

Designing your Garden

In this handy guide, you will learn some of the essential basics of growing your own garden. Whether you consider yourself to have a green thumb or not, this guide will help you on your path to growing an abundance of backyard beauty. With effort and patience, anyone can grow their own little oasis.



8 main topics

- Create a Wish List
- Take Measurements
- Set a Realistic Plan
- Garden Sketch
- Plant Placement
- Innovative Design Ideas
- Take Detailed Notes
- Great Growing Tips

We will cover these topics to get you started



Creating a Wish List



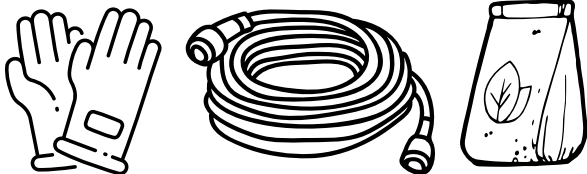
DREAM BIG!

Start by brainstorming your ideal garden. What features, plants, and themes speak to you? Do you see bountiful flowers, delicious home-grown veggies, or native perennials and shrubs for pollinators? Collect inspiration from websites, botanical gardens, and social media. The more local the inspiration the better chances of it being a viable option for you.

This is creating the dream! Consider factors like color schemes, plant varieties, hardscaping elements and overall atmosphere.

TAKE INVENTORY

Before you buy anything, go through your garden sheds, garage, and existing seed supply. Get an idea of what you have, what needs to be replaced, and what you still need. On this list be sure to add things like potting soil, weeding tools, gloves, garden boots, sprinklers, hoses, plant identification markers, etc.



Take Measurements

OBSERVE YOUR LANDSCAPE

- Observe your limiting factors, available space, growing zone, sunlight, and soil type.
- Note other site conditions: wind, wet and dry areas, animals, neighbors, and micro-climates.
- Think about where your water will come from and how far your hose or sprinkler can reach.



TAKE A SOIL TEST

If you have not recently tested your soil, do so before planting. The test results will indicate whether you need to amend the soil or add nutrients. Soil tests are inexpensive and most adjustments are relatively straightforward. Your local extension agency can provide information on how to perform a soil test.

CACHE VALLEY: USU SOIL ANALYTICS LAB

MEASURE YOUR SPACE

Accurately measure your garden area, including dimensions and any permanent fixtures. Allocate space for walkways, seating areas, and functional elements. Does equipment need to get into the area? Make sure to allow plenty of room to work around objects.

Know the size of your desired plants. The design needs to account for the full maturity of the plant.



Set a Realistic Plan

With your wish list and measurements in hand, you can start penciling out what you want your garden set up to look like. Determine how long the beds and paths are. Once that is established, you will easily be able to figure out how many plants you can fit into your plot. From there you can narrow down your wish list.



Prioritize the essentials of your wish list and consider the feasibility of each element within your budget and time constraints.

Be willing to compromise and adjust your plan as needed to achieve a balanced and manageable garden design.



BIGGEST MISTAKE NEWBIES MAKE:

Be realistic with how much you can take on. Is growing 20-30 new varieties reasonable in the first season? Probably not. Start small and build over time. Get one bed thriving before starting new projects.



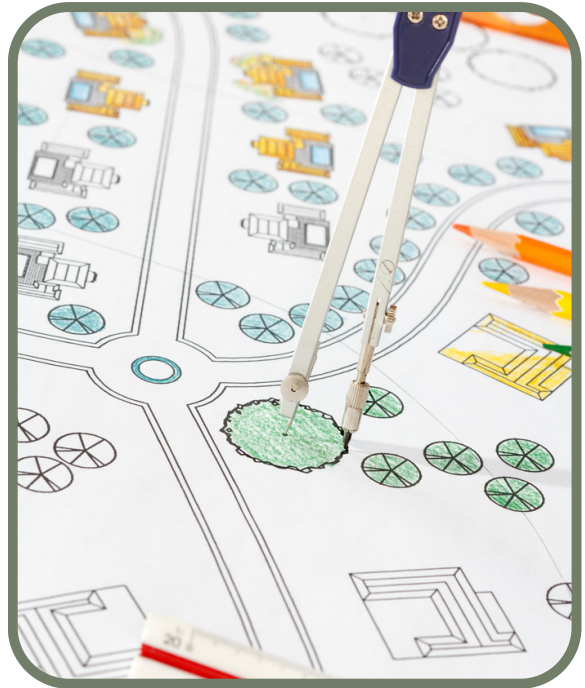
Garden Sketch & Map

PAPER PLANNING:

Create a garden map or sketch to visualize your layout and placement of plants and features. Include details like plant names, dimensions, and orientation.

