



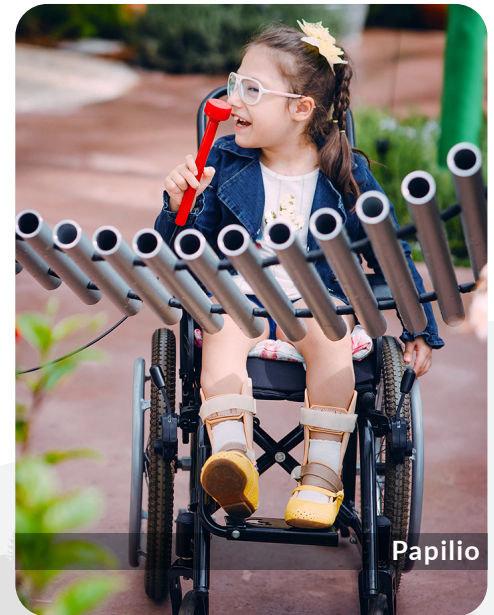
 **PercussionPlay**<sup>®</sup>  
Outdoor Musical Instruments

Guide to Building the Perfect  
Musical Garden

# Guide to Building the Perfect Musical Garden

Whether you are planning a new interactive sensory garden, or making an existing landscape more sensory-rich, there are so many benefits – happily all relatively easy to achieve. The design and layout of your musical garden, if you get it right, should provide a stimulating journey through the senses, with opportunities for seeing, smelling, hearing, touching, and tasting.

Typically, sensory gardens are built in Schools, Colleges, children's Centres, Special Needs Units, Hospitals, and Senior Living environments. This shows the importance of the sensory garden in providing both a place to learn and play, as well as a place to relax and recuperate in peaceful surroundings.



# Planting

Ensure you'll have year-round interest by planting lots of shrubs and perennials for the winter months, with bright stem colors or eye-catching bark – winter honeysuckles and grasses will help.

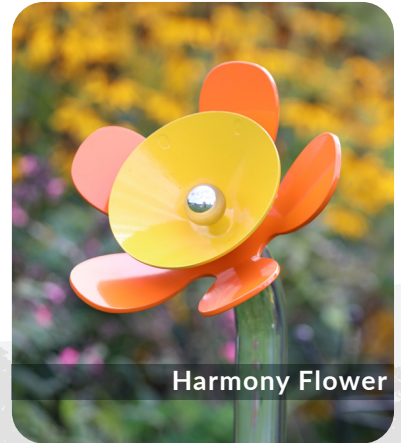
Everyone welcomes spring and visitors will love to see the early signs, so snowdrops, early daffodils and hellebores are good choices, along with other spring bulbs.

To add multisensory depth to your musical garden, choose flowers and shrubs that are highly scented, like the Mexican orange blossom, which gives out a fragrant, aromatic scent when the leaves are rubbed. Flowers, herbs, leaves – these can all give off a wonderful fragrance. Timber smells great when it dries out too.

All plants must be non-toxic, child-friendly (no poisonous, sharp or prickly ones! ), and sturdy enough to withstand handling. Look for textures like soft flowers, fuzzy leaves, spongy moss, rough bark, succulent leaves, and springy seed pods. Visitors can enjoy breaking off leaves to smell or taste.

Herbs like mint and chives will provide both scent and taste opportunities. Fruiting plants like cherry tomatoes, strawberries, blueberries, and edible flowers add beautiful colors, flavors, and aromas. Visitors will love the textures and fragrances of sage, rosemary, thyme, tarragon, and parsley.

Sounds can be created by the plants too – visitors will hear the wind rushing through the leaves, grasses waving in the breeze and the rattling of seed pods.



# Access

Sensory music garden pathways and trails should not only be easy to access: they should be an invitation to take a closer look, a promise that there's more to see. The best pathways will draw visitors into the musical garden and make them want to see what's ahead.



For hard landscaping, there are plenty of options to consider: concrete, stone paving slabs, treated timber decking, gravel, wood chips, and crushed stone, to name but a few.

Whatever materials you use, they need to be sympathetic to the surroundings. Most of the outdoor musical instruments can be installed directly into the ground, fixed to the surface or fitted to walls.

Varying the width along the route can make the path more interesting and can indicate 'destination' points, such as musical instruments, seating or a water feature. Consider a contrast between the path and edging for added interest. From an accessibility perspective, high-contrast colours will help visually impaired people find their way around independently and wider paths will help wheelchair users.



