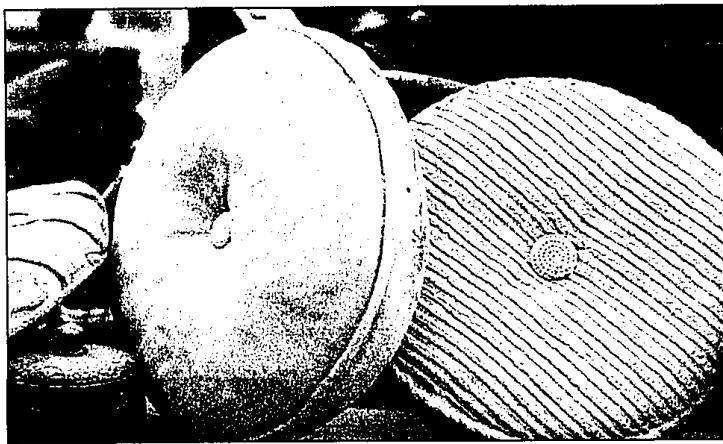


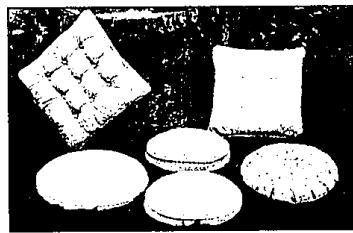
At Home

Pillows & Poetry



Work of art: These concrete stepping stones feature the look and feel of vintage accent pillows. They are often mistaken for the real thing because of the attention to detail — the tufts, buttons, pleats and gathers make these stepping stones a creative addition to a serene garden. Available exclusively at Goldner Walsh Nursery in Pontiac.

Garden planning for 2002 includes eye-catching stepping stones



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For garden-lovers January is a busy month to plan their gardens, for spring and summer months. The season's trends are making way to shelves at nurseries all over metro-Detroit.

And expected to be big again this year are stepping stones. Sure there's the current favorites of stone or resin butterflies, dragonflies, turtles and frogs — but look beyond those mainstays and catch some even more unique ideas.



Colorful concrete throw pillows that will fool anyone into believing they're velour, velvet and suede turned the head of Julia Janiak of Goldner Walsh Nursery on Orchard Lake Road in Pontiac. When a customer returned from a visit to an art gallery out west she told Janiak of the stepping stones detailed to replicate real throw pillows.

"People can't believe they aren't made of real fabric," Janiak said. "The detail is perfect."

Currently, Goldner Walsh Nursery is the only nursery nationwide to carry the Concrete Throw Pillow Stepping Stones, \$59.95 in nine styles in pastel colors. As a trend-watcher, Janiak said she knows it's only a matter of time before the pillows are discovered at chain stores. For now she's enjoying that Goldner Walsh is the only nursery nationwide to carry the whimsical stones. She expects the pillow stones to be popular near reflecting or meditating areas, as they can complete a serene atmosphere.

"They are perfect for placing near a pond, or anywhere in the garden where people would want to place a pillow and sit," she said.

Janiak said as more people are reducing their time traveling this year, they're spending more time on details to improve the home. At the chain stores, the feeling is the same, said Tina Babusci, a buyer for garden decor at Troy-based Frank's Nursery & Crafts.

"(At Frank's) do-it-yourself kits are big this year," Babusci said. "People are making their own stepping stones; it's a great thing to pass time in the winter and it's a good activity for families." The stepping stone kits that are most popular are mosaic and gem kits and poetry kits. Gardeners can make their own stepping stones with their favorite words or poems; or with the gem stones to complement the color schemes of the garden.

"There are the traditional stones that are still going strong," Babusci said. "Anything with wings. Butterflies, dragonflies and turtles are still strong."

Whimsical glow-in-the-dark stones are newer at Frank's.

At Goldner Walsh, the pillows are the current gems and Janiak, who prides herself with discovering rare and cutting-edge garden trends, travels across the globe, from Paris to San Francisco, for original items.

"The art of the pillow (stones) complements the blooms of summer and brings a splash of color to a dark bed of groundcover or creates a complete path for a bold design."

And unlike pillows, you can walk through your garden on them. They are fully cured, fade-proof and sealed.



Self-made: Do-it-yourself stepping stone kits (above) allows the gardener to chose whatever poetic word would best suit their garden style. Mosaic and gem stepping stone kits (top, left) are also available at Frank's Nursery & Crafts.

LISA LUCKOW-HEALY

Capture precious moments on pieces of paper.

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MARTY FIGLEY

There's lots new for 2002.

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JOE GAGNON

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