



Get creative

Mark Rayner presents inspiring ideas for some DIY garden art.

OUTDOOR paintings or decorative panels are a great way to introduce some year-round interest to your garden and needn't be expensive or difficult to make yourself. As long as all your materials are suitably weatherproof there's no reason why your garden art shouldn't be around for years. Here are some suggestions to get you started.



Outside the square

This simple tiled panel was inspired by the clean lines and simple colours of a Mondrian painting – and the simplicity of its design means there's no need to cut tiles or use grout. First, plan your tile layout and then work out the finished size of your artwork, allowing for the timber frame and the black edging lines (made from 50mm x 25mm battening). Cut a piece of 22mm treated plywood to match the finished size as a backing board. Build the frame next, attaching it directly to the edges of the board with galvanised nails and exterior PVA. Then attach the lengths of battening in the same way to form edging lines. Prime and paint your piece, and then glue the tiles into position using exterior construction glue.



Go fish!

This fabulous, low-relief, marine-themed garden panel was made by Napier artist Maggie Taylor from concrete and then primed and painted with exterior house paint (Maggie uses Resene testpots). You could have a go at making your own, using a piece of treated plywood as a backing board and then attaching a small piece of chicken wire to create the basic form. Mix up small amounts of builders' mortar mix until you are happy with the final form and then allow this to dry thoroughly. Prime with Resene Concrete primer and finish your work off with Resene testpots. If you'd like to see more of Maggie's work, see www.mtpots.co.nz

She'll be right

This cool, coastal-inspired garden panel is very easy to make. First build the base and sides of the frame. Drill equally spaced holes partly through the inside bottom edge of the frame and the inside of the (yet to be attached) top frame edge to accommodate vertical lengths of stainless steel rod. Put the rods in place in the holes on the frame base. Next, drill holes in seashells and thread them onto the steel rods, and then attach the top of the frame, fixing the tops of each rod into the pre-drilled holes. You could adapt this design to use lengths of heavy-duty wire and threaded pumice instead.



Old master

Use an old artwork as inspiration – this panel was inspired by a detail from a Van Gogh iris painting. Print a copy of the artwork from the internet or copy it from a book or a print. Scale your copy up to the correct size with an enlargement from your local copy shop. Then, trace your design on a suitably sized piece of 22mm treated plywood, using carbon paper. Mix some exterior builders' fill and apply to the surface of the board to build up a brush-like texture on the flowers and foliage. When this is dry, prime your piece with a coat of Resene Quick Dry and, starting with the background, use some Resene testpots to fill in the detail. Continue in this way until the picture is complete and then finish it off with a coat of Resene Multishield+ gloss.

Modern masterpiece

This bold abstract design really brightens up an ordinary shed wall. To make one like it, prime a piece of 22mm treated plywood with Resene Quick Dry and apply a coat of Resene Mediterranean effect to texture the surface. When that's dry, apply two coats of Resene Lumbersider tinted to Resene Paua. Mask off horizontal bands with low-tack masking tape and paint alternate bands with a testpot of Resene Porsche, followed by two coats of Resene Bullion. Remove the masking tape, and when all paint is dry, apply a coat of Resene Multishield+ gloss to really bring out the colour. Hang your artwork from a sturdy wire or screw it directly to the shed wall (touch up screw heads with a dab of paint).



Five more ideas for garden art

- Pebble mosaics make fabulous wall art – embed pebbles into a thin bed of mortar mix (reinforced with chicken wire) and hang from a sturdy wire.
- Glue small vitreous glass tiles to 22mm plywood creating a pictorial or abstract piece, as your drawing abilities allow, and it off with grey grout.
- Corrugated zincalume makes a great base for an out-

Let the sun shine

Be inspired by the example of Whanganui mosaicist Louise Herdman who made this stunning mosaic and create own sunflower masterpiece. Use a sturdy piece of 22mm treated plywood as a base and draw out your design with a pencil. Start with the main subject (the flower) using vitreous glass tiles for the centre and coloured glass for the petals. Once the flower is finished, work on the background, letting the rows of flowing vitreous and iridescent tiles create a sense of movement and energy. Glue tiles with exterior PVA glue and finish off with exterior grout. You view more of Louise Herdman's wonderful work, see www.mosaicpictures.co.nz



- door painting – prime first with suitable exterior metal primer and then paint it with Resene testpots.
- Stained glass panels can look stunning in a garden setting. Make your own by fixing coloured glass to a piece of safety glass using clear silicon and then finish your artwork off with a black coloured grout.
- Combine bamboo and galvanised wire to create an unusual outdoor woven panel.