

The Power Of The Flower Report

A Handy Guide To
Keeping Your
Landscaping
Looking Good

Proudly Brought To You By:



Landscaping

The Power Of The Flower Report

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Landscaping tips and tricks for beginners

1. Live there for a while. If you absolutely can't stand to look at your current landscaping (or lack thereof), settle for a few annual flowers, and start getting rid of weeds. More permanent landscaping solutions should be saved for after a year of living there. That way you'll be sure of where they will do best in all seasons. While you wait, you can start purchasing some of the important landscaping tools you will need.
2. Determine the atmosphere. Learn where the sun rises and sets, and which parts of your yard get partial and full sun, or no sun at all. You'll need to know this to determine what type of plants can go where. It's also helpful to know where the wind will blow snow drifts, if you have any, and if there are any wet spots.
3. Learn the terminology. You need to know what you're talking about. Do the words deciduous, annual, perennial, and conifer make your head spin? It's important to know what you're planting so that you know what you'll end up with. Check out this landscaping glossary for some common landscaping terms and definitions.
4. Don't try to do it all at once. With landscaping, it's very easy to get in over your head. If you buy too many of something, your yard will look cluttered and overrun rather than well maintained.
5. Fill in the bare spots with grass first. One of the first things you should do is plant grass where it needs to be. A lush lawn is a staple for any landscape.
6. Remember that trees grow. Yes, that sounds silly. However, that tree you want to plant next to your house will only get bigger, and at some point, the roots may interfere with your foundation, or, if you live in an area prone to hurricanes, that same pretty little apple tree may end up in your bedroom in ten years. It's best to keep smaller plants near the house and larger things like trees farther out in the yard.
7. Take note of plant size. Plant flowers from largest to smallest. You don't want to plant something like a sunflower in front of a tulip. You'll never see it.

Randy's Lawn Fertilization Schedule

For southern grasses including: St. Augustine, Bermuda and Zoysia

- FERTILIZE - four times a year:

Late February-Early March - apply a simple 15-5-10 for an early green-up.

Most companies that make slow-release fertilizers also make a non slow-release 15-5-10 that provides for a quick two-week green up before we get to the heart of the fertilizer schedule.

WARNING: Some people will be tempted to use a weed-and-feed at this time, but if you've been following the GardenLine herbicide schedule, there should never be a need. However, spot weed-and-feed treatments are recommended for those with turf-only landscapes or landscapes that have been established for many years. Most weed-and-feeds contain Atrazine which burns roots of young trees and shrubs.

Late March-Early April - apply slow-release 3-1-2 ratio fertilizers.

Recommended formulations:

19-4-10 Nitro Phos Super Turf

18-4-6 Fertilome Southwest Greenmaker

18-0-6 Fertilome's Zero Phosphate Formula

15-5-10 Southwest Fertilizer Premium Gold

20-0-10 Bonide Premium Lawn Food

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Late June-Early July - apply slow-release 3-1-2 ratio fertilizers.

(recommended formulations 19-5-9, 19-4-10, 18-4-6, 15-5-10.)

October-November - apply winterizer formulas for winter hardiness. Ratios vary, but make sure they are "winter" or "fall" formulas designed for southern grasses. (examples: 18-6-12, 8-12-16, 10-5-14) Will make lawns winter-hardy.

June-September - if turfgrass looks yellow (chlorosis) or necrotic, use an application of either granular or liquid iron. Once a year should be enough.

- FUNGICIDE - two times a year:

July-September - Gray Leaf Spot is a blotchy spot on the grass blade leaves.

(mostly on St. Augustine lawns) Use fungicides with active ingredients like Daconil, Consan or Banner.

September-October - To control the dreaded Brownpatch fungal disease (symmetrical brown circles in the grass) you must prevent it from coming up with a systemic lawn fungicide with Bayleton, Terrachlor, Banner or Benomyl.

