



## **Planning Your Garden for Next Year**

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Now that the fall is here, it might be a good time to start planning next year's garden. You may have been happy with your garden and are not going to change it much, or your garden is not what you had imagined, or you just moved into a new home and want to plan your landscaping for next year. Regardless of how many changes you want to make, now is a good time to figure out what you are going to do.

The best place to start is to take a survey of your present garden. Draw a map of your property. It doesn't have to be extremely accurate but it should include the lot size, the position of the house, fences, sheds, patios, and the flower beds. Draw in the trees and shrubs, recording the area that they cover. Make a note of the shady areas before the leaves fall from the trees. Make a survey of the types of flowers that are growing. Are they perennials? What colour are the flowers? What size they are and did you like them? Now you can sit down this winter and work on your plan.

On a piece of squared paper draw your property to scale including all the information that you have collected. Make a few copies so you can change the plan till you have what you want your garden to be.

Here are a few basic principles to keep in mind to help you make decisions when making your plan.

**Balance** – A balanced garden gives the viewer a peaceful, restful feeling as an unbalanced garden is unsettling. Both sides of a central point in a balanced garden seem to be the same in size and weight.

**Proportion** - The size of the plants and trees in relation to size of your lot should be in proportion. Large trees in a small lot overwhelm the garden. Small trees and shrubs would be a better choice.

Repetition – Repetition of elements in design such as colour, texture or shape will give a feeling of unity and harmony. For example, repeating of one colour in a flower bed or the use of the same plant or different plants of the same colour leads the eye onwards.

Style - There are two basic styles: formal and informal. The formal garden has curved formal flower beds that sweep along the natural shapes of the ground. This would also include sidewalks laneways, lawns and terraces. An informal garden could be a natural meadow or wildflower garden. If the land you are working with is irregular shaped with large rocks with slopes or different levels an informal design would suit it.

Plants - You will need to consider the characteristics of the plants that you want to use such as colour, height, form and texture. Try to work with these elements to create interest in your design.

Colour - There are many theories about colour but it is a personal preference. Colour can influence the mood of the garden. Reds, oranges, and yellows will provoke a happy exciting mood and bring the object or scene closer. Greens blues and purple create a feeling of serenity and tend to recede and push the objects further away.

There are other things to consider when creating your plan. If you are going to entertain a lot outside, then a large patio area would be needed. Do you want to grow some vegetables? If you have children, then an area for them to play is necessary and it should be in an area where you can see them from the house. Do you need an area to store garden equipment and the children's play things? The library has many good books on landscaping and checking them out would be a good start to creating your own beautiful garden.

*Previously published in the Peterborough Examiner*