

This issue of the M & M Landscape and Lawn, Inc. Newsletter is dedicated to all the lazy gardeners out there as well as to all the gardeners out there who are just plain tired after a long growing season of battling weeds, bugs, and diseases. Hopefully, there will be some tips herein that will encourage both groups.

NO MAINTENANCE LANDSCAPES

Gotcha' didn't I. Of course everybody wants a lush, beautiful "no maintenance landscape". Sorry to be the bearer of bad news, but there is no "no maintenance landscape", short of astro turf lawn or living smack dab in the middle of a forest or meadow. For the rest of us, who prefer a more civilized landscape, the truth of the matter is that all landscapes will require some degree of maintenance. Now for the good news! There are steps you can take to minimize the time spent maintaining your landscape.

To create a low maintenance landscape, the best place to begin is with proper planning and wise choices.

Here are some helpful tips to help you develop a plan for your property and to help minimize excessive landscape chores.

1. Less lawn or no lawn, more hard surfaces.

Reducing the amount of unused lawn portions can save you much time on required care and maintenance of lawns such as mowing, rolling, watering, fertilizing, applying pesticides and herbicides. Replace unused portions of lawn with easy to care for trees, shrubs, and groundcovers. You can accomplish this by herbiciding the unwanted existing lawn area, and planting in its place low care woody plants with a thick groundcover layer of mulch atop landscape fabric (a geotextile weed fabric). Mulch may be either chipped bark, shredded bark types, gravel or rock. The idea is to suppress weeds and conserve moisture.

2. Use quality, long-lasting landscape materials

As you select structural features (hardscape) in your landscape, choose materials with longevity in mind or materials that do not require replacement. Initially this will usually not be the least expensive option, but you will achieve savings by not having to replace more durable materials. Sidewalks, patios, decks, fences, steps, driveways, seating, trellis, gazebos, pergolas, and furniture items should be chosen for durability. Consider the initial cost and maintenance to long term cost and durability when selecting

these features.

3. Use perennial plants for color in the landscape

Again, this will not be the least expensive option up front, but by choosing perennial plants (plants that come back every year) you reduce the cost of replacement for annual plants (those that live for one season) to achieve color in the landscape, not to mention all the time and energy expended in replanting annuals every year.

4. Choose durable, rugged plants and stay away from high-maintenance plants

Avoid planting high maintenance plants, those requiring regular insect spraying, watering, or fungicide applications in order to successfully grow. Keep in mind, all plants require water, that's just a fact of life, but some plants will simply not live without supplemental watering, while others are more drought tolerant.

Tough groundcovers:	Tough perennials:
Liriope or monkey grass	Daylily
Sedum	Black-eye Susan
Wintercreeper Euonymus	Purple Coneflower
Groundcover Juniper	Iris
Vinca	Peony
Tough shrubs:	Tough trees:
Butterfly bush	Southern Magnolia
Flowering Quince	Red Maple
Forsythia	Black Gum
Summersweet	Willow Oak
Weigelia	Bald Cypress
Spirea	
Vitex	
Eleagnus	
Yaupon Holly	
Crape Myrtle	

5. Use landscape fabric or weed barrier

Using landscape fabric on the ground around existing shrubs and covering with a thick layer of mulch, gravel or rock will effectively reduce the growth of many weed species. The area should be weed free before covering with landscape fabric, by either hand pulling existing weeds or using an herbicide if possible.

6. Use the right plant in the right place

A common mistake is to choose plants that look just right on planting day, that rapidly outgrow their space, creating a continual maintenance headache. A landscape

design should look best about 3-5 years after it is planted rather than the day it is installed. Your nursery professional will be invaluable to you in choosing the right plant for the right spot. You can reduce constant pruning to reduce the height of plants by selecting plants that will not outgrow their spot.

7. Place plants in masses, not individually

Create a dense shrub border in large island beds by mass planting plants rather than using one individual plant per spot. This creates a more eye catching arrangement and reduces the need of weeding scattered plantings.

8. Weeding

A little but often is the rule (once a week as you wander round the garden) rather than a three hour blitz once a month.

9. Water feature or fountain rather than a pond

A pebble fountain rather than a pond will provide the sight and sound of water without much work.

10. Get an automatic watering system

Even if plants require only minimal maintenance, water and fertilizer are still essential. A drip-irrigation system on a timer eliminates the needs to stand with a hose or to move sprinklers around. An automatic watering system, need not cost your first born, and will cope with watering when you are not home or while you sleep.

11. Don't think you can't have colorful containers of annuals if you have a busy lifestyle and little time to care for them. These colorful containers of red Begonias and Cannas were planted on Mother's Day 2006 and watered *deeply only one time weekly* throughout the summer and fall. Most container annuals need once daily watering to live. The difference here is that the plants were chosen for their toughness and durability, a mixture of water crystals that would expand and hold moisture and slow-release fertilizer were mixed into the soil at the time of planting, and the containers they were planted in were large enough to hold sufficient soil content to retain moisture from one watering until the next.



ESTABLISHING WILDFLOWERS

1. Choose an appropriate site with adequate rainfall, good drainage, and at least eight hours of sun a day. If weeds are growing there, so will wildflowers.

