

# Garden Trains

by Master Gardener Intern and Garden Railroad Enthusiast Cliff Winter

Want to add something special to your garden? No, I am not talking about flowers, a special shrub or even a tree. I am talking about a train, a railroad! Garden railroads have been around for quite a while. They came over from Europe and Great Britain. Some of you may have had one around your Christmas tree when you were younger and did not realize that that train might also be a garden train. Garden trains are G-scale. No, the G does not stand for garden, but maybe it should. G scale is the largest scale in model railroading. It is 1/24-1/32. Scale can vary by different brands but and size in this range will fit on the standard track. Railroad track is made of stainless steel, brass or aluminum rails fitted with plastic ties. Most is made for outdoor use, so you can lay your track and leave it in your garden, hence, ***garden railroad***.



Most of the G-scale trains are pretty rugged and can take the outdoors' day to day use in pleasant weather. Trains are powered by electricity either through the tracks, track power, or have batteries to power them. Some of the real garden train enthusiasts may have steam power locos, but that is costly. Landscaping is usually done with live plants, rock, bridges, tunnels and some buildings, all to fit the scale of your railroad. If you are into bonsai, this is a great way to display them. Most any type of garden works whether it's a flower, rain, or cottage style, a train can make it more special. Bridges over the low spot on a rain garden, tressels through a rock garden or track winding through ground cover give your garden a personal look.

Now your question may be, how to I even get started? An easy way is to start with a starter set offered by most train manufacturers. They usually come with an oval track 4'by 8', a locomotive, tender (coal car) a regular car and a caboose, along with a transformer to power the train over the tracks.

Interested? Another great way to add knowledge is to visit a local garden railroad club, check websites, there are many, visit your local library or ask me. So "*Climb onboard*" and let your imagination run wild. If you have grandchildren, check out Thomas the train collection and introduce the children to the outdoor hobby of gardening and of course, trains.

## References:

Garden Railway Basics, from concept to construction to upkeep by Keven Strong

Website: Put a Train in your Garden - Garden Railroading Primer for Gardeners by Paul D. Race