

GARDEN TO THE MAX

12 Ways to Embrace Maximalist Style in Your Garden

Maximalist style isn't just for interiors—it's a bold, vibrant approach to garden design that celebrates abundance, creativity, and personal flair. Here's how to go big and bold in your garden with these 12 tips:

1. **Go Bold with Color:** Choose a vibrant color palette that complements your home's exterior and repeat these hues throughout your garden. Mix bold plant foliage, flowers, and garden accents to create a cohesive and energetic look.
2. **Embrace Patterns:** Incorporate striking shapes and patterns in your landscape, such as repeating diamond elements in trellises, patio pavers, or garden beds. These patterns create visual interest and rhythm throughout the space.
3. **Curate Collections:** Group plants by type, such as cacti, tropical plants, or air plants, and use pots in matching or complementary color schemes. This curated approach creates a visually appealing collection that adds character and cohesion.
4. **Create Garden Rooms:** Divide your space into themed areas (e.g., a rose garden, an English garden, or an all-white garden) to add variety and a sense of discovery, inviting guests to explore different "rooms" within your garden.
5. **Add Layers:** Use a mix of plants in varying heights and textures to create depth and dimension. From towering trees to lush ground covers, layered plants help form a rich, multi-dimensional landscape.
6. **Embrace Exotics:** Experiment with tropical plants outside your growing zone and bring them indoors to overwinter. Their large leaves, flamboyant colors, and unique textures add an unexpected twist and intrigue to your garden.
7. **Celebrate Abundance:** Fill garden beds and containers densely with plants to create a lush, full look. This abundance not only provides year-round interest but also supports pollinator activity and fosters a thriving ecosystem with its diversity.
8. **Adopt a Theme:** Choose a central theme for your garden, such as a tropical oasis or whimsical cottage retreat. Select plants, colors, and accessories that reinforce this theme, allowing the space to feel unified and intentional.
9. **Inject Personality:** Personalize your garden with unique art, special plants, or items from your travels. Whether it's a vintage garden statue or a rare plant you adore, these personal touches make the space uniquely yours.
10. **Play with Scale:** Use oversized plants, such as large pruned hornbeams, or create mounds of lush groundcovers like Japanese forest grass to emphasize proportions and maximize visual impact.
11. **Think Vertically:** Maximize smaller spaces by planting vertically. Use trellises, fences, or walls to support climbing plants, or embrace natural hillsides with cascading, layered plantings that make the most of every inch.
11. **Include Surprises:** Add unexpected elements like quirky sculptures, ornamental objects, or playful signs that spark curiosity and joy. Thoughtful focal points—such as a bold container arrangement, a colorful garden bench, or a striking obelisk—draw the eye and guide visitors through your garden.

By Teresa Woodard, author of *"Garden to the Max: Joyful, Visionary Maximalist Gardens"* (Timber Press 2025). Photography by Bob Stefko. Order books [here](#), through online book retailers and at local bookstores.