# Picking Your Sound

The crucial element to your sensory musical trail or garden is the outdoor musical instruments themselves. With instruments installed in strategic spots along the way, the performances of the visitors will resonate throughout the garden.

Adding musical instruments to your sensory garden creates a new and exciting way to discover music-making in the outdoors. Unlike a traditional music room, which can sometimes feel intimidating, a musical garden makes creating music a magical experience that players can freely enjoy while being inspired by the sounds of nature. Imagine a tranquil walk that suddenly provides the delightful experience of playing a musical instrument in the great outdoors. All Percussion Play instruments would be suitable for a sensory garden, but we've pieced together some customer favorites below.

## ♪ *Inspired By Nature*

Where music, nature, and creative thinking converge. The great outdoors has inspired us to create a collection of nature-themed outdoor musical instruments. This growing selection features designs inspired by flowers, leaves, insects, and other creatures, all while ensuring superior acoustic quality.

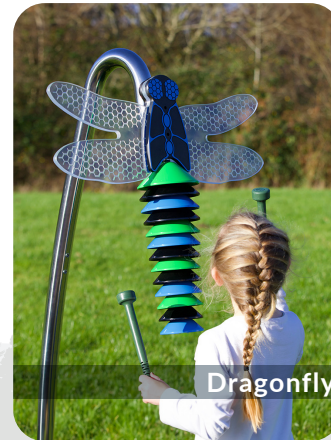


## ♪ Bugs & Insects

Our newest range to join the Inspired By Nature is our insect and bug-inspired collection.

Bumblebee will create a buzz with its lively sounds, encouraging young explorers to be playful with music and celebrate the beauty of nature. Firefly is visually captivating and uniquely musical, creating an enchanting auditory experience. Dragonfly is an enchanting musical creature that produces beautiful bell sounds that inspire children to unleash their creativity while enjoying the outdoors.

“Meet The Beetles” our playful musical bugs that will spark young imaginations while they discover the wonders of nature. Our Bug-Beats collection features the Leaf, Flower, and Honey Beetles. Hit the blocks for fun, loud, and echoing sound. For extra sensory benefits, each block is equipped with notches to create a sensory, ridged surface.



# Picking Your Sound

## ♪ *Liberty Bells*

Reminiscent of the small grassland mushrooms, our new Liberty Bells will allow players to experience something magical and bring a little enchantment to the local music park or garden.

Expertly crafted, the aluminum musical bells, tuned to the pentatonic c-major scale, 'sing' when struck with the attached mallets. The stainless-steel 'gill' on the underside of the cap completes the look.

The cluster of six powder-coated conical 'caps' in bright colors and wiggly-shaped stainless steel 'stems' positioned at different heights and angles is an eye-catching piece that will quickly become an instant favorite.





## ♪ Petal Drums

Petal Drums feature designs that represent the Daisy, Poppy, Sunflower, and Forget-Me-Not Petal Drum.

Each 'Petal Drum' contains a small (10"/250mm) Babel Drum encased within specific-shaped high-pressure laminate (HPL) petals. The flower heads are securely mounted to a stainless-steel frame or ready to be wall-mounted and come supplied with soft, flexible mallets specifically designed to produce delightfully soft, soothing tones.

Adding a hint of happiness to any space, Petal Drums look and sound gorgeous on their own or with any combination of our instruments—a wise choice to quickly add another dynamic to your outdoor space or playground.



# Picking Your Sound

## ♪ *Cattails*

Whether you call them cattails, reeds, or bullrushes, these sleek chimes are instantly recognizable as the slender marsh plants with tall stems and dark brown velvety heads.

Stainless-steel 'stems' support the three or six light bronze cylindrical anodized aluminum chimes, which produce tranquil and harmonic sounds when struck with small soft green mallets.

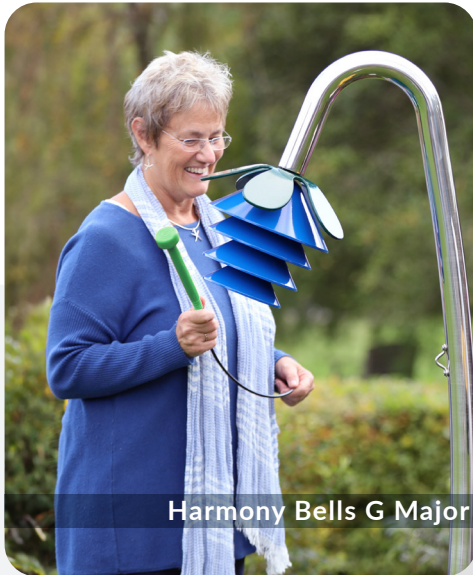
Perfect for playful interactions along nature trails, in parks, or in woodlands, citizens can stop and enjoy a moment of musical mindfulness while exploring the great outdoors.