- HERBICIDE - three times a year:

(Pre-Emergent controls to prevent weeds)

Late October-Early November - Use two (2) different pre-emergent herbicides, to prevent the weeds that we experience in February and March. First is a pre-emergent with Portrait or Gallery for broadleaf weeds like clover. Second, use a pre-emergent with Amaze, Betasan, Balan or Treflan for grassy weeds like poa anna or annual bluegrass. There is also Barricade, Dimension or Pendimethlin as a 2-in-1 control.

February-March - Use the pre-emergent controls for grassy weeds again, to prevent such weeds as Crabgrass, Goosegrass and Dallisgrass from popping up late in the spring and summer. Again, use the grassy pre-emergent like Amaze, Betasan, Balan or Treflan. There is also Barricade, Dimension or Pendimethlin as a 2-in-1 control.

May-Early June - One more application of a grassy pre-emergent like Amaze, Betasan, Balan, or Treflan will keep fall weeds from invading from August on. There is also Barricade, Dimension-based or Pendimethlin as a 2-in-1 control.

- INSECTICIDES — It is our belief on GardenLine, as a way to be kind to the environment, that you do not put down insecticides unless you know you have a problem. However, be prepared during the hot summer months — July through September — to attack chinch bug damage. This will show up as irregular shaped spots in the lawn along the concrete. Any liquid insecticide, like Permethrin or Cypermethrin, will treat the spot well. Then apply a granular insecticide like Deltamethrin or granular Permethrin in a broadcast applicator throughout the rest of the yard.

Randy Lemmon's Lawn Fertilization Schedule

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
F E R T I L I Z E R		Apply a simple 15-5-10 for an early green-up.	Apply slow-release 3-1-2 or 4-1-2 ratio.			Apply slow-release 3-1-2 or 4-1-2 ratio.				Apply winterize formula fertilizer for winter hardness.		
	For brand names of fertilizers, see original schedule online.											
F U N G I C I D E							Gray Leaf Spot is a blotchy spot on the grass. Make leaves. Use fungicides with active ingredients like Daconil, Consan or Banner.		To control Brownpatch use a systemic lawn fungicide with Myclobutanol, Terrachlor, PCNB, Banner or Beconyl.			
H E R B I C I D E		Use pre-emergent with Amaze, Betasan, Ralan or Triflan for grassy weeds. There is also Barricade, Dimension or Pendimethalin as a 2-in-1 control. Pictorial for broadleaf only.			Use pre-emergent herbicides again 2-in-1 are best at this time of the year.						Use pre-emergent herbicides again 2-in-1 are best at this time of year.	



Randy Lemmon is the host of the GardenLine radio program on Newsradio 740 KTRH. Randy has been doing GardenLine in one capacity or another since December of 1995, for all three of the now Clear Channel AM stations - KTRH, KPRC & KBME. When Randy took over GardenLine, he replaced long-time Houston radio veteran and GardenLine originator, Bill Zak. For those who remember that far back, GardenLine was a weekly radio staple on KTRH from 10 a.m. to Noon Mondays through Fridays - along with a Saturday show as well. Now GardenLine is heard exclusively on Newsradio 740 KTRH on weekend mornings.

How to plant (and keep) a great flower garden.

Making a garden of your own can feel like a big project, especially if it's your first time. But follow these do's and don'ts and you'll find that with some simple "rules of the rows," you can become the neighborhood green thumb!

1. Don't ignore your environment.

Location, location, location! Just like real estate, success in your garden comes down to where you are—especially what kind of sun you get. Don't fall for a flower that won't thrive where it's planted or a garden design that won't work where you live.

Do: Research sunlight.

Make a little map or drawing that shows where you get shade and sun and bring it with you to the garden center. When you're there, look for plants that thrive in your sun conditions. Employees may have ideas for tricky locations.

Decoding Sun Requirement Labels:

Amount of Sunlight What It Means

Full Sun At least 6 full hours of direct sunlight

Partial Sun 3-6 hours of sun each day (preferably morning and early afternoon)

Partial Shade 3-6 hours of sun each day (with some mid-day protection from trees or other source of shade)

Full Shade Less than 3 hours of direct sunlight each day (with filtered sunlight during the rest of the day)

2. Don't plant all annuals.

Annuals look great right out of the pot, so it's tempting to plant them for quick rewards. But the very next year you'll be starting your garden from scratch again. Invest time and money in perennials and the return will be year after year of robust flowers.

