

## GARDENS Four Seasons GARDENDESIGN - May 2012

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**Want *your* yard to be famous?** Well, maybe not worldwide, but at least here in Saskatchewan?

I am in the process of revamping my website. I have been doing Landscape Design for over 20 years & offering Landscape Design Classes for 5 years. I have a few good pictures of client yards but could *really* make use of more current ones.

Do YOU have some yard pictures you'd like to share? I'd be eternally grateful for ANY you can send & who knows - they might just end up on my websites GALLERY for ALL to enjoy!

We now resume with our regularly scheduled E-Newletter.....

### - Got MULCH? -



*-quote courtesy of some random excited nursery!*

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In areas unaffected by man, soil gets covered with a protective layer of growth, rotting vegetation, sand, gravel or rocks. In our gardens, surfaces are often laid bare with weeding & cultivation. I recall as a young gardener preferring the look of bare soil around my plants - cultivating as required. I don't need to tell you how long THAT lasted! :)

Plants need a good start in life to thrive. To help them establish in a new bed - Mulching the soil around them is a great idea. By applying generous Mulches of organic matter, nature can be imitated. A *Mulch* is any type of material that is spread over the soil surface for a number of reasons.



Moisture is retained where it is required the most - at the plant's root level. It keeps the soil cool on excessively warm days & keeps root temperature more consistent. Erosion control is provided - particularly in sloped beds. If layered thickly enough it can deter weeds & makes any required weeding easier. A more finished, professional look is achieved. In my mind - that & less maintenance are the best reasons to make use of it! An exceptional yard AND more time to spend actually enjoying it instead of working in it!! Wahoo!



I highly recommend the use of Mulch around freshly planted trees or shrubs. This gives any planting more of a 'finished look'. Often the front yard is where most Mulching starts because that's generally the area you want to look best first. Less time in the front yard weeding means more time in the back yard where most of a person's time is spent. Mulch choices are endless - crushed rock, rocks or boulders, sand, crusher dust, compost, dead leaves, wood chips, bark chips, grass clippings or even finely shredded recycled rubber. (I've even had success with layering wet newspaper between vegetable garden rows...at the end of the season compost it by tilling right into the soil!) Coloured wood chips are perfectly good - just know the colour fades gradually.



My all time favourite Mulch is fine wood chips, preferably cedar. It lasts a long, long time & is a pleasure to work with - easy to spread & smells awesome! It also packs down to form a nice layer & doesn't get blown around the yard. You can top it up each year if desired but the goal of most Mulched tree & shrub beds is to cover the soil long enough for the plants to mature so their leaves & branches fill the surrounding area. The Mulch eventually gets covered up. I like it also because it naturally decomposes & adds organic matter to the soil. As an added benefit - it doesn't hurt if you happen to get hit with a chunk of it whilst mowing your lawn!



***Avoid entirely*** the 'dreaded shredded wood' of any kind. It is usually long shreds (4"-6" long) of wood or bark. It's so fine that it doesn't pack down properly & mostly just scatters around the yard everywhere including your lawn! Annoying & unsightly!



***'Dreaded Shredded Mulch' blown into low Juniper***

Start by ensuring your is bare & weed-free. If using crushed rock ensure you layer 2" deep; a good thick 4" is necessary if using wood chips. (wood always packs down by about 1/2 & can be easily topped up as desired)

Landscape cloth is not recommended as it makes touch-up weeding more tedious & is an unnecessary extra cost & labour. Besides even if you use the heaviest landscape cloth - it still needs to be replaced every 5 - 7 years which translates into pulling off the old Mulch, laying new cloth & then reapplying the Mulch. By not using landscape cloth - you can top up as needed without the extra work.

I don't suggest Mulching annuals or perennials as it inhibits their growth & spread. If you do want to Mulch them - only do the larger perennials over 3' high. (they are more like small shrubs anyway!)

Most larger Nurseries carry Mulch as do Big Box Stores, Home Centres, some Tree Maintenance Companies & Early's Farm & Garden in Saskatoon!

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.....and now Ladies & Gents it is time for my favourite **PLANT-OF-THE-MONTH!**

**DWARF DELPHINIUM - delphinium grandiflorum**



Unlike it's close cousin - the Giant Delphinium - this one only reaches about 2' in height & has a 1' diameter spread. The delicate ferny leaves are bright