## ♪ *Harmony Flowers & Bells*

Our 'blooming' marvelous collection of Harmony Bells is inspired by nature and tuned to uplifting major and minor chords. Visually stimulating and colorful, each 'flower' is made of four bells of decreasing size and ascending pitch. Each 'bell' - when struck - emits a pure tone with a long sustain.

The bright and fresh colors of the Harmony flowers will help to brighten spaces and give everyone that spring feeling. Available individually or in two 'posy' arrangements (Major Posy and Minor Posy), each with three flowers.



Harmony Bells G Major



Harmony Flowers Minor Posy



Harmony Bells Minor Posy

# Picking Your Sound



## ♪ Harmony

Harmony is a T-Run outdoor xylophone inspired by a traditional Vietnamese bamboo musical instrument. Robust yet elegant, Harmony has an irresistibly beautiful sound and resonance.

The notes are suspended harmonically in a C-Major Pentatonic arrangement, producing a sweet, melodic sound pitched ascending from the Middle C.

Perfect for creating sensory-rich environments and for melodic exploration in music gardens, inclusive playgrounds, care homes, family attractions, and more.

## ♪ Emperor Chimes

Tall and striking chimes that require no mallets. Repetition of palm or fingertips just about anywhere along the tube produces a soft, velvety, rich tone that you not only hear but can feel as well.

The harder you strike, the more it will vibrate, creating a louder sound with such resonance you can feel the vibration through your entire body. Perfect for creating a multi-sensory experience.

It is an amazing experience that makes you feel like you have been bathed in sound!





Large Babel Drum

## ♪ Babel Drum

The Babel Drum produces mesmerizing gentle mellow tones that are neither brash nor loud – perfect for musical exploration in the fresh air.

Often used by music therapists and for meditative purposes, a wide range of tones can be created through experimenting and developing different playing techniques.

Played with the hands, preferably by striking the tongues with the fingertips or the sides of the thumb, this drum creates calming melodies with remarkably long sustain (it resonates for a long time after being struck).

## ♪ Cyclone

Spinning the wheel which sets the ball bearings inside into motion, generating a variety of sounds that mimic falling rain. Players can control the intensity of the rain sounds—ranging from a gentle pitter-patter to the roar of a heavy downpour—by adjusting the force with which they spin the wheel.

This interactive activity not only demonstrates the concept of cause and effect but also encourages the development of gross motor skills, as players engage their bodies in the spinning motion. Such an experience can be both engaging and educational, providing a fun way for players to explore sound and movement.



Cyclone

# Additional Garden Planning

## ♪ *Shade*

For good year-round use, make sure your garden has plenty of shaded spaces. Try planting trees, growing climbing plants over a pergola, or adding shade sails that can be removed and taken inside.

## ♪ *Wildlife*

Consider the wildlife in your garden and create a welcoming space for friendly garden creatures. Encouraging wildlife brings your garden to life, adding vibrancy and natural harmony to your outdoor space. To attract birds and enjoy their beautiful songs, provide and maintain birdbaths, bird-friendly plants, bird feeders, and birdhouses.

Insects and bugs are a natural part of any garden. While some, like wasps, biting flies, and mosquitoes, can be bothersome, it's not possible to eliminate them from their habitats. However, you can reduce their presence by keeping waste bins away from populated areas and maintaining regular cleaning, especially if there are any sweet spills! By fostering a diverse ecosystem, you'll witness the beauty of nature thriving in your garden.



## ♪ Seating

Allow visitors to stop and ponder with seating at thoughtful intervals along your sensory trail. Place seating next to an instrument, so the player and listener or therapist can enjoy the experience together.

You could even consider our Cajon Drum as an alternative to traditional seating. Allowing players to take a seat along the sensory trail, whilst still being engaged in making music in the great outdoors. Installing three of the Cajon Drums provides an instant 'Drum Circle' – allowing players to experience the high energy and power of group drumming, transcending age, language, and ability.

## ♪ Signage

Help your visitors find their way around with signposts and way markers. Point to key areas and instruments in your musical garden and label your most interesting creations!

## ♪ Water

Water features are perfect for bringing other sounds to the garden. Think waterfalls, fountains, or naturally-occurring bodies of water.

Make sure any potential water hazards are clearly marked, or that they've been blocked off effectively to limit any potential danger associated with water.



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