

# Snow transforms yard into a wonderland



Carla  
Keast

## AROUND THE YARD

Snow changes everything.

All gardens have a season of rest. In some places, that means a monotonous period of browns and rain. We're lucky in this part of the prairies. We have snow to whiten, brighten, add moments of humour, and flourishes of drama to our yards while our plants rest.

The first snowfall clears away late fall's doldrum browns with a blank canvas, catches the sun's attention, and asks, "Who's up for some action?"

The evergreens immediately step out of their role as background foil, wind protection, or privacy screening. Against a canvas of snow, they shed their dark sombre cloaks and emerge as dashing daring romantics. Add a light layer of freshly fallen snow to their boughs and they take us into the magical place of greeting cards. Even the needles shine!

Check out our standoffish, no frills scrub oak all decked out in that same light layer of snow. It spends the summer

cautiously doling out growth and acorn output. No frivolous fancy flowers for the scrub oak. In the fall, it shuttles nutrients from its leaves to roots, and efficiently discards its leaves. No frills there either. But add a light layer of snow to its branches, and the scrub oak comes out to play.

The dogwoods' red branches harmonized with early fall's brilliant reds, and late fall's browns. But set against a pure white backdrop, they positively glow.

And the perennial seed heads? When not festooned in toques, bonnets, or nightcaps, they're busy painting extravagant snow shadows at their feet. When the snow builds up and threatens to cover them, they happily become installation sculptures. Artists, the lot of them!

If you have creative child living in your house or heart, you won't find a material more willing to play than snow. It lends itself to piling, packing, carving, painting...and the price point!

Shovel it into a mound, let it set for an hour or so, and it can be carved into a sliding hill, built into a yard monster, or hollowed out into a quinzee. You start the project, and the weather will keep it in motion for the rest of the winter. Snowfall fills in hollows; wind creates ripples or



Submitted photo

**The first snowfall can help clear away the brown doldrums left behind from autumn and lend some dramatic flourishes.**

drifts; intense sun melts and polishes.

While our gardens rest, snow keeps our yards alive with light, shadow, and sculpture. Enjoy!

*Carla Keast has a master's degree in landscape architecture and is a Winnipeg-based freelance landscape designer. She can be reached at [contact@carlakeast.com](mailto:contact@carlakeast.com).*