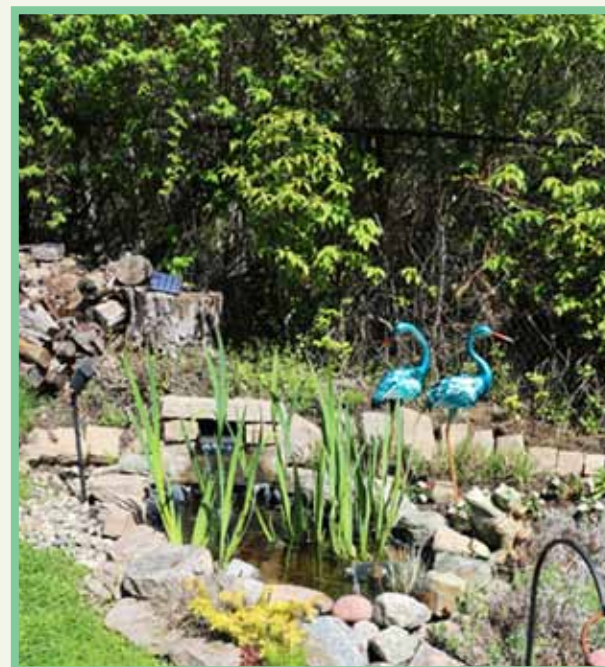


CENTENNIAL SUMMER 2025

Peace and beauty found in backyard ponds

Stories and photos by Kathy McGrath

1. Boxhill Drive



Top: Sandra loves sitting by the pond to decompress.
Above left: One of the resident frogs enjoys a sunbath.
Above right: Ornaments add a splash of colour to the pond.
Left: The soothing sound of a waterfall helps drown out traffic noise.

We asked Centennial residents to share their backyard ponds with us, and we weren't disappointed. Three homeowners invited us into their yards, revealing the lush beauty and Zen-like atmosphere created by their ponds. We learned these water features create an oasis of calm in a big city.

1 Sandra Itenson and her husband Angelo Bernardo built their pond as a Covid project. As with many hobbies, the pond grows every year. Sandra said the water feature adds a peaceful element to the yard. "I'll come out here with my cup of tea, or a glass of wine after work, and just decompress. The sound of the running water is really nice." Frogs have taken up residence and they sing a croaking chorus. "We've had frogs for three years now," Sandra said. "I don't know where they came from — they just arrived one day." Sandra and Angelo keep things green by using solar panels to run the pumps. They only use natural enzymes to keep the pond clear, steering away from chemicals if possible. Sandra belongs to a Facebook group where she meets other pond owners who share plants and maintenance tips.

2 When Nancy Green and her husband moved into Centennial 30 years ago, Nancy took one look at the backyard and knew she wanted to add a pond. "There was a corner with a depression, so I dug the first one myself." After starting a second career as a landscape designer 18 years ago, Nancy had a larger pond professionally installed. The couple has never looked back. "We sit here by the water in our Muskoka chairs with a glass of wine and a fire going; it's like being at a cottage," she said. "It's so peaceful." The pond contains goldfish that don't need feeding because the natural ecosystem of moss and water lilies provides for them. Once in a while, minks come from the lake and clean out the fish, which is why the Greens don't buy expensive koi.

3 Sue Thorne and her husband Frank De-Leo inherited their large pond when they moved to Centennial almost five years ago. What was originally a swimming pool had been converted by the previous owners into a backyard paradise. "When we looked at the house I thought 'I don't really want a pond,'" recalled Sue. "But it was so beautiful. The perennials they put in were outstanding." Sue and Frank quickly became pond converts, and have since installed their own small pool. Over the years a variety of wildlife has made use of the pond including ducks, frogs and a great blue heron. Recently Sue spotted turkey vultures weighing down the branch of a nearby tree. Sue says the pond looks best at night when the waterfall and surrounding rocks glow from artfully-placed lighting.

2. Rockport Drive

Right: The tranquility of a waterfall gives the yard a country feel.

Below: A colourful sphere adds beauty to the setting.

Centre: During winter, the fish hide in a crevasse and the frogs burrow in mud, becoming inert. In spring, they magically come to life again!

Bottom: Nancy keeps her pond open from April to November.



3. Bonacres Avenue



Top: Planting perennials around a pond is a good way to reduce yearly maintenance.

Second photo: Sue loves to watch birds bathe or take a drink in the water.

Right: Various elevations make a pond more interesting.

Left: Buddha gives his blessing to the yard.