

A bed of colour is easy to create with these tips

If you've admired a neighbor's flower-filled landscape, but didn't know where to start to beautify your own yard, follow this simple advice: Start small. A single flowerbed is easy to create in a weekend or less and will stay colorful all summer long.

PLAN BEFORE YOU PLANT

Look around your yard for a logical focal point for a flowerbed. Do you have a small tree or a large flowering shrub? Or how about a birdbath, sundial or some other object that will be taller than your plants when they're fully-grown? Pay

attention to how much sun the area receives -- is it in the sun most of the day or only a few hours? This will be important when selecting plants.

Use a tape measure to determine the size of your new bed. Keep it small: 3 feet across or less is ideal, so you can reach plants growing toward the center or close to the back. Sketch the dimensions of the bed on graph paper. On another page, make two columns for notes on shorter and taller plants. Then, take both with you to visit your local home or garden center.

SELECT PLANTS

You don't have to spend hours weaving through the plant aisles to get what you need. Simply select a few flowers with colors and textures you like, and then check the labels for how much sun the plants need, how tall they'll grow and how far apart they should be planted. Look for taller plants to surround your focal point and shorter ones toward the

edges of the bed. If you have trouble choosing, pick out just two varieties, one taller, like zinnias or geraniums, and one shorter, like marigolds for sunny spots or coleus and bright impatiens for the shade.

Next, look at the various edgings available -- from bricks or landscape timbers to flexible plastic garden edging. The edge separates lawn and flowerbed, so you can mow grass without cutting down plants.

Once you've selected the plants and edging you want,

quickly sketch their dimensions on your graph paper to determine how many plants you'll need. To get you started, here's a sample shopping list and the tools you'll need to finish the job.

BEFORE YOU PLANT

Use a garden hose or a length of rope to create an outline for your flowerbed. This lets you see how you like the shape of the bed and provides a digging guide. The next -- and most critical step -- is to improve the soil.

Start by loosening the ground across the entire bed. Remove the weeds, sod or old plants from the area. Next, spread two to three inches of peat moss, or a 50:50 blend of peat moss and compost, across the bed. Then, dig this into the top six inches of soil. The peat moss helps sandy soil hold moisture, so you won't have to water as often, and it loosens and improves the drainage in clay or hard packed soil, so air can get to the plant roots. It also makes weeding easier and

reduces the amount of fertilizer you'll need.

Once the soil is ready, position the plants according to their planting instructions. Then, complete the bed with a layer of shredded bark or other bagged mulch to give it a more polished look. Water your new bed frequently until the plants take hold and then regularly during the summer to supplement the rainfall in your area. Then, just watch your garden grow and enjoy. No one has to know it took less than a weekend to create.



Simple landscape tricks to increase...

Continued from page 12
or walkway. In addition, such flowers will draw the attention of guests or those in the real estate market, taking their eyes away from potential problem areas you might not be able to fix at the moment.

Plant Trees

If, like many homeowners, you simply don't have the time to keep your lawn looking lush and green throughout the year, consider planting some trees around the property. This is not only environmentally friendly, but effort-friendly as well, as tending to trees is not nearly as time consuming as keeping a lawn in great shape. Once a tree begins to sprout, envelop its base in a bed of mulch. Mulch only needs to be replenished once per year, and the look it creates is both beautiful and serene. In addition, planting trees is inexpensive. Just make sure you consult with neighbors first if you plan on planting near property lines.

Work On Your Walkways & Surrounding Landscape
Unless you have young

children, you and your guests will likely spend more time on walkways and patio decks than you will in the actual yard lawn. Take advantage of that by further lessening the time you spend on the actual grass as a means to keeping it in even better shape. For example, if you have a backyard garden you're especially proud of, install a concrete walkway that leads you and potential visitors back to the garden. This will greatly reduce the amount of wear and tear your lawn takes each time you visit the garden. In addition, a concrete walkway won't be damaged by wheelbarrows full of soil or new plants.

If walkways leading into the home are already lined with foliage, make sure you keep them well-trimmed. Keeping shrubs and bushes well-trimmed doesn't require a lot of effort but does give the impression of a home that's been well cared for. On the other hand, unkempt shrubs and bushes are an eye sore, and can imply a homeowner has been lax in other maintenance areas as well.



OPEN ALL VICTORIA DAY WEEKEND! **FIREWORKS ON SALE!**



10" hanging baskets

BEST BUY!
\$9⁸⁸
reg 15.99

YOUR CHOICE
impatiens
geraniums
fuschia



marigolds

HOT BUY!
\$9⁸⁸
/flat
reg 14.99/flat



impatiens



rose bushes

3/\$30
reg 14.99 each



PREMIUM GARDEN SOIL MIX

MULCHES ALSO AVAILABLE IN CUBIC YARD BAGS ONLY \$129

PREMIUM GARDEN SOIL MIX

Yard Bags

\$119 delivered!

MEADOWVILLE'S VERY OWN SPECIAL BLEND!
(Guelph, Fergus & Rockwood Areas)

Bring the bag back and receive a \$5 in-store voucher for our Garden Centre

buy in bulk & save on soils • mulches • aggregates

www.meadowvillegardencentre.com



2 convenient locations!

Wellington Rd. 124 N. 519 822-0840
(across from Guelph Lake)

265 Edinburgh Rd. N. 519 822-8208
(between Paisley & Willow Rd.)

OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK • WE DELIVER