Do: Have patience.

Those new perennials will look pretty thin the first year. But, in the years to come, you'll get results you won't believe. Pick perennials that bloom at different times so you'll have color all season long.

3. Don't forget your soil.

Soil is the foundation of your whole garden. Don't plant until you know what kind you have and how to make it better. Any soil can be improved with a little support. Learn the tricks of good compost and feed the ground you've got.

Do: Check the soil.

Determine whether your soil is sandy or loamy or full of clay. Compost improves sandy soil. Wood chips or lawn clippings can be added for loamy soil (rich, crumbly soil that's relatively equal parts sand and silt with a somewhat smaller proportion of clay). Soil with a lot of clay needs added organic material or the use of raised beds.

4. Don't mistake compost for manure.

Compost is organic matter that has broken down enough to enrich the soil—veggie scraps, yard waste, or clippings. Fertilizer is made from manure, animal waste, or commercial products that provide nitrogen.

How to plant (and keep) a great flower garden. (cont)

Do: Pick the right food for your soil.

Both compost and fertilizer have nutrients but plants have preferences about what they eat! If your soil needs nitrogen, fertilizer is the thing. Overworked soil with unbalanced moisture needs compost. Find out what's best and feed from the roots up.

5. Don't spend too much money.

Though going crazy at the garden store is fun, it adds up fast. You can get the great results if you rely on careful planning and help from friends and neighbors.

Do: Be thrifty.

Use homemade compost from a backyard bin. Developers may have clean topsoil or drainage rocks to give away. Other gardeners will need to hand out divided hostas and trumpet vine. Someday, you can do the same! Start seed sharing to spread the gardening joy.

6. Don't plant invasive species.

Some plants at the garden center are invasive species. Usually these aren't native to your region, and in the right conditions they can take over your garden and choke out your favorites.

Do: Control creepers.

Invasive plants like artemisia, mint, morning glories, kudzu, and buckthorn can take over any garden. If you do plant them as quick-growing cover, keep on top of them by regularly weeding, trimming, and deadheading.

7. Don't go to war with bugs.

Mosquitoes can be more than just annoying—they can be downright dangerous for humans. That's why you should consider using OFF!® repellent on your skin to help repel mosquitoes that can carry West Nile virus while working in your garden, especially at dawn and dusk. That said, many garden bugs are beneficial, and our plants need them. Bees and spiders do important work in the garden, pollinating and hunting pests.

Do: Encourage helpers.

Plant a pollinator garden to encourage beneficial insects like butterflies and native bees with milkweed, columbine, black and white sages, yucca, yarrow, sunflower, and lupine. Make mason bee houses and include water features and windbreaks to keep helpful, beneficial bees in your garden.

8. Don't battle your wildlife.

Wild animals look at your garden as a free meal! Squirrels, deer, and rabbits can wreak havoc on your plants, but beneficial animals like songbirds and bats will avoid your garden without an invitation. You can learn how to manage wildlife with some small adjustments.

Do: Invite good guests.

Daffodil bulbs are toxic to squirrels, and they hate the taste of alliums, marigolds, and hyacinths. Rabbits and deer avoid the smell of bone meal or cayenne pepper on the soil. Bats will eat garden pests and mosquitoes, so put a bat house in your garden to bring them swooping in. Songbirds bring gardens color, bug control, and song, so plant ornamental fruit trees, grasses, or cacti to attract them.

Planting Trees and Shrubs

I'm often asked about "my technique" for planting trees. It's a technique used for years with great results in this area's gumbo/clay soil, and it's one that can be applied to large shrubs as well.

While most landscape plants should be planted in raised beds, trees will do well in poor soil if they're just given some help in acclimating to the environment.

As many people have found, just digging a hole and popping in a tree's root ball doesn't always work. That's because, in most cases, the hole is dug just big enough for the root ball. Consequently, the roots are immediately faced with the need to penetrate the hard clay soil, so the tree stagnates and doesn't seem to grow much at all.

