GARDEN DESIGN

bluest, sweetest sweet peas
NEW PLANTS YOU'LL LOVE, TOO
10 GARDEN ORNAMENTS FOR DRAMA, BEAUTY
FRESHEST OUTDOOR FURNITURE

GREAT GARDENS!
8 Golden Trowel Winners Designs and Plants That Work 17 Designer Tips

Features

33 Winners! Annual Golden Trowel Awards From courtyard nooks to sprawling acres of tended greens, this year's Golden Trowel competition drew the gamut of garden entries for a chance at the coveted Garden Design accolade. Stroll through the top eight, designed by amateurs and professionals alike.

60 Fresh from Chicago Hip, elegant, eclectic or classic, each year Chicago's casual furniture mart unveils the newest in outdoor furnishings. See the latest pieces by Donna Dorian.

66 The Sweetest Thing America's darling—the fragrant and frilly sweet pea—enjoys yet another revival, thanks to old favorites and newcomers. Is there any business more charming than a sweet-pea nursery? By Graham Rice.
2003 GOLDEN TROWEL AWARDS

Urban and country, expansive and shriveled-in, outrageously colorful and subtle shades of green — the eight winners of our annual garden design competition reflect the wonderful diversity of our readers' interests, styles, climates and sites. And every single one proudly displays the heart and soul that went into it, along with wheelbarrows of compost, nights of sore knees and hours of mental deliberation. Thanks to Phil Madlue, landscape architect of Palm Beach, Florida, who agonized with us as we chose winners from so many worthy contenders. Want to win a Golden Trowel? Our next issue will provide details on how to enter, for professionals and amateurs alike.
swain’s world

Bob Swain calls his garden a "personal sanctuary." We call it a seamless fusion of the soul, style and plants that make the Pacific Northwest such a hotbed of gardening.

Left: Follow the walkway to the Buddha statue at the rear of the house. Right: Nearby is a quiet seating area that seems part of the house. The pavers are hand-carved granite planks; the table is made from a Chinese mortar. Tall bamboo lends shelter and elegance.
Bob Swan is an architect and passionate mountain hiker who wanted to bring to his hillside city the rugged beauty of Washington's forested peaks and sparkling mountain meadows. He also wanted to draw on the imagery of a Zen temple, and on Chinese artifacts and stones, to add a "soothing calm and suspension of time."

The original garden consisted mainly of a few large trees and shrubs and a concrete driveway running nearly the length of the property. First step: Remove 10 truckloads of decades-old poured concrete, then the top layer of poor compacted soil. In came 14 truckloads of fertile new soil: a mix of 30 percent Woodland Park Zoo Doe (from the meadow and bedding materials of meadowlark herbivores), combined with 60 percent Cedar Grove compost and 10 percent cocoa fiber. Planting began just three years ago, and included full-sized specimen trees as well as tiny seedlings.

Now the illusion of escaping into wilderness begins at the parking strip along the street. Mountain hemlocks, underplanted with Northwest natives such as kinnikinnick, white mountain heather and bunch grasses, provide a screen from traffic and offer a hint of the serene garden beyond. The faint sound of trickling water reinforces the mountain feeling.

Like a mountain trail, a cedar-plank pathway beginning near the sidewalk takes you to the house and deep into the garden and its various outdoor living areas. You first brush past a tall hemlock and a Douglas fir into the front garden, which suggests a sunny clearing in the forest. Springtime in the "meadow" brings blooms of Western trillium (T. virginianum), Pacific bleeding heart (Dianthus formosus), false lily-of-the-valley (Maianthemum dilatatum) and other Northwest wildflowers.

The pathway seems to float over the meadow's moss as it leads to the front entry past a Japanese-style water basin (main photo). This
winning style

1. Sensitive combine hand-crafted Asian objects with a wilderness setting for an overall feeling of calming serenity and sophistication.
2. For successful plant combinations, take a cue from how mountain plants group together in the wild and emulate it—random yet not busy.
3. Let nature inspire you everywhere—like using granite stepping stones to resemble boulders in a mountain stream of salal.
4. Vigilantly remove weeds and invasive nonnatives, no matter how attractive (like California poppy). In a naturalistic garden, less is more.
5. Aim for sustainability by reusing rescued objects and garden waste.
6. Never scrim on soil: This mix is wonderfully rich and also amended semiannually. Plants that are growing well need less attention.

“I live in the city, have no curtains, shower in the garden—that’s how much privacy the garden gives me”
plant palette

Bob's vision for his garden is a look that is drawn from his experience of the beauty of Washington's forested mountains and rolling meadows full of wildflowers. Key plants:

**BIG TREES**
- Western hemlock (Tsuga heterophylla)
- Douglas fir (Pseudotsuga menziesii)

**SHRUBS, SMALL TREES**
- Quaking aspen (Populus tremuloides)
- Pacific rhododendron (R. macrophyllum)
- Oregon grape (Mahonia aquifolium)
- Vine maple (Acer circinatum)
- Snowberry (Symphoricarpos albus)
- Giant timber bamboo (Bambusa arundinacea)

**GROUND COVERS**
- Kinnikinnick (Arctostaphylos uva-ursi)
- Beach strawberry (Fragaria chiloensis)
- Salal (Gaultheria shallon)

**WILDFLOWERS**
- Western trillium (T. ovatum)
- Western bleeding heart (Dicentra formosa)
- Redwood sorrel (Oxalis oregano)
- Red paintbrush (Castilleja miniata)
- Goat's beard (Aruncus dioicus)
- Stream violet (Viola globella)

...feature is made from several pieces—a monumental natural basal column found in eastern Washington makes the basis, while water falls in a steady trickle from a copper pipe suspended from a Chinese granite well marker.

Continue on the pathway, screened by slender-trunked quaking aspen, to the outdoor dining area, sheltered by towering Japanese timber bamboo. A Chinese granite mortar has been transformed into a dining table. Pavers are seven 6-foot, hand-carved granite slabs from villages to be submerged by the Three Gorges Dam in China. (Rhodes Architectural Stone, a Seattle-based company specializing in importing handcrafted building materials, supplied the numerous artifacts in the garden.)

The pathway's final destination is a Buddha stone (a standing stone marker) and peaceful seating on a secluded deck, made of recycled and reclaimed cedar timbers. A convertible indoor-outdoor shower has a sliding glass door that allows the luxury of showering in the garden on nice days. Nearby is a meditation wing converted from the old garage.

The garden includes a number of delicate and hard-to-find Northwest plants cultivated from seeds and bulbs: white and pink fawn lilies (Erythronium spp.), camas (Camassia quamash), Sitka mist-maiden (Ranunculus stachyus) and others. These and many others come from small local nurseries specializing in Northwest natives. As Bob says, "These nurseries are run by people with a profound passion and knowledge of the fragile environment of this part of North America." Look closely at the plants and you'll see the true spirit of fusion: tiny but determined Oregon stonewort spreading from the hole of a Chinese well marker to other parts of the garden.