

# Exotic elements

## Turn an urban space into a lush landscape

Once upon a time, a string of plastic Tiki lights could pass for tropical outdoor décor. But those days are long over.

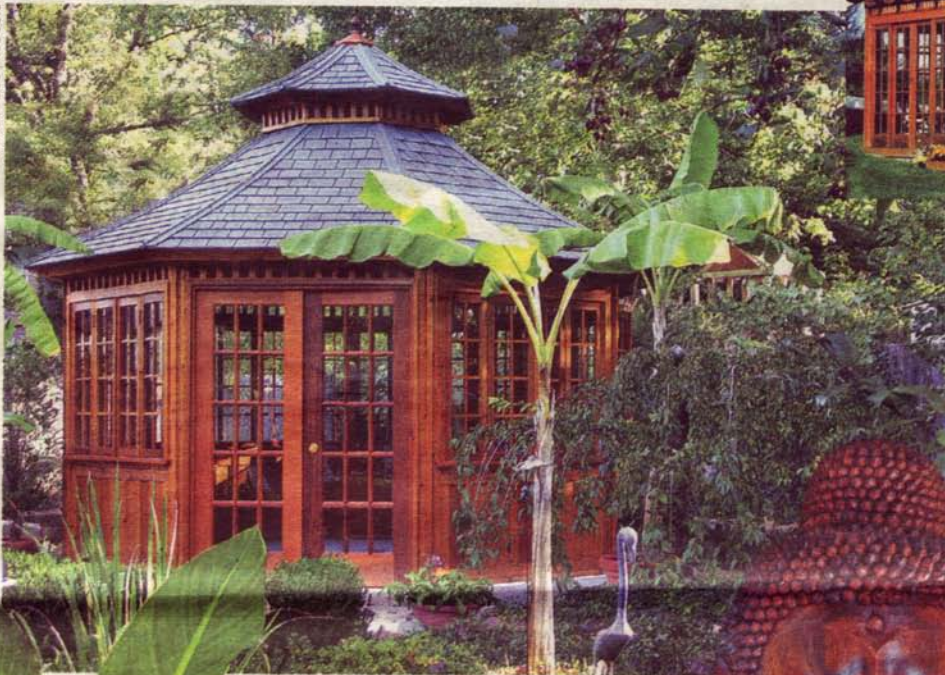
In fact, achieving an exotic-flavoured landscape nowadays is more of an exercise in winnowing out the many style elements on the market that only tangentially relate to the desired look. Stick to dark-stained wood furniture and structures and overscale planters, then add subtle touches like a low-key water feature and a Buddha made from stone or wood.

Take a pass on cushions or other textiles that are overly bright or loud (kitschy palm-tree prints are definitely not what you're after). When it comes to plants, the bigger, the better — fast-growing, large-leaved banana plants are increasingly available from local nurseries, and look great in containers.

METRO NEWS SERVICES

Banana plants are increasingly available at local nurseries. They're great in containers, and can be overwintered indoors. Right, *Musa lasiocarpa* from Valleybrook Gardens' Heritage Perennials line. See [www.perennials.com](http://www.perennials.com).

SUMMERWOOD PRODUCTS



Above, the San Cristobal from Summerwood Products is an elegant structure that can be used as a gazebo, home office, cabana, spa enclosure and more. The company offers prefab kits built to specification for a variety of outdoor structures; see [www.summerwood.ca](http://www.summerwood.ca).



Above, the Bali Tea House from Summerwood Products is a majestic structure that can be used as a gazebo, home studio or spa enclosure. For more details, visit [www.summerwood.ca](http://www.summerwood.ca).

Right, the Luau rechargeable lantern by Vessel is a portable light source that casts a soft glow. See [vessel.com](http://vessel.com) for details.



Look for Buddha heads or statues in wood or stone — metal versions can be a bit too jarring for this look.



Above, a forest of giant bamboo may be a challenge in this climate, but certain types of bamboo are indeed hardy here. A great Canadian resource is [bambooworld.com](http://bambooworld.com).



LINDA BUNCESS/RED COVER



Left, sleek, overscale planters fit the modern exotic look very well; glazed ceramic pots in deep blues and greens also work. Above, take inspiration from this image from Thailand, and float blossoms in containers for a special occasion.



VESSEL

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