

Gardening

BY MARK CULLEN

When you're considering what and where to plant, it's a good idea to draft up a reasonably accurate sketch of your property and to try to envision the kind of landscape you would like to have surrounding your home. Make notes on all the ideas that come to you. Your sketch and notes are invaluable whether you are attempting to create your own landscape plan; simply add to an existing landscape; or have a plan drafted up for you by a landscape designer.

Here's my list of important questions you should ask yourself before you make any final decisions:



Are you considering future building plans like an inground pool, greenhouse addition or garage? You wouldn't want to plant a shade tree in front of a potential greenhouse area.

Think about the functions of your garden. What do you want your plants to DO for you? Perhaps, increase your privacy; direct or prevent foot traffic; add beauty and color to a drab area; produce food for your family with a vegetable patch, fruit trees and canes, create winter interest by providing food and shelter for birds; cut down fuel bills by blocking winter drafts and winds with foundation planting on the northwest side; provide shade against the southern sun; screen out traffic noise and unsightly views; accent an area with specimen plants; or create a children's play area. You see...the possibilities ARE endless.

Then, once you have decided what you would ideally like, check practicality of your plan with a landscape designer.

Most nursery garden centres have professional designers on hand, who can suggest plants that will survive in the sunlight, soil and moisture conditions afforded by your property. A good designer will consider your ideas, with some help from your sketch, before he makes any recommendations. And before you make any final decisions, give special consideration to the use of slow-growing, dwarf plants for small areas; and larger specimens on big lots.

Last but not least, your proposed landscape treatment should compliment your home and lifestyle. Does your schedule allow for a high maintenance garden or should you opt for low maintenance? A garden can provide a lifetime of reward. It's beauty and bounty will be the fruit of your labour for years to come.


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