

RGA Gardening Fact Sheet #11: *Garden Design*

Gardening enhances our personal and community space. All plants, from trees to flowers, beautify our living area, provide edible food and offer environmental benefits ranging from the oxygen we breathe to creating summer shade to cool our homes. By growing plants, we better appreciate our natural environment and the ecological relationships between soil, water and climate. Gardening helps the young to the young-at-heart understand the responsible use and protection of our natural environment, as well as the impact we have on the "big picture" of environmental stewardship.

With support from the Conexus Credit Union's (CCU) Community Investment Program, the Regina Garden Associates (RGA) at the Regina Floral Conservatory aim to promote environmental stewardship through a series of gardening fact sheets, teaching appreciation of growing plants and basic gardening practices to the general public. Visit the Regina Floral Conservatory often and continue learning about gardening through our fact sheets.

conexus
Credit Union



Regina Garden Associates Inc.

Landscape and Garden Design

Landscape design alters the outdoor environment to achieve specific objectives and it typically uses a combination of trees, shrubs, perennial and annual plants with hard landscaping like retaining walls, lighting, walkways and water features. At a finer scale, we apply garden design for specific growing beds typically near a home and involving establishment and care through gardening. Individual and groups of plant material provide line and shape through the creation of outdoor walls, floors and ceilings. Visual appeal is added through colour, texture, form, space and composition. Plant materials can also be used to modify the environment through shading, wind-breaks, erosion control and visual screening. This fact sheet will provide a brief overview on how you can apply design to create attractive home gardens.

Know Your Property

- Identify your objectives for property use. For example, you may prefer an outdoor entertainment and relaxing space with a rear patio or deck. You may also value a low maintenance garden that will provide an attractive environment around the patio or deck.
- Inspect the property and assess your priorities and limitations of the site. You can do this by reviewing the property survey certificate and by completing an inventory of space available; of slope and drainage conditions; of sunlight versus shade space; of quality of soil and; of existing plant materials as well as of hardscape features like fencing.
- Next, prepare a scale drawing of the design area. Measure the yard space and locate key features including the house, property boundary and existing hardscape features and plant materials to be retained. Have the utility service lines located and marked on the ground and then show on your drawing.
- Develop a design concept on the drawing of those proposed spaces; hardscape features and garden beds plus tree and shrub plantings.
- For garden areas, fine tune this process to set your preferences as an example for degree of shading of the patio; need for screening to create privacy; and

CONTACT US: 1450B Fourth Avenue
Regina SK S4P 3C8
306.781.4769
info@reginafloralconservatory.ca

VISIT US: 1450B Fourth Avenue, Regina

Our Pride in Bloom

www.reginafloralconservatory.ca





your time for future gardening. Consider the site's growing conditions for plant hardiness. What is the condition of the soil and whether it will need to be amended with organics? Are growing areas influenced by winds? Categorize the growing spaces as to the degree of sunlight from full sun to full shade. At this point you may even choose to adapt the design drawing and relocate garden space areas for better chance of success.



Plant Selection and Garden Design

Most importantly, select plants that have plant hardiness suited to our environment and property location. Understand the growth rate and expected life of these plants. Next, look for plant characteristics or elements that will contribute to your design as follows:

- **Form + Size:** Most visual is the size of a plant's mature height and spread. The mature growth form is also important and it can vary from round to columnar to trailing at ground level. Recommendation is to mass or group like plants of form and size.
- **Texture:** Bark plus leaves, branch structure and flowers convey texture. Recommendation is to use rough texture to accent and to add diversity while smooth texture plants are to support the colour and form.
- **Colour:** Leaf and flower colour whether contrasting or harmonious create moods. Recommendation is to use colour to accent. A year round visual interest may be created by a succession of colorful flowering plants combined with foliage and bark.
- **Composition:** Together plant form, size, texture and colour create composition. Recommendation is to focus on linking these qualities in harmony by reducing variation and to focus on massing of plants.



Recommended Design Principles For Smaller Urban Lots

- Be strategic and keep the garden design simple, organized and in scale with the size of the property lot, home and hardscape features like a patio.
- Use an informal style and promote rhythm through smooth flowing lines in the layout of planting beds with walkways, fences and the home foundation.
- Add some diversity but for visual emphasis create masses as opposed to single plantings.
- Balance trees and shrubs with consideration of their visual size and height.
- Pick a sight line or focal point like a garden sculpture and install plantings for symmetry so as to arrange an equal balance on each side.
- Repeat plantings and thereby create unity through colour, form and texture.