

Outdoor furniture
Weekly Times Column
By Warren Joel

The variety of collectables and what people choose to collect never ceases to amaze me. The outdoor furniture that is on the front veranda that you walk past every day, or sitting in the corner of the garden, could be a valuable collectors' item.

So what do we look for in this type of furniture, and how do we know if it is worth anything? As with any other collectable it will be about supply and demand, it will be about how collectable it is and it will be about how attractive the item is to the collector. Up the top of the collector list will be items of garden statuary, whether in marble, or some form of cast metal like bronze. With these works it will be about who did the work. So it is about looking for signatures, and makers, marks or even a foundry mark.

High on the list of sought after items will be what I call decorative items. These include items like bird baths, fountains and garden pots. These may have a maker's signature on them, but more often this is all about how attractive the work looks. The fountain sitting in the middle of the front lawn, with lots of figures holding up the water bowl, could be many thousands of dollars.

With outdoor furniture most of the collectable items will be cast iron from the Victorian period. Now you need to be very careful as there are some very good and bad reproductions out there. At the very top of the valuable list will be anything cast iron, old and with Australian decoration. The decoration may be a simple Australian fern decoration all the way through to kangaroos, and these are worth thousands of dollars. With the other cast iron furniture the name to look for will be Coalbrookdale, not as valuable as an Australian piece but still very valuable.

Next week: Rugs.

Free Valuation for Weekly Times readers.

Byjoel will do a free valuation of your collectables via email. If you send a photo and description of your item to valuations@byjoel.com.au I will access the item and respond.

Warren Joel

Warren is a third generation auctioneer and valuer specialising in Art, Antiques and Collectables, accredited by the Commonwealth in 2002 different areas of collectables.

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