

## Gardening in Small Spaces by Beth Turlington

There you are, standing in the garden center, drooling over all the beautiful plants, the colors, shapes and textures, and crying to yourself because you think you have nowhere to put any of them.

Fear not my space challenged friends, there's a garden out there with your name on it, all you have to do is locate it.

Ask yourself a few questions about the area you have to work with. How much sunlight is there during the day or do you have more shade. Is there a lawn you'd rather not mow? Get rid of that turf grass to give yourself more gardening space. Will you be planting in existing beds or starting from scratch? Is the space so limited, you'll need to use containers?

For new or existing beds, be sure to incorporate good plant derived compost to help improve your soil. In new beds, also add in expanded shale to help open up the soil for good drainage and air space.

With containers, chose a good, quality planting mix. Your choice of containers is almost limitless in size, shape, and weight. Plastic, styrofoam and composites look great and are far lighter than ceramic and terra cotta, which makes moving them much easier. Another space saver is going vertical, with vines on a trellis and hanging baskets of bright color.

Once you've figured out where and how you'll be gardening, start looking at plants. There are miniature and dwarf varieties of a large number of trees, shrubs, and roses from which you can choose. Also, pick plants that are recommended for our area. Do some research and talk with any of the professionals at our local nurseries. You can also contact the Extension Service office at 716-8610.

When you've completed your planting, don't forget about mulch. You can put a layer of 10-12 sheets of newspaper down, covered with a three inches of hardwood mulch. The paper will help as a weed barrier and will break down over time and add to your soil fertility, the hardwood mulch will help retain soil moisture longer and keep the roots cool. Don't forget to mulch you pots too.

Use drip irrigation to water your garden beds whenever possible. It will deliver water exactly where you want it with no waste. Containers will need to be watered more frequently, especially as the weather heats up.

Don't forget your vegetables either! You can inter plant them in the ornamental beds that get at least 8 hours of sun or grow them in containers. Nowhere is it written that you can't grow tomatoes next to petunias. Grow beans and squash on trellises.

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