

Gardening Thoughts from Gay Larson

*by Gay Larson, Parker County Master Gardener
Pictures from Gay Larson's Yard*

Landscaping in your mind is a form of artistry and creative thinking; therefore, every garden begins with a thought.

To create a total landscape idea, walk the layout of the whole property with long-term goals in mind. Take pictures of the property with a digital camera as “before” pictures and then use that image to draw different landscaping possibilities with computer software. Be sure and take pictures after each phase is finished. Peruse neighborhoods, take pictures to get ideas or go to the Botanic Gardens in Fort Worth, or Clark Gardens and Chandor Gardens located in Parker County and see what the professionals are creating. Read horticulture books and look at gardening magazines, talk to nursery professionals and gardening friends to pick their brains for ideas.



Look at the property from the most viewed direction, stand back, and imagine the possibilities. Choose the focal point, and then look at that point from all directions. Whether it is a 40-mile and hour drive by concept or a close-up walk through garden, a picture in your mind will develop.

Remember in Parker County, we have little rainfall, high temperatures, cold winters, also alkaline water and soil. Determine how much money, work, and effort will be required to build and maintain the beds, lawn, and extras to keep a “cared for look” to a landscape. Supposedly, it takes 50 years for the water that we use to irrigate, to return in rainfall for us to use again; consequently, we must take into consideration the amount of water needed to irrigate a landscaping idea.



Check out prices and availability of products in Parker County, we have many good landscape nurseries, garden supply stores, and rock and soil companies.

As a gardener, one of the most difficult problems in creating a flowerbed from an idea is to determine how much soil to add to each bed after designing the shape. Use a garden hose to lay out the shape of the bed, then use brightly colored spray paint to outline the soil

or grass this helps to keep in mind where to till and install edging. To kill the grass, use a glysophate before the cool weather comes in the fall or after the grass greens up in the spring, this product only works on green plants. Measure the square footage of the proposed bed with the depth of soil or mulch and have the soil and materials company calculate how much is required for the project. Till the soil first, add the amendments, till again to break up the clay soil, after that install the edging. When you plant, do so with the mature size of the plant in mind. Always, add mulch after planting to conserve moisture and retard weeds.

A rear tine tiller is the best in Parker County soils because the motor is in front and that weight helps to keep the tiller from bouncing when tilling our heavy, hard clay soils.

Then stand back and watch your dream come true. All plants will grow with proper watering and fertilizing, if planted in correct sun or shade and recommended for this area.