



This slender, abstract sculpture is framed by its setting.

# ART-ful placement

**H**ow to place a piece of art in the landscape is not an easy decision.

“Usually you can sense that there’s a place,” says landscape architect and artist Nancy Eastman. It can go in the center of a turf area or garden—or off in the distance, which causes the eye to move. It needs to improve the landscape, not just decorate it.

“In the right place, a work of art will complement the landscape, will add to it and will integrate the aesthetic with the natural,” she says.

To accomplish that goal, art must be located “purposefully, to access and maximize the view of it,” according to Glen Ellison, Land Designs by Ellison, Eagle.

That, says Michael Becker, CLP, Estate Gardeners Inc., Omaha, requires the designer “to ask a lot of questions and listen well” to what the client wants. “You have to have the knowledge of how art works in a landscape and find a way to tastefully and correctly place the piece,” he says.

Scott Deemer considers the longevity and the growth habits of the plants surrounding it. “I would challenge every designer to consider what the landscape will look like it five years, 10 years, 50 years. How will the artwork fit into the evolution of the garden?” he asks.

Plants, he says, should work with the piece. He sited a formal sculpture in a rose garden, for example, and framed a more contemporary work with crabapple trees.

Finally, he says, if it’s in a public or commercial space, locate it where it can be relatively isolated from vandals.

Once you’ve decided where it goes, build a strong foundation to keep it safe from settling or tipping over. Higher elevations might require a deeper frost line for the foundation, according to Ellison. Other than that, he says, maintenance and weatherization for outdoor art is the same, no matter the altitude. 🌿



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