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FLORAL CREATION — To create your own personal flower garden take advantage of the natural surroundings which presently exist — trees and shrubs can be made the backbone to a well-harmonized flower garden. A fence, wall or hedge can also be used to your advantage in framing your personal garden.

Design your own personal flower garden

Creating your own personal flower garden can be fun and satisfying if you do a little bit of planning before you start, says Professor Jim Tsujita, department of horticultural science, of the University of Guelph.

Take advantage of the natural surroundings which presently exist—trees and shrubs can be made the back-bone to a well-harmonized flower garden. A fence, wall or hedge can also be used to your advantage in framing your personal garden.

Allow at least 0.5 metres to one metre between these structures and plantings to ease maintenance such as weeding and staking.

If a diversity in plant height, form and color is desired, ensure that the plan allows a minimum width of 1.0 metre to 1.2 metres for the flower border.

Depending on location, available space and personal choice, borders may be designed for natural, informal appeal. This can be accomplished by creating a free-flowing effect by using height variations and natural contours and curves in the flower bed.

Geometric form and sharp contrast in plant color, form and texture can be used to create a more rigid, formal garden. Do not use informal and formal design in the same border—keep these separate within each bed to ensure harmony in design.

After consideration of design, color is what personalizes your garden. Color is a matter of personal choice and taste—everyone has a favorite color. Color can be used to create a feeling of coolness and temper the heat of summer. Pastel shades of blue, purple, lavender, pink and rose coupled with white can be used for this purpose.

The use of closely related harmonious colors will help avoid unpleasant clashes in color. For example, orange and yellow, red and violet, orange, bronze and red are harmonious, whereas, blue and yellow or blue and orange are contrasting colours.

Select plants that are suited for the location. For hot, open areas, choose plants that are heat-tolerant such as zinnia, petunia, verbena, marigold, geranium, portulaca and cleome. Balsam, impatiens, coleus and fibrous, tuberous or non-stop begonias are best suited to shady locations.

For best showing, arrange plants according to their height. A flower bed viewed from one side should have the tallest plants in the background, intermediate height in the centre and low growing plants in the foreground. Allow plant height to drift into each zone to create a natural appearance avoiding sharp, step-like patterns.

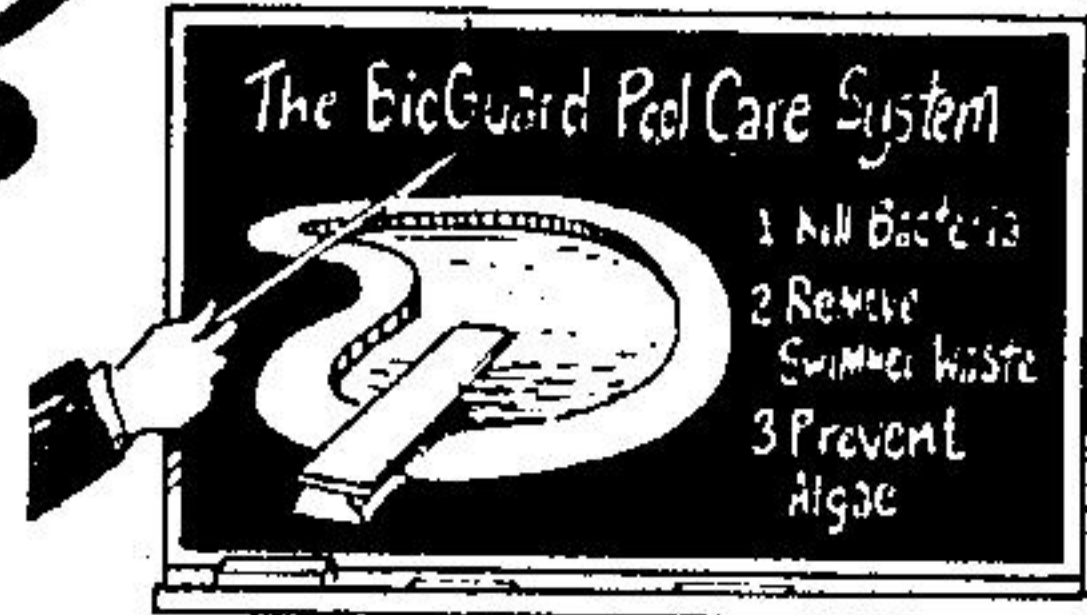
Arrange plants according to form and texture to maximize their potential show. Mix plants with vertical and horizontal forms. Interplant spike flowers such as snapdragons and stocks with horizontal forms such as petunias.

Use foliage texture and color to enhance composition. Foliage can soften harsh color clashes and blending plant form and texture leads to natural appearance of the garden.

To create a massive appearance of less prominent or less showy plants, arrange these in groupings of three, five and seven, etc.

Planning a flower garden should begin by thumbing through seed catalogues to familiarize yourself with the vast selections of annual flowers which are presently available in the market. Your local garden centre will give you added assistance and guidance in plant selection.

Put your ideas on paper then make a scaled drawing of your future garden. Let the colors unfold for your pleasure this summer and take pride in your own creation.



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