

"Just Add Water"

By Soni Forsman -- previous articles under "Just Add Water" bullet above



flea-markets find is repurposed as a container water garden. Maybe originally used on a farm? Aquatic plants in the vintage galvanized container are Nymphaea 'Little Sue,' Black Madras (*Oryza sativa*) ornamental rice grass and *Acorus gramineus* 'Ogon' (golden variegated sweet flag).



A rain barrel pulls double duty - yard art and rain catcher. It was spotted at a site on the 2019 Northfield Garden Club tour.



The Pothos is a popular and easy-to-care for houseplant. It is listed as a poisonous plant but rarely fatal to children or pets. Houseplants multitask as air purifiers and items of decor.

What's In, What's Out?

Story and photos by Soni Forsman

Paraphrasing the former and current hosts of Project Runway, 'One year you're in and the next year you're out.' As one-year ends and the new one begins, gardening magazines, garden-related websites and the home and garden section in newspapers predict gardening trends for the new year. Just how often do garden fashions

change?

To answer that question, I perused many websites for the predicted yearly trends during the past decade. I did not find dramatic differences from one year to the next. What I did find is predictions that began the decade and are still trending in 2020 were rephrased or renamed each year to make them seem new or at least refreshed. Trends were numbered on some lists but most were bulleted. Even if numbered, I didn't feel like the first one was more 'fashionable' than the others.

There were three trends that showed up all 10 years but one really stood out - **SUSTAINABLE GARDENING**. It was called by different names over the years such as eco-friendly, green living, kinder and gentler gardening, green is the new black and water-wise. All catchy titles meaning sustainable.

What is sustainable gardening? Basically, it is gardening in a way that does not harm the earth. Growing plants without outside resources such as pesticides, herbicides and chemical fertilizers and composting to rebuild the soil with rich organics are some of the sustainable trends. Rain barrels and rain gardens are also part of earth-friendly gardening. These rain catchers manage rainwater, either by storing for reuse or by capturing and filtering the runoff.

Another sustainable thread through the past decade is getting rid of high-maintenance perennials that require lots of deadheading, dividing and watering and replacing with drought tolerate, low-maintenance/self-cleaning ones that are pest and disease resistant and kid and pet safe. In 2010, this was called 'Replace the Prima Donnas' (Newsday.com Lifestyle - Home and Garden section)) and 'Divas are Out' (gardenmediagroup.com). The use of native plants attractive to birds, bees and small mammals grew in popularity during the same time.

Along this same theme, gardenmediagroup.com in 2010 noted the growing demand by customers for products made from recycled materials. As the decade moved along, an interest in slowing the growth of consumerism immersed. It is restoring items to reuse as originally intended or repurpose. If those options are not possible, then recycle.

There were two other trends I took particular note of at the start of the last decade. One has maintained its popularity but the other was just a blip in 2010 but has exploded in the past few years. They are growing your own vegetables and houseplants respectively. Vegetable gardening is known by such names as edible gardening, grow your own groceries and mixed-use landscapes (incorporating vegetables into the landscapes).

Gardenmediagroup.com predicted 'Bringing the Outdoors In' in 2010. Houseplants are

natural air cleaners, provide oxygen while removing carbon dioxide. Houseplants are mood enhancers and contribute to décor in 2020, according to gardendesign.com. A 'Houseplant Craze' is how pennlive.com describes what is happening with houseplants. *Plant Parenting* by Leslie F. Halleck was published June of last year. The book is advertised to be everything you need to know to care for plants and grow your collection by seed and propagation techniques.

'What Goes Around Comes Around.' I was a part of the 'houseplant craze' back in the early 1970s. I had a house full of plants. Large ones on the floor and small ones on table tops. If an area had adequate light, it had a plant. Later in the decade they fell out of favor and I went with that. I still have several houseplants and have added a couple recently but I will not collect again. I followed watering schedules, repotted and divided, rooted stem cuttings and so on. Been there, done that. The only plants I'm 'parenting' now are my waterlilies and lotus.

Gardendesign.com concluded its 2020 predictions with 'Immersing Yourself in Beauty.' Picture accompanying this trend is of the Marjorie McNeely Conservatory at Como Park in St. Paul. It looks across the water gardens at the iconic glass dome. As people and doctors are learning the benefits of being out in nature, this prediction encourages people to visit a botanical garden or an arboretum as a time-out from the stresses of everyday happenings.

The Twin Cities is home to two renowned public gardens, the Conservatory in St, Paul and the University of Minnesota Landscape Arboretum in Chaska.