

Red Osier Drift: A Winter's Stick Garden

reviewed by [Lil Copan](#) in the [January 25, 2012](#) issue



Passersby linger outside Old South Church in Boston, where the grounds—designed by gardener Jim Hood—offer a visual witness to the life of the church. During the bleak winter months, a stick garden maintains a profound presence. Carpenters create "whips" of spruce, 7 feet tall, covered in shades of red opaque stain, to form an abstract sculpture resembling red osier dogwood, which is common in New England. The shock of color provides a promise that a nearby sign articulates: "The

garden is also a proclamation of our faith, that beauty will spring from barrenness and form out of chaos, life out of death. Here in the coldest and darkest time we make bold to proclaim that spring and life are on their way."

—*Lil Copan*