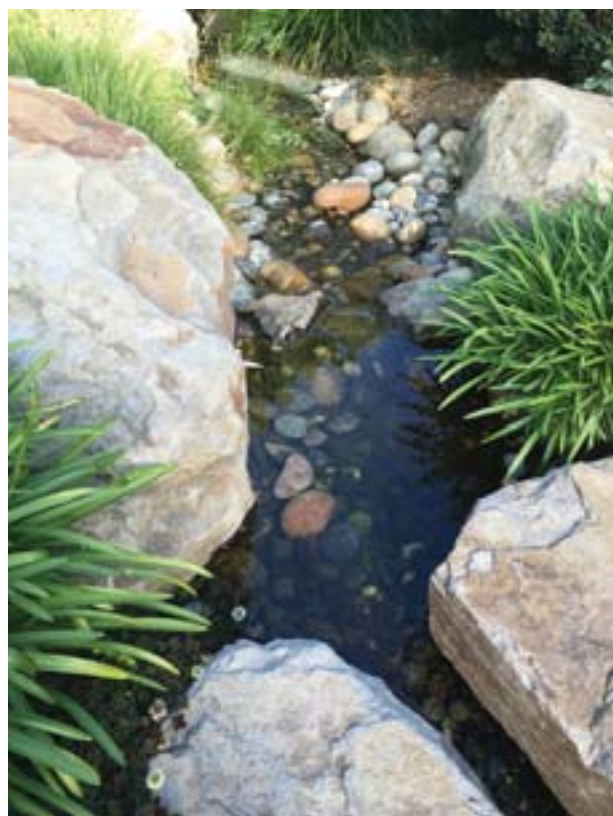


Organize your dorm room

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Digging Deep with Goddess Gardener, Cynthia Brian

Sacred spaces



Photos Cynthia Brian

A man-made garden stream offers the sound of trickling water over river rocks.

By Cynthia Brian

“Nature is the original church. Worship there daily.” ~ Alan Cohen

If we have learned anything from the pandemic of the past 18 months, it is that our greatest blessing is to be able to go outdoors to breathe fresh air. Many people choose to hike the hills, walk the reservoir, or take a

jaunt to the ocean to calm nerves and preserve sanity. For those of us fortunate enough to have a garden, balcony, porch or patio, we can open a door to escape the confines of lockdown.

The majesty of Mother Nature rivals the most exquisite man-made cathedral. Throughout my landscape, I have designed special areas that stimulate my senses, inducing a sense of tranquility and connectivity with the natural world. I have dubbed these my “sacred spaces,” places where I can meditate, watch the wildlife, listen to birdsong, commune with the breeze, rest my weary legs, take a nap, or just sit and contemplate life. My “sacred spaces” provide a structure amidst the chaos, a respite against the turmoil of the times.

We can expand our living environment by crafting outdoor elements that nurture our spirits, emotions, and bodies. Here are a few of my favorite strategies to help gardeners recast their yards into a serene, yet lush oasis.

Water

The sound of water is immensely soothing. Listening to the gurgling of a fountain or the rippling of a stream heightens my creativity. Birds splashing in a birdbath bring a smile to my face. A pond with a recirculating pump provides a happy home for frogs, and if deep enough, fish.

Hammock

Hanging a hammock from two trees is the ultimate in shaded relaxation. I have double hammocks strung between a giant magnolia and Japanese maples. There is nothing quite like swaying in the hammock looking up at the light as it dances between the branches. The colors of the leaves are forever changing. For an afternoon nap on a hot day,



Recline on a hammock for the best view of the branches and rustling leaves.

a hammock provides a piece of paradise.

Swing

I’ve installed a metal garden swing behind my pond flanked by orange Birds of Paradise and midnight blue agapanthus. By adding comfy cushions, I can silently swing while listening to the aerating pond and watching the aerial antics of squirrels spiraling through the loquat tree.

Tables, Chairs, and Benches

Throughout my landscape, I have placed multiple tables, chairs, and benches in specific areas to encourage me to take a break from the hard labor. A wooden picnic table under an apple tree begs me to take a lunch period. A bench facing the hills beckons me to behold a doting doe with her twin fawns as they forage. A small rocking chair in a cozy nook allows me to remove my mud boots and watch the sunset.

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