Use graph paper or hand-design tools for accuracy and precision. Keeping the scale of mature plants is important.

Paper planning allows for a tactile and customizable approach, suitable for those who prefer hands-on design processes.



GARDEN PLANNING APPS:

There are benefits to digital garden planning apps. They offer convenience, flexibility, and access to extensive plant databases and design features.

We have explored:

- Old Farmer's Almanac Garden Planner
- Grow Veg
- Seedtime (fairly new)



Plant Placement



RIGHT PLANT, RIGHT PLACE

Our biggest motto! If you choose the plants that are well-suited to their location they will perform their best with the least input.



Position plants based on their sunlight requirements, considering factors like direct sun, partial shade, and full shade.

Group plants with similar water needs together to simplify irrigation and maintenance creating “zones”.

COMING TOGETHER

Use the mature size of plants when planning spacing to avoid overcrowding and competition for resources.

Utilize companion planting techniques to enhance growth and deter pests naturally.

Incorporate focal points and visual interest by varying heights and textures throughout the garden.

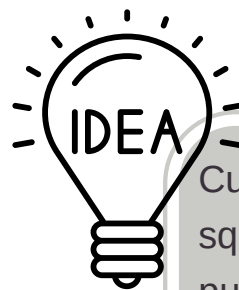


Think outside the box

Incorporate vertical gardening to maximize space, such as trellises, hanging baskets, and vertical planters.



Explore creative solutions like cattle panel arches for supporting climbing plants and creating visually striking garden structures.



Cucumbers, squashes, pumpkins and tomatoes can be grown vertically to save space.



Take Detailed Notes

Keep a gardening journal to track planting dates, growth progress, pest and disease occurrences, and maintenance tasks.

Note observations and insights to inform future planning and improve gardening practices. This is essential to crop rotation and seeing how the garden progresses over the years.

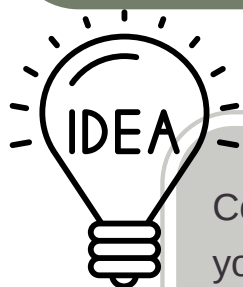


“
A garden
is not a
place.
It’s a
journey.”

-Monty Don



Great Growing Tips



Consider placing your garden in a prominent location rather than tucked away in a corner.



Spending more time in your garden increases plant success rates and allows for early detection and diagnosis of issues.

Provide plants with optimal growing conditions by selecting appropriate varieties for your climate and soil type.

DID YOU KNOW?

Plants can climatize to a region. Select plants and seeds that are grown close to home.



- Promote healthy growth to prevent stress and disease
- Monitor for pests and diseases regularly



Resources

SEEDS:

- Johnny's Seeds -- www.johnnyseeds.com
- True Leaf Market -- www.trueleafmarket.com
- Burpee's -- www.burpee.com
- Swallowtail Seeds -- www.swallowtailgardenseeds.com
- Park Seed -- www.parkseed.com

GARDEN TOOLS AND SUPPLIES:

- Johnny's Seeds -- www.johnnyseeds.com
- Lee Valley Tools -- www.leevalley.com
- A.M. Leonard -- www.amleo.com

BULBS, PERENNIAL PLANTS, SHRUBS:

- Swan Island Dahlias -- www.dahlias.com
- Triple Wren Farms -- triplewrenfarms.com
- Colorblends -- www.colorblends.com
- Breck's -- www.brecks.com

GARDENING INFORMATION AND TIPS:

- USU Extension -- www.extension.usu.edu/yardgarden
- USU Small Farms Lab -- www.smallfarmslab.com
- Floret -- www.floretflowers.com
- Johnny's Seeds -- www.johnnyseeds.com

A scenic outdoor setting featuring a picnic table and two chairs under a large, blooming cherry blossom tree. The table is set with a white tablecloth, a pink napkin, and various items including a glass of water, a glass of juice, a plate of fruit, and a small vase of flowers. The background shows a lush green lawn and more cherry blossom trees in the distance. The sky is clear and blue.

*"I must have
flowers, always
and always"*

CLAUDE MONET