

Your garden should be a beautiful reflection of your personal style

One of the most enjoyable aspects of gardening is the pure physical work that is involved. This, coupled with being outdoors among the flowers and trees, makes gardening one of the most relaxing and therapeutic pastimes imaginable.

Nothing clears your head of the everyday trivialities and problems of life better than getting out in the air, working with the soil, and being able to enjoy the fruits of your labor.

The ultimate retreat

For many, a garden is the ultimate retreat. It is an expression of nature that is at once peaceful, beautiful and pure.

And, whether you are a city or country dweller, you can have a garden in some form or another.

The other wonderful aspect of having a garden is that you can create your own. Whether it be a flower, vegetable, herb, rose, Japanese or English cottage garden, it can be a true expression of your own individual style.

Factors to consider

When deciding what type of garden you will create, a few factors should be taken into consideration. Climate, type of soil, drainage, position, and access to direct sunlight are all important factors.

Consider how large you would like your garden to be, being careful to note how much time you have to devote to it. You can then draw a diagram of your garden on paper, noting the space you wish to assign to each flower or vegetable. This will enable you to decide how much seed and how many plants you need to buy.

Protecting your garden

To avoid damage by small animals such as dogs, rabbits or moles, protect your garden with a fence that is fairly high and tightly woven.

The time you will need and the method of preparing a garden for planting will depend heavily on the type of soil you have and the geographical location. However, there are a few hard and fast rules pertaining to soil preparation that work for most all areas.

Soil that is fertile with organic matter, well-drained and relatively free of rocks is necessary for a successful garden.

Good air and drainage — that is, free movement of air to lower levels — are necessary to lessen the damage that can be caused by frost.

There are many things that you can do in the spring to protect your seedlings from frost.

If you are able to, plant your garden on a high spot; a south-facing slope or a spot along the south wall of a building is warmer than most places and will provide some protection for your plants.

Coverings for plants — whether they be old blankets, buckets, baskets, sheets or black plastic — will trap heat that rises from the earth while allowing some air to circulate, discouraging the formation of ice crystals.

A myriad of possibilities

The varieties of gardens you could plant are endless, but one of the prettiest, most natural and easiest to create is the English cottage garden.

Informal, colorful and fragrant, this type of garden provides a natural environment for flowers and shrubs. Wisteria, climbing roses, delphiniums, bachelor buttons, daisies, daylilies, basil, mint, lavender and sunflowers are just some of the flowers and herbs that make an English garden special.

Very often these gardens look as though they must have been very carefully planned, given the overall harmony of the flowers and the resemblance to an Impressionist watercolor.

Natural beauty

The truth is that nature, more times than not, is a better orchestrator than we are, allowing the natural beauty of wild flowers to come through.

Whatever method of gardening you choose and whatever type of garden you create, enjoying the creative process and the beauty of the flowers and plants is the true purpose of this wonderful pastime.



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HOME POST SCRIPTS
By
Glenda Hughes

Now that all that "white stuff" has disappeared, many of us are looking at our driveways and discovering that they need some repair this year. As there are three types of blacktop sealer on the market, it might pay to do some research. Here is what I have found out. The three types of sealers are asphalt-based, tar-based and acrylic. The cheapest is asphalt-based and it gives that nice black finish, but unfortunately, it does not protect your driveway from damage caused by oil and gasoline spills. The coal tar and acrylic-based sealers will protect your driveway.

If you are going to do the repair yourself, you will have to sweep and wash the drive. All hairline and fine cracks must be filled with an application of one of the thick, tar-based sealers. The larger cracks should be filled with a butyl rubber caulking compound that is sold for this use, and then coated with an asphalt, tar or acrylic-based sealer.

Big holes and cracks should be filled in with a cold asphalt patch material that is available from our local building supply outlets. Should your driveway have soft spots, these should be dug out and filled with the same material, then sealed immediately with an acrylic sealer, but not with a tar or asphalt-based sealer. Apparently you should wait at least 60 days for the cold asphalt to cure, before using the other sealers.



HOMES SOLD CREATIVELY
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