

# GARDENS Four Seasons

## GARDENDESIGN - OCTOBER 2016

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### SECRET GARDENS

- ways to make a private space just for you!

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*(I am  
always sad  
when  
Summer  
days are  
over BUT....  
the BONUS  
is we now  
have plenty  
of time to  
enjoy  
Winter &  
plan for  
next year's  
garden!)*

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When I was a little girl - one of the most fun things to do (aside from yearning for a puppy!) was to create special spaces where I could occasionally hide away from the world & read, plan & dream. They usually occurred outdoors & often took the shape of a fort or hut.

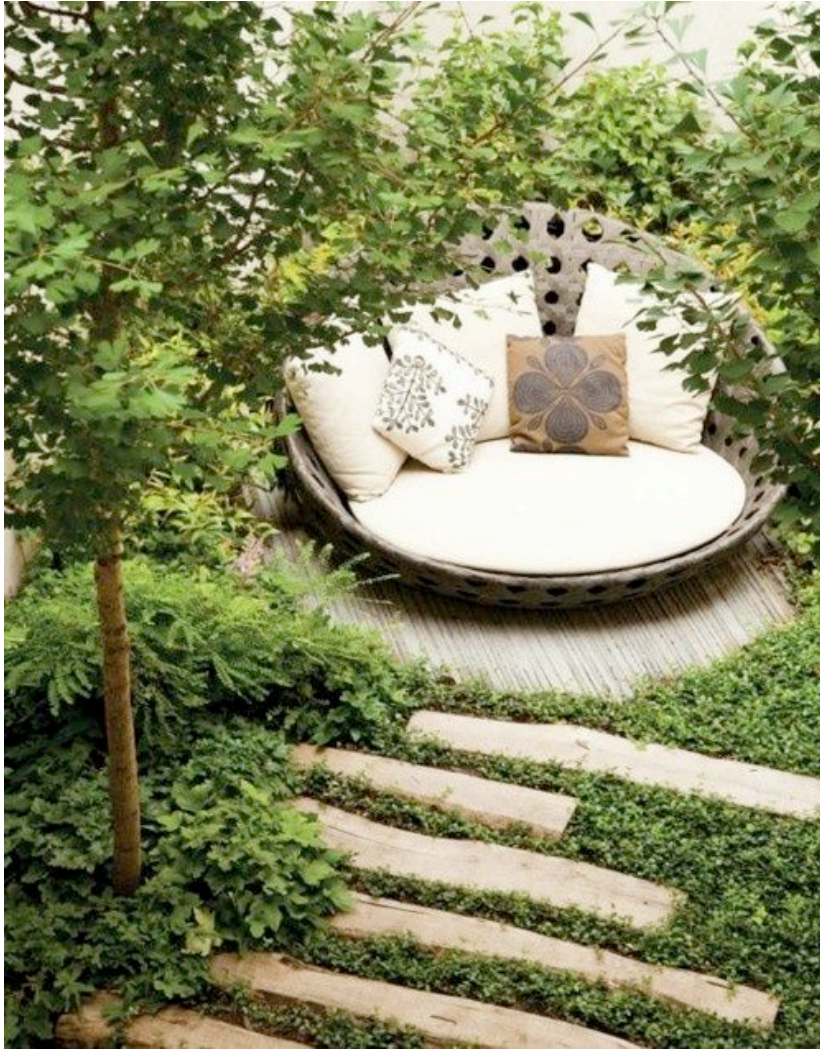
Kids are naturally drawn to a place where they can control their own worlds. Ever ask how much they love treehouses, tents or 'blanket' forts? Created

is a zone where for a bit of time - they alone, are in control of their environment - & the out of doors is perfect. Hopefully all of us never lose that childlike sense of wonder!

As grownups tho', we still have that need for a private space & again - out in nature is an excellent locale.



## Reasons to create a Secret Garden



Fittingly, Secret Gardens would provide a strong sense of enclosure & separation from the rest of the world - you know - Secret! Beyond that requirement, the reasons can be many - an area to meditate, read, practice yoga or just BE.

They become the perfect opportunity to utilize little used areas or create an 'Outdoor Room'. What a great chance to enjoy & observe nature. But

perhaps you want yours for relaxation or napping? How about a separate space for hot tub? Or could be - your choice is a special vegetable or herb garden or doing yoga (or all three!)?



Maybe, just maybe, you want to create an exclusive front courtyard - only visible if someone comes right to your main door.

Whatever your reason for a Secret Garden - I highly recommend having at least one place in your yard developed as a separate room that ideally cannot be immediately viewed upon first seeing your yard.

### **Places to create your Secret Garden**

Consider any site that is under-utilized, seldom seen, or a nook you've used as a catch-all for junk. It could even be where all your gas & electrical meters are congregated such as a side yard. How about a space between a garage or shed & a house or a fence or even behind a garage or shed?





*- a 'sweet spot' for kids to play*

Possibly consider developing your garden near an entry to the house or to the yard.

Or do you have an awkward space under a large tree in a corner of your yard (perhaps under a spruce or behind one?) My Grandson discovered such a location in my own yard this July. I had been struggling with what to grow there & a 3 year old showed me that not every spot has to be planted - it can always be just be FUN!

Maybe you'll want to create a berm or raised area - either natural - utilizing soil &/or boulders, or manmade using bricks!



- *side yard slope terraced to allow for raised vegetable beds*

Use the berm to act as a border or camouflage for a secret garden (or both!)

So next month we'll continue with the Secret Garden theme & look at ways to implement your private space.

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## **GARDENDESIGN in NOVEMBER - SECRET GARDENS - part 2**

- *actual ways to make a private space just for you!*

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Meantime, I invite you to experience my PINTEREST site for further ideas on creating Secret Gardens - please click the following link & select the Board titled SECRET GARDENS - easy peasy! -

<https://www.pinterest.com/gardens4seasons/boards/>



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## PLANT OF THE MONTH

### AMUR CHERRY - *Prunus maackii*

While trying to decide on a selection for Plant of the Month - I hit upon the fact that when planning for 'Winter Interest' one should also include this time of year - when most of the leaves are down & things are looking a bit bare.

Nothing grabs your attention more than a striking glint of tree bark. Amur Cherry is one of the best in this regard. (thanks for the inspiration Wendy!) It has THE most amazing tactile bark -





looks & feels good too! An almost cinnamon-honey golden hue - the texture is mesmerizing at any time of year but most noticeably now. It's appeal increases when snow arrives to stay.

A medium sized tree (mature height of 30' with a 15' spread) it is very hardy & easily accessible but rarely seen. The leaves are deep green & it might produce white flowers in Spring & tiny blackish fruit, but both are infrequent.

Simple to establish but locate it with care. It is a bit prone to bark scald in Winter. Avoid that by placing it where the sun will not shine on the trunk for more than 4-6 hours per day. Being a member of the Prunus family - some fear it will be apt to develop the dreaded Black Knot Fungus but it appears to be less susceptible to that & insect infestations than say - the Chokecherry or Mayday tree. Even with these minor drawbacks - it is a tree worthy of further use.





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## DESIGN BRILLIANCE



- a variety of Cactus - *Trichocereus pachanoi* (San Pedro) *cristata*

Once again Mother Nature trumps Man in the Design Department - how DOES a plant know how to grow like that?

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I am a big believer that Gardens need to stimulate all your senses in order to be fully appreciated. Why not become extra enlightened on this subject?



Ask me to send you the GARDENDESIGN issues I did on the SENSUAL GARDENER - great Autumn reading!

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*or they can email me to request their own copy!*

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