

# Stone:

## *For More than Just Landscaping*

Gone are the days of plain landscaping stones used in place of mulch or grass — lately, stones are becoming a decorative way to accent gardens.

*By Carrie Burns*

A few years ago, I helped my dad lay about 3 tons of small (approximately 2-inch-round) plain stones around his pool. Every few feet or so we added a little design — almost like a stepping path — with extra bricks from the house. It seemed like such a good idea at the time. Now that I think about it and look at it, we could've done so much more. I don't think my dad went to a garden center and asked what would look good, and I'm not even sure he would. However, if he would've seen an example somewhere, say outside a garden center he drove by or in an advertisement, we would've been more apt to venture out into the world of stone.

We could've added larger stones with mulch around the pool; we could've used those kits that help you make stepping stones; we could've accented flower beds with larger, matching stones — could've, should've, would've. It's done now, so there's no use talking about it, but it does speak to a great new trend in garden accents: stone.

When thinking about stone, it's easy to get caught up in the landscaping aspect of this material. You may not provide a landscaping service, or if you do, you may consider it a completely different department. You may also not even carry landscaping stones. If you don't, you might want to rethink that because stone can be used for more than just landscaping, and your store can inspire creativity when it comes to accenting a garden with stone. The following are just a few of the latest uses for stone...and none of them are traditional hardscaping.

### **DECORATIVE STONE**

Stone pieces are no longer plain and gray. Gems are now mixed with stone to add more color and texture. You can find gems and pieces of colored ceramic embedded in stone birdbaths, wind chimes, stepping stones, etc. The newest stone pieces feature designs etched into them, color painted onto them and entire statues carved from them.



### Cobblestone kit

Words In Stone is an easy-to-use, do-it-yourself kit that comes complete with everything you need to make word-bearing cobblestones. It works well for creating plant markers and garden stone messages. Kit includes lower-case press-in letters, numbers and punctuation marks, a 3 lb. starter bag of concrete, five cobblestone shaped forms, buff-colored tint, a trowel and instructions. Magnetic Poetry, Inc. (800) 370-7697. **Write in 1495**

Whether it be a stone with a collegiate mascot on it or one that pays tribute to a lost loved one, decorative stones are gaining consumer attention. More and more, stones are communicating style.

### WATER FEATURES

**Waterfalls.** Stones are what make waterfalls in nature, and now they are included in kits for the home gardener. Kits allow large stones (real, poured or simulated) to be stacked on top of each other to create a beautiful, large and easy-to-build waterfall.

**Fountains.** Much like a waterfall, these fountains are usually just over-sized single stones with a hole in the top where the water trickles out. I saw an abundance of these at the IPM show in Essen, Germany, in January. (See more trends from the IPM show on page 6.) They've been around for the indoors for a while — though much smaller in size — and have been very successful. Now they're available for the outdoors and will most likely become as popular as the indoor models.

### LARGE, FOCAL POINTS

Every garden needs one, and stone is quickly becoming one of the hottest focal points in new garden designs. Most often, stone focal points take the shape of large, natural boulders placed into the landscape to mature and naturalize the setting, but designers are starting to refine this trend with more shaped stone.

Even as furniture, stone is gaining pop-

ularity. Though stone benches, tables and chairs have been around since medieval times and were used for functional reasons, they are now so ornate that people are using them to accent their gardens.

### STEPPING STONES

The design of stepping stones is another example of functional pieces turned aesthetic over the years. You've seen the different stepping stone kits featured in *Lawn & Garden Retailer*; we often position them as children's products because they are such a great project to interest children in gardening. However, adults enjoy them too, and you can position them in any way you want. I'm not a child (though some beg to differ), and I would love to create beautiful stepping stones and use them in the right environment.

### ARTIFICIAL STONE

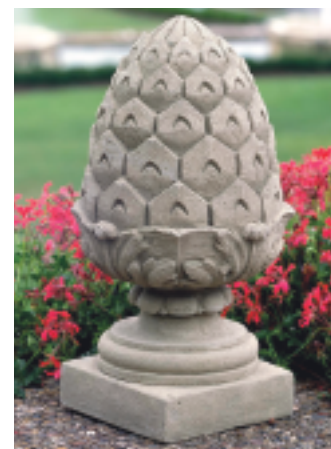
Stone has become so popular that manufacturers are satisfying the demand by creating artificial stone — not just those key-holding fake rocks; artificial stones have branched out into lightweight faux benches, landscaping rocks, birdbaths, containers and more. Look to the following pages to find some of these stone and faux stone products and other accents.

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### Headstone urn

This headstone is inscribed with the following tribute: "If Tears Could Build A Stairway, And Memories A Lane, I'd Walk Right Up To Heaven And Bring You Home Again." It has a container in the bottom that holds the remains of loved ones. The headstone measures 9 1/2 x 8 inches and weighs 18 lbs., suitable for placement in the home or garden. Kay Berry. (800) 426-1932. **Write in 1492**



### Garden accessories

The Longwood Gardens Collection is reproduced directly from early 20th-century originals selected from the estate of Pierre du Pont and includes a finial, flower basket, frog, basin, pedestal birdbath and three urns. Reproduced in natural cast stone, the pieces are also finished in a choice of eight hand-applied patinas to achieve various antique, weathered looks to match any garden or décor. Campania. (610) 388-1000. **Write in 1485**

### Weather-resistant accents

The new line of lightweight, durable and weather-resistant planters, urns, pedestals and water fountains is manufactured using fiberglass and resin. With more than 60 styles and five finishes per style, the selection of shapes and sizes will suit everyone from the floral arranger to the patio designer. Suitable for use both indoors and out. KAS International. (800) 505-1380. **Write in 1491**



## Books for Your Customers

Books are always great references for your customers, and an add-on for you. Here are a few to look into.

- *Stonescaping: A Guide to Using Stone in Your Garden* by Jan Kowalczewski Whitner
- *Stone in the Garden: Inspiring Designs and Practical Projects* by Gordon Hayward and Gordon Morrison
- *Garden Stone: Creative Ideas, Practical Projects and Inspiration for Purely Decorative Uses* by Barbara Pleasant and Dency Kane
- *Sunset Landscaping With Stone* by Hazel White
- *Step-By-Step Outdoor Stonework: Over Twenty Easy-To-Build Projects for Your Patio and Garden* by Mike Lawrence
- *Gardening with Water, Plantings and Stone* by Carroll Calkins
- *Stone, Rock & Gravel Gardens* by Kathryn Bradley-Hole



### Cover rocks

Urestone, a new line of high-quality, artificial rocks is designed to hide or cover unsightly irrigation valves, telephone and cable boxes, electrical transformers, well vents and others. The series includes 12 rocks, varying in size and

shape. They are designed from a tough, structural polymer and use a 3- to 4-step coloring system to provide a realistic look. Replications Unlimited. (314) 524-2040. **Write in 1500** ▶