

Lawns 2 Landscape

Determine type of Garden YOU want, remember to consider the amount of sun for your type of garden.

How to determine the amount of sun you have:

- Full Sun 6+ hours, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. is the strongest sun plants receive
- Part Sun/Part Shade 4-6 hours of sun, usually morning or evening sun, little to no direct afternoon sun (10-3)
- Shade- 2-4 hours of sun, usually morning or evening sun, however light can be filtered by trees, shrubs or shadows of buildings throughout the entire day
- Deep Shade- less than 1 hour of light,

Gardens types that require full sun:

- Bird
- Food
- Meadows/Prairies
- Pollinator
- Rock/Crevise

Get ideas for your garden by:

- Walking your neighborhood
- Visiting local city public gardens
- Visiting botanical gardens

When you are observing other gardens, create a list of plants/shrubs/trees that you must have. Note the locations of where they are growing and doing well (full sun, part sun, shade).

List the “must haves” for your garden

- Gathering spaces, what type and size?
- Sitting nook
- Strolling
- Edibles
- Kids space for digging, mud pies or a sand box
- How much maintenance do you want? High, moderate or low (there’s no such thing as no maintenance)

Create a plan

Use a garden hose or rope to determine where and how big you want your garden. If you are expanding a garden bed, use the garden hose or rope to see how far out you want to expand the garden bed. Make sure if there is a pathway, that the mower/wagon/people can navigate the pathway comfortably. This includes being able to turn a wagon around a corner. Once you have determined bed size and shape, use spray paint to mark your border. It is a good idea to sketch a diagram of your garden. The sketch does not have to be beautiful, but should have the garden dimensions on it. This will help when choosing plants and plant placements for your garden. Remember it is ok to start with a smaller garden bed and expanding it over time. This is easier on the wallet and allows you to adjust your design over time.

Create your garden

There are multiple ways of removing the weeds, grass and other unwanted plants in your garden spot. Which method you decide to use is up to you. However, the more the soil is disturbed, the more weed seed will germinate. No matter which method you choose, mow everything in the area as short as possible.

Methods to choose from:

- **Cardboard and mulch-**
 1. Lay cardboard on the site.
 2. Water the cardboard- helps keep it in place and removes air pockets.
 3. Apply mulch to top of cardboard.
 4. Let the cardboard and mulch sit 2-3 months.
 5. To plant cut holes in cardboard and place plant.

The cardboard and mulch will act as a weed barrier and keep weeds to a minimum while letting rain/moisture reach the soil. If you want to plant the garden faster, turn grass over with a shovel (dirt side up) and follow all of the above steps, except number 4.

- **Solarization**

Solarization involves covering an area and letting the sun kill the grass underneath. Use items that you may have already or are easier to acquire such as a tarp, black or dark plastic to cover the area of your garden. Make sure to seal the edges with your border edging (if you have one), fallen tree branches or with mulch. This works best if you let material you use to sit for at least 4-6 months if started in early to late spring. If starting in late fall winter add another 2-3 months to the timeline. The longer your solarizing material is left in place, the less sod to dig up.

If there are lots of weed seeds and/or bindweed in the area leave the material in place for one year. Additionally cover your solarization material with 4-6" of mulch.

- **Dig or Till**

This is the fastest method of getting the garden site ready to plant. Keep in mind that this method will induce the most germination of weed seed in the soil.

Therefore, mulching deeply- 2-4" once planting is finished is strongly advised.

Planting time!

Always check the tags of the plants you want to make sure they will get the adequate amount of sunlight and moisture in your garden. The tags will also inform you on how much space is required between plants. Make sure to leave at least the minimum amount of space required.

Add compost to the holes in which you will be planting in. Leave the recommended space and a bit extra stated on the plant tags. If you can't handle the negative space (empty area between plants), plant with annuals. Over time the number of annuals you will need to use will decrease.

Annuals that can be direct sown into the soil:

- Bachelor Buttons Marigolds
- Calendula Sunflowers
- Cosmos Zinnias
- Four o'clocks

Enjoy your garden!

Enjoy the fruits of your labor. Notice the increase of insect visitors, whether they are caterpillars that turn into beautiful butterflies and moths, bees of all types and other pollinators. Watch for the predator insects that prey upon others. Praying mantis, lady bugs (who are happy to munch on aphids), lace wings and wheel bugs to name a few. With an increase of insects, you should see an increase number in birds and other urban wildlife that frequent your garden. Increasing the biodiversity in your yard is a wonderful thing. You are helping multiple creatures survive in this time of climate change. One "creature" you are helping as well, us! Notice how neighbors stroll by your house and enjoy the scenery as well. A garden is a relaxing visual you get to enjoy each and every day!