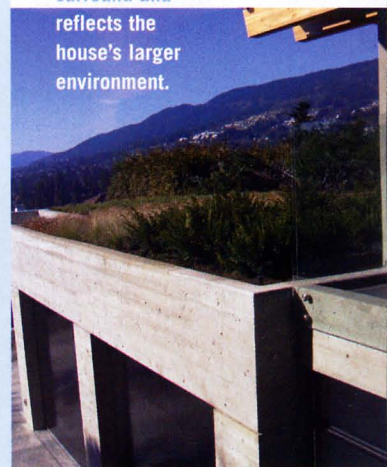




PILLARS OF THE CONTEMPORARY GARDEN

- A conscious balancing of the controlled and the organic
- Geometric lines and angles
- Multi-season plants that perform year-round (even in death)
- Plants that are kinetic (swaying grasses, finely textured sedges) and interestingly shaped (globes, buttons, spires, plumes)
- Fences, railing and walls made of concrete, stucco and metal
- Paths, steps and terraces made of large-cut concrete or granite blocks
- Clean-edged metal or resin furniture
- Abstract or brazenly modern garden art and sculpture

A roof garden softens the starkness of its concrete surround and reflects the house's larger environment.



Zigzagging concrete steps flanked by ornamental grasses continue the clean geometry and simple palette of a sleek contemporary home in Vancouver.

plants laid out in masses to create bold designs. The plants are often grouped into three categories: “structural,” “connective” and “feature.” Structural plants—typically trees and shrubs such as yews, rhododendrons, pines, hemlocks and oaks—define a space and provide year-round presence. Connective plants—mostly groundcovers such as periwinkle, salal, ferns, heathers, astilbe, crinkled hair grass and lavender—unify the garden by linking plantings together. Feature plants, including ornamental grasses, *Rudbeckia*, dogwoods, Siberian iris and hostas, highlight important parts of the garden (such as entry points, seating areas and views) and add seasonal interest.

What about hardscaping? I'm very partial to concrete, a versatile material that can be used for paving and walls; tile and stone can be used to contrast or break up large areas of concrete. We also use cedar and steel for fencing, gates and structures. The cedar is typically left untreated to weather naturally or is treated with a clear sealant, while the steel can be galvanized, painted or stainless. I also love the quality of crushed granite for paving.

What type of structures and accessories are appropriate? Lighting can transform the quality of the design, but it's important to show restraint; if it's too bright, you end up with hot spots in the garden. Where possible, custom-design your own site furnishings such as planters and seating, keeping in mind the contemporary lines and style of the garden.

Where can a gardener go for inspiration and guidance? A really good Internet resource is Land+Living, a landscape blog (www.landliving.com). Good books on contemporary garden design include *The Modern Garden* by Jane Brown (Princeton Architectural Press) and *Designing Gardens* by Arabella Lennox-Boyd (Frances Lincoln). >

contemporary

ARCHITECTURAL CUES

- Geometric construction, clean lines and sharp or jutting angles
- Mix of manmade materials (concrete, steel) with natural elements (wood, stone)
- Exposed architectural elements such as beams, columns and joists
- Floor-to-ceiling windows that offer wide views and invite the outdoors in
- Use of sustainable new technologies, such as solar heating and energy-efficient lighting
- New opportunities (such as green roofs) for garden location

Specializing in “strong, simple” gardens, **Jeff Cutler** of space2place design inc. in Vancouver tackled the subject of contemporary gardens, embodied here in a bold hillside space his firm created in B.C.

How would you define a contemporary garden? Contemporary garden design recognizes that the garden is part of a larger environment, so it seeks to emphasize or reveal natural processes and elements, such as light, wind, seasonal change. It tends to emphasize the experiential over the strictly ornamental. And it closely considers how a space will be used, carefully balancing culture and nature.

What plants would you recommend? Generally the plant palette is simple, with