

GARDENS Four Seasons

GARDENDESIGN

Sept./Oct.2019

GRADE CHANGES in your Yard Part 2 - Adding Grade Changes



*"It is a joy to walk
in the bare woods.
The moonlight is
not broken by the
heavy leaves. The
leaves are down,
& touching the
soaked earth,
Giving off the
odours that
partridges love."*

- Robert Bly,
Solitude Late at
Night in the Woods

*Such an incredibly
poetic take on
Fall - thanks Mr. Bly!*

Alright! So you'd like to add some interest to the terrain of your yard?

You're in luck because there are a number of ways to do that! First off - any smaller bed or spot can be mounded to create a hillock. As long as you have room to slope it on all sides the size, shape & uses are infinite.



Next you could look at Raised Beds. These can be free standing or back onto a fence or structure. Keep in mind that if you build up the elevation on one side - you must have a back & sides to hold in all that dirt.

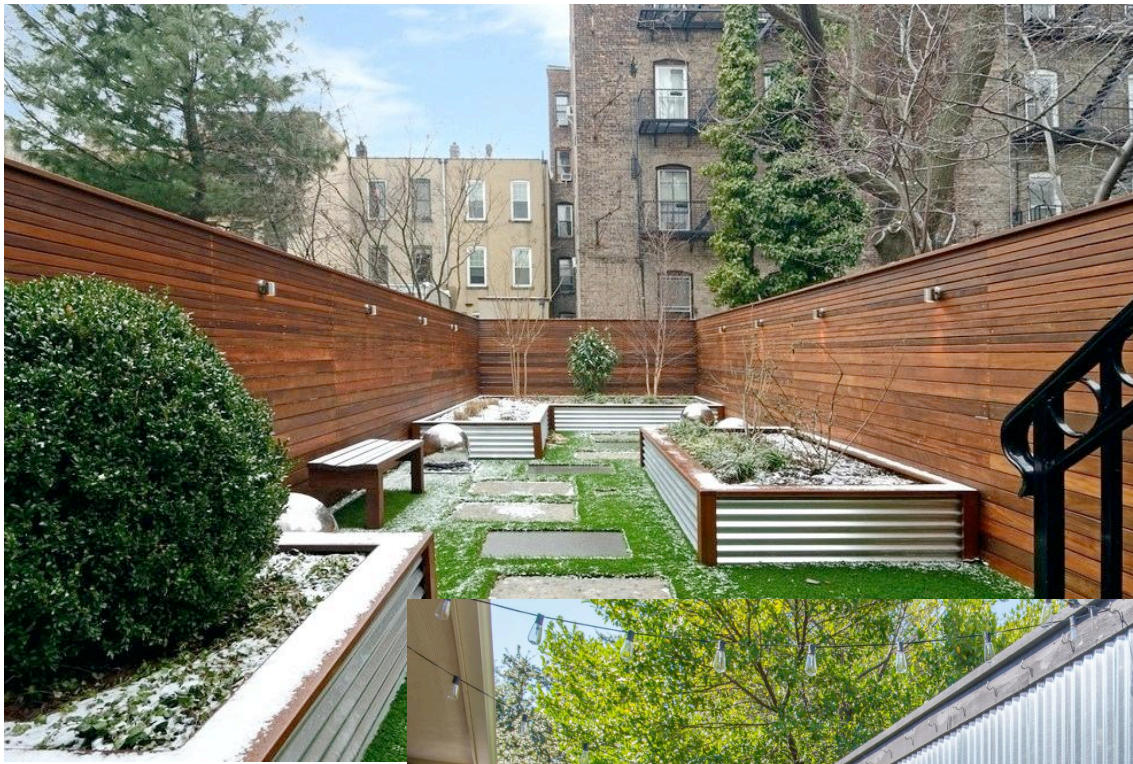


In the picture above the elevated area is framed with Cindercrete blocks. Cindercrete has a very utility look & is good for backing as is any simple pressure treated post & plywood surface but get creative with the front & any visible sides by using a nicer material. Less cost that way too & I am all about being frugal in the landscape!

Want to try a more updated take? Rusted Steel is a very modern look & works splendidly in ultra contemporary treatments.



Or try Galvanized Metal. Maybe consider using a Galvanized Stock Trough for smaller situations.



Then there are always the omnipresent man made building blocks from Home Building Centres. There is a dizzying array of those to choose from!



Brushed or Textured Concrete also works nicely. Here a few metal containers dress up the base of a high retaining wall.



Don't forget wood as an alternative - even pressure treated beams can be just the ticket. (**note:** due to the chemicals in pressure treated wood never use it in any areas where food crops will be grown) Cedar is always classic in a yard - the design possibilities are endless!



Then again - why not use good old-fashioned rocks & boulders?

Originally used to hold back river or sea banks Gabions are becoming more & more mainstream in Design. They are simply panels of heavy wire screen shaped to hold rocks. Their look changes with the size, shape & texture of rocks. Brilliant eh?





& Lastly - you can use rocks & boulders to create a retaining wall of any height.



Rock piles make excellent bases for hills particularly for rock gardens.



Pile rocks & cover with top soil. Broken bits of concrete or brick can be also be repurposed for a base since they'll be buried out of site.

& there you have it! Your very own grade change or slope where previously there was just flat land.



A word about growing plants in raised areas.

You kind of lose the effect of an elevated spot when planting trees & most shrubs because they get so large. They take over & fill in so much that you can hardly notice the change in grade.

Using smaller shrubs (2 1/2' & less) or Perennials - particularly those 2' & under, will better feature the elevation itself. Just be sure if you are creating a rock garden - you use as large a rock as you can handle since even a 1' high perennial can cover or dwarf a 1'-2' diameter boulder in no time at all!



No Plans for Grade Changes in your Yard's Future?

As I mentioned in part 1 of GRADE CHANGES one can create the illusion of a raised or sloped area simply by tiering your plant material - you know - lowest in front & highest at the back of any bed :)

Have some fun with your planning to add a bit of Change in *your* Grade!



PLANT OF THE MOMENT

PARKLAND PILLAR BIRCH

***Betula platyphylla* ‘Jefpark’**

With Autumn upon us my thoughts turn to seasonal displays in pots. One the most common & fun things to use in containers are Birch poles because of their cool bark & structural feel.

So naturally I thought of a Birch Tree for this part of GARDENDESIGN.



Parkland Pillar Birch nicely fills the need for compact or columnar trees for our increasingly smaller yards. It has a spread of only 6' & is relatively small - topping out at 30' high. The bark is the usual striking soft white & the autumn colour is spectacular!



Loves lots of moisture as most birch do but is surprisingly drought tolerant once established. A versatile addition to pretty much any landscape!



DESIGN BRILLIANCE

Like a magnificent work of art - rusted steel retaining large stretches of verdant lawn!



Say
no
more!

In the next issue of

GARDENDESIGN

November/December 2019

I will share some of the incredible landscapes I've had the privilege of planning.

Meantime - I have started an **INSTAGRAM** account. Click on the link below & follow along with me as I marvel at all things Landscape Design in Saskatoon ;)

https://www.instagram.com/gardens_4_seasons_land_design/



& spend some some time going thru' my Pinterest pics for
Grade Changes (or any other topic that catches your fancy!)

<https://www.pinterest.ca/gardens4seasons/grade-changes/>



Would you like to see my thoughts on

- STEPS ?

- DRAINAGE ?

- ISLAND BEDS ?

Ask & Ye Shall Receive my **GARDENDESIGN** BACK
ISSUES!



Feel free to forward this to any friends!

(or they can email me to request their own copy!)



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