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STEPHEN CANTRELL/staff photographer

A bubbling fountain and fresh flowers create a relaxing space on the patio of Carol Wedge's Birmingham home.

Statuary accents back-yard retreat

By Arlene Funke
 Special writer

CAROL WEDGE of Birmingham enjoys listening to the soft gurgle of her back-yard fountain.

"It's so peaceful," Wedge said. Along with her fountain, Wedge has small cement statues of wildlife, blended to create an inviting scene. "There are little and discreet pieces," added Wedge, 44. "They are so beautiful and natural."

Joan Hintzke has filled the garden of her west Dearborn home with Oriental statuary. "It's serenity and peace," said Hintzke, 60. "I like graceful things."

There's a statuary available for every budget and taste, said Linda LaMaunula of Cliff Sales, a Livonia statuary company.

"Even with a tight economy, people can take a small fraction of the money they would spend for a vacation and

create a back-yard retreat," said LaMaunula, formerly of Redford Township and now living in Livonia.

STATUES RANGE in cost from a few dollars to several hundred dollars. An elaborate fountain may cost up to \$1,500.

If you enjoy a wildlife look, there are little cement statues of raccoons, turtles, foxes, frogs and deer.

Fountains also are available in a variety of themes, including Oriental, nautic, floral, Victorian and whimsical.

Birdbaths are perennial favorites. In Oakland County, the contemporary look is very popular, said Dena Darin, a spokesman for English Gardens Nursery, with several stores, including a West Bloomfield location.

"It's all square blocks or rounds," Darin said.