



Focal points in the garden

In art, it is called the focus point – the part of a painting or work of art that immediately draws your attention. In a garden setup – landscapers refer to them as focal points. This designed “focalization” gives the garden a sense of purpose, order and visual appeal.

Utilizing focal points in a garden is one of the “tricks of the trade” that can take your garden from dull to delightful in a very short period of time if well planned and executed. There are a few factors involved which may sound a bit theoretical but the suggestions (with images) will explain in a way that only images can.

Size (scale) and colour (bright or warmer) are some of the most serious attention grabbers. Something that is warm and colourful or bigger than its immediate surroundings beckons your eye almost in an uncontrollable way.

The use of lines and smooth surfaces are both devices used to create a situation



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leading your attention to a focal point. The eye naturally follows lines. Therefore, to create a strong focal point, visual lines within the garden should intersect. Some obvious places where lines intersect are the sidewalk to a porch or at the beginning or end of a path. A smooth lawn surface with neat straight (or curved) edges creates more focus on whatever focal point breaks up the green carpet-like monotony. The tidy/neat lines and smooth surfaces created in a garden are considered as essential basics to highlight the focal areas successfully.

Symmetry is another ancient favourite to display the well maintained shapes and forms in a garden that reflects precise gardening skills, not to mention visual appeal. The use of symmetry creates the effect in an obvious manner, while asymmetrical designs soften or even avoid focalization.

Overcrowding your garden with too many focal points creates a confused space in which the eye is not allowed to rest on any one item effectively, eliminating the value of creating a focal point in the first place. By definition,



focalization involves discrimination. You will not draw much attention to A if you have indiscriminately set up B, C, and D as competition.

Suggestions for focal points in your garden (apart from plants, trees and shrubs):

**GARDEN PATHS**

A beautiful pathway comprised of basic paving stones or a complex, geometric, mosaic pattern, making it as simple or as elaborate as your heart desires.

**SCULPTURES**

A sculpture can be a very stylish addition to your property and can add an air of class, providing a timeless piece of style to your outside space.

**DECKING**

Not only is a deck a very attractive visual feature to have in your garden, but it's also a very functional piece of design, providing a fantastic outside space in which to relax and entertain.

**DECORATIVE POTS**

There are so many shapes, colours and styles of pots available, choosing the right pots for your garden can be challenging but the options are almost endless.

**BIRD BATH**

Offering water in your backyard will attract more birds than just food sources, since birds that would not normally visit feeders can be tempted by a bird bath.

**PONDS**

However, a pond can be as big or small as you want it and can also be tailored to perfectly fit your garden.

**BENCH**

A pretty bench in the right spot will lure the viewer closer and entice them to linger and relax.

**SUNDIAL**

The perfect accent for an old-fashioned country garden or formal herb bed. Place it towards the back of a border to create vertical interest or in the centre of a circular or square herb garden. dw

