

## SMALL SPACE GARDENING

Many Nevada gardeners are presented with the challenge of small space gardening. With little space to utilize it is important to carefully analyze the space and how it will be used. Even though your yard may be small it will be important to pay attention to the details as you add them to your yard. This will ensure that you are able to incorporate every aspect of your ideas and create a space that is welcoming, comforting as well as visually appealing.

There are a few key components to keep in mind when working in a small space. First, it is a good idea to have only one focal point in the garden. This can be a piece of art, water feature, an interesting specimen tree or a planter bed. The focal point must remain the main attraction of the yard. Be careful when introducing surrounding plants as they need to support the garden's focus and not overpower this area. Having a strong focal point will be an important component in the small space garden, if properly placed this will eliminate the feeling of an enclosed and cluttered space that is common in many small gardens.

To continue planning the small spaces choose a palette that will use only a few colors limiting the spectrum in the garden. Depending on your vision you could choose vibrant colors like reds, purples, and pinks or mix cooler blues with yellow and white. The limited palette will allow you to create the illusion of more space. Large plantings of single colors will appear larger to the eye. Also, try planting lighter colored flowers in the background and bring brighter colors to the front. This will trick the eye into elongating the view, making the space appear larger. When implementing these techniques be sure to plant taller plants in the back with shorter varieties in front.

Now that you have chosen the colors you'd like to see in your yard, you can begin to assemble a list of plant species that will meet these requirements. When choosing your plants remember the space with which you are dealing. Small spaces can be overwhelmed with the addition of many large specimens and random plant placement. This will require a well thought plan to ensure plants are positioned strategically into the landscape. The small garden is a good opportunity for gardeners to use one of the many dwarf plant varieties that are now available at nurseries. Visit Moana Nursery to see the variety of dwarf evergreens, trees and shrubs that are continually being introduced.

When finalizing the list of plants pay attention to the variety of leaf shapes, green tones and textures that each species offers. This is the time to consider the contrast the greenery in the landscape will provide. Plants that have intricate detail and/or fragrant scents are great choices for small spaces.

Most landscape plantings are placed around the perimeter of a patio or outdoor entertaining area. If possible try to pick neutral or consistent materials when installing hardscape features. These areas will flow better if they are not broken up into a variety of materials which distract the eye and chop up the landscape. Areas around the patio that are highly visible will benefit from detailed plantings. Place plants here that have intricate flower or leaves. This is also a good place to put fragrant plants that will attract the nose of those nearby. The patio space also provides areas for container plantings. You can use groupings of coordinating pots to bring in color and create interest along the patios edge.

Small spaces may confine the planting area we have available but they don't limit the number of layers that can be added to the garden. Rockery walls or elevated planting beds will add depth to the landscape. They will even create the illusion of a larger yard. Again, be careful when choosing materials to create elevated areas, you don't want to introduce too many materials and textures into the small garden. Trellises and espaliers are other good options for adding height and dimension to the landscape. There is an abundance of styles available, some of which can easily be built. Talk to your neighborhood nursery professionals for planting ideas.

Container gardening is another option that can be considered as they can provide color and create space for herbs and vegetables on a patio, balcony or in any small space. When selecting containers to place be sure to have one element that will tie the garden together. This can be as simple as using one plant that is repeated in each container or choosing various sized pots that are the same color and material. When planting your containers be sure to incorporate a mix of flowering plants and those with showy, leafy foliage. This will create contrast and interest in your pots. You can also take your container plantings to another level and add hanging baskets with draping plants to create depth and color at eye level.

For night time entertaining consider lighting to highlight details in your landscape. Shadows created from the lighting will draw the eye towards the lighted area they will also make the yard appear larger by not highlighting the defined areas of the space. Try using both ground and down lighting to create a visually stimulating impact on the space. There is a variety of lights available including low profile shapes that can be hidden in the landscape, or artistic lights that may add a bit of interest to the day time scene. Choose carefully and place lights sparingly. Remember one of the most important aspects of small gardens is to pay attention to the details.

Small space gardens can provide an oasis of color, texture, interest and appeal. As with most landscape projects it is important to plan and design your space to get the most out of it. This is even more important when conquering a small space. Remember to keep your focus on the fine points of the yard and you will be on your way to producing a fabulous space.

Want more information on small space gardening? Here are some books we suggest you check out: *Small Garden* by John Brooks, *Landscaping Small Spaces* by Sunset Publications, and *Container Gardening* by Paul Williams.