2. Prepare the ground several months in advance of seeding by first destroying all existing weeds, either by removing or mowing them. Loosen or till the soil to a depth of about one inch. Water lightly to encourage remaining weed seed to germinate. When they do, cover the entire area with black plastic, mulch or thick newspaper and leave it there for the entire growing season or until seeding time for the wildflowers. It should now be weed free.

3. Select wildflower varieties or mixes known to thrive in your region. Most Wildflower seeds are labeled for specific growing regions or USDA hardiness zones.

4. Scatter the seeds on a windless day, either by hand or with a whirlygig seeder (large areas) such as used with grass seed.

5. Keep the seedbed slightly damp until all seeds have sprouted. Water sufficiently to keep seeds and seedlings from drying out until mature plants are established. Reseed each year until you are pleased with the results.

6. In northern hardiness zones 1-6, wildflower seeds seeded in the late fall will remain in the soil and germinate the following spring or they can be seeded in the spring. In southern zones 7-11 a fall seeding will give you a big jump on growth for the following spring.

7. Exercise patience. Wildflowers require several years to reach their blooming potential.

An excellent source for wildflower seeds by the pound is www.wildseedfarms.com They do not come cheap though; expect to pay \$29.50 per pound. Recommended seeding rate is 1 pound per 2,000 square feet.

WEEDS IN MY BEDS

Whatever shall I do, I have let my perennial flower beds be taken over by bermuda grass? Never fear, all is not lost. Weed control in perennial flower beds often becomes a

drag. Bermuda grass is a common problem especially in sunny sites ideal for growing iris, daylilies, and other sun loving perennials. And if you have ever tried to pull bermuda grass out of your flowerbed, you know that it is practically impossible to get it all out.

Two herbicides, chemically different but with similar modes of action, have become available to remedy this delimita. Fusilade (active ingredient on the label, fluazifop) commonly sold as Grass-B-Gon, Over-the-Top, or Grass-No-More and Poast (active ingredient on the label, sethoxydim) commonly sold as Hi-Yield Grass Killer or Monterey Grass Getter. These two herbicides will only kill grasses and are not effective for killing the broadleaved weeds in your beds, but if bermuda grass is your problem these two are your solution. Remember when using herbicides, the label is the law, and read the label carefully. These chemicals are safe to spray over-the-top of most broadleaf shrubs and perennials, be sure to check the label carefully to see if your plants are listed as safe to spray this herbicide on.

Do not apply these herbicides to your lawn or ornamental grasses as serious damage may occur.

Fall is an excellent time to apply these herbicides and get a good kill on those pesky grassy weeds.

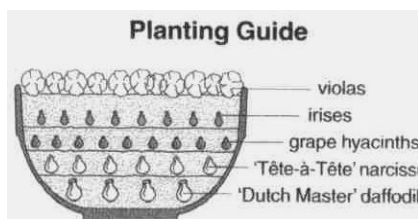
BULB GARDEN IN A POT

Pack a pot with bulbs this fall for a container that will bloom from fall through spring. Follow these easy steps:

*Chose a tall deep pot with a top diameter of at least 12 inches and large drainage holes.

*Good potting soil is a must. Do not use garden dirt in your container.

*Place the largest bulbs in the bottom, at the depth listed in the planting instructions on the package. Don't allow the bulbs to touch each other.



*Add more soil until you've covered the bulbs and reached the depth where the second layer should be. Place bulbs as you did before and cover with soil. Continue until all bulbs are in place.

*Plant violas or pansies on top. Add a granular timed release fertilizer such as Osmocote to this upper layer only.

After planting, add water until it flows out of the pot's bottom. During the winter, add moisture as the violas or pansies require it. Soak the pot well to keep the bulbs at the bottom hydrated.

After the first flush of flowers finish in the spring, cut off the spent blooms. Leave the foliage alone and the next round of bulbs will spring up and bloom around it. After all the bulbs have finished blooming, empty the pot and plant the bulbs in your garden.

HARVEST WREATH

You can make a lovely wreath from clippings harvested from the yard.

1. Start with a basic wreath form, grapevine, foam or wire, available at most craft stores or Wal-Mart.

2. Slip florist wire through the top of the form and twist the ends together to make a hanger.

3. Soak florist foam cages in water. Attach the florist foam cages to the wreath by pushing florist wire through the foam and then through the wreath form. Twist the ends together to secure the cages to the form. Space the cages every 6 inches to allow the filler to overlap.

4. Insert the filler into the florist foam. Collect leaves and berries around your yard, or buy filler from a florist.

5. Continue adding filler until the wreath form is no longer visible, and then hang it up. Add more water to the florist foam every few days for a long-lasting display.



GREENHOUSE HAPPENINGS



October Hours: Mon-Friday 9-3 Sat.& Sun. 9-12

We will be working around the Greenhouse for most of October. The Greenhouse will be closed for the winter in November, December, January, and most of February. We are still landscaping full time and, throughout the winter, weather permitting, will be installing lots of structure, retaining walls, drainage, patios, and walkways. Please call us at any time so we can schedule your landscape needs.

If you need plants during this time, please don't hesitate to contact us and we can arrange to meet you.

References:

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