Some folks dig more accommodating large holes, but they back fill with peat, humus, mulch or even fluffy potting soil mixes. That normally leads to an area that's continually too wet, so the root system can't breathe and the tree yellows and dies.

So, the idea is to help the tree properly adjust to the existing soil conditions. Since clay isn't really a very good environment, we have to add a permanent soil amendment*.

First, dig a hole two to three times wider than the root ball, and 1½ times as deep as the ball's height. For example, if the container is 10 inches across and 10 inches deep, you will need a hole 20 inches across and 15 inches deep. Throw the dirt on a drop cloth or tarp as you dig.

Next, add the amendment to the dirt you've dug out. Every amendment has different dirt-to-amendment ratios, but you're almost always safe at 6-to-1 or 5-to-1.

;Add enough mixture to the bottom of the hole so that when the tree is inserted, the top of the root ball is at ground level. Center the tree in the hole, and fill in around the ball, tamping down continuously as you go. Don't worry about "compacting" the area ... the permanent soil amendment you've added will essentially keep the dirt "aerated."

Finally, build a mulch ring on top, and water in. In fact, water once a week for the first year of the tree's life.

As the tree's roots acclimate to their new environment, they'll strengthen enough to penetrate the harder clay soil beyond the zone you established.

*PERMANENT SOIL AMENDMENTS

Commercial Names

- Tru-Gro (kiln-fired rocks, a concrete byproduct)
- Schultz Soil Conditioner
- Fertilome Natural Guard (also known as Revive)

Non-Commercial (homemade) Alternatives

- Small pea gravel (the smallest you can find)
- Pure clay kitty litter
- Granular gypsum (pelletized gypsum)

Mycorrhizae:

Insurance for your plantings

These tiny little fungi can make a mighty big difference in promoting landscape plant survival and health

BY KRISTI WOODS, M.S., AND MIKE AMARANTHUS, PH.D.

We purchase insurance for our cars, our houses, and ourselves. What about for the trees and shrubs you install? Naturally you want your landscape installations to have the best opportunity to succeed. You choose healthy stock plants, insure proper planting depth and choose the ideal location.

However, after you leave the job site, care of the plant is often then left to the property owner, and here is when most plants fail. Plants succumb for a variety of reasons including over- or under-watering, shock of transplant stress and lack of proper nutrition. Wouldn't it be great if you could leave behind something that would help insure against common plant neglect? This is where mycorrhizae play an essential role.

We are fungi

Mycorrhizae are specialized fungi that form mutually beneficial associations with plant roots. They help increase establishment

and growth, greatly extend the roots' surface area and provide resistance against stress. The presence of mycorrhizae results in healthier plants.

Typically, both the plants and mycorrhizal fungi benefit from their association with each other. This functional give-and-take relationship provides a carbohydrate source for the mycorrhizal fungi, which is what they need to grow and explore the soil resource. The plant, in turn, benefits from improved nutrient and water uptake, carbon acquisition, phytohormone pro-

duction, salt tolerance and resistance to pathogens.

Mycorrhizae actually alter the relationship between the plant's roots and the soil, increasing the roots' ability to absorb phosphorus and nitrogen, critical nutrients for plant growth and stress physiology.

Mycorrhizae form an association with more than 400,000 different plant species, ranging from primitive plants to more advanced species. The nature of the association depends upon the species of plant and fungus involved as well as the environ-

mental conditions. Forming with approximately 95% of all land plants, mycorrhizae are found in a variety of ecosystems and plant communities. About the only terrestrial setting in which they do not occur are where plants are absent.

Mr. Outside; Mr. Inside

While mycorrhizae are classified into seven major groups characterized by key morphological features of the root-fungus association, the two most common groups are ectomycorrhizae (colonize outside) and endomycorrhizae (colonize inside). Ectomycorrhizae colonize outside root cells and can produce a mushroom, puffball or truffle "fruiting body" above or below ground. Ectomycor-

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A flourishing landscape two months after using mycorrhizal inoculants at planting.

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