

# garden

By Roger Myers

Roger Myers is the President and Founder of American Beauty Landscaping. Established in 1979, ABL is the Valley's industry leader with more than 100 national, state and local awards to its landscape design and build credit.

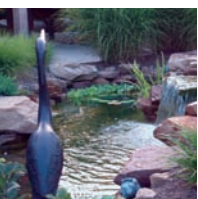


## Wet and Wild!

One of the questions frequently asked is, what can I do with my landscaping to attract wildlife? I can't resist responding: like Deer, Raccoons, Geese or Snakes!?

Of course that's usually not what they want. Sometimes you don't get to choose. A garden is a natural habitat, that will automatically attract critters of all types.

What you get depends on plants and features as well as location, climate, nearness to water, nearness to the city etc. etc.



Like us, wildlife needs water, food, and shelter. By designing the right accommodations, you can improve the likelihood you'll have the kind of wildlife you desire. After all, a lot of folks get excited when Bambi comes calling, and many folks feed the squirrels and Rocky Raccoon! Be careful what you wish for!

For those of us who enjoy the esthetics and the pleasing effects that water has on us all, let's consider the benefits of a water feature:

Water features can be large and elaborate with multiple fountains such as those seen in public parks and cities, or the (pardon the pun) "garden variety" that you can have in your own back yard.

I happen to prefer the small back yard water feature that I can enjoy watching, as well as a place to putter when I have free time(!)

A 5'x10' irregular water feature, with a small waterfall splashing into it, is just the thing to attract a variety of wildlife.

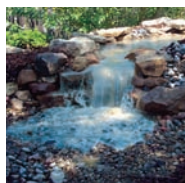
We have installed many kinds of water features over the years, and it is exciting to see what happens.

If the water is clean, moving in some fashion, or contains fish, it will not be a mosquito habitat, and it will attract birds, dragonflies, butterflies and frogs. It might also attract an exotic visitor. I have had a Heron visit my pond and try to devour all my fish. They appeared to be his lunch, as there were no fish visible after his departure. However, as if by magic, they slowly "returned" to visibility after 2 weeks of hiding; all of them! They were traumatized!

A couple of mallards visit annually; but apparently get bored swimming in circles....

An elevated fountain will limit visitors to birds and butterflies.

If you like the sounds of a waterfall, but don't wish to contend with the issues of a pond – you may opt for a "pondless water-feature". The falling water enters a gravel pit, where a hidden pump re-cycles the water back over the falls.



There is no pool of water – just stones.

It is a neat trick, offering a lot of benefits of an aggressive fall, with a lot of splash action and sounds associated with it. By planting a variety of marginals around it, it can be very attractive as well.

Besides attracting wildlife, we have found that many humans have gathered around this backyard water feature as well.

*Enjoy the Spring and good-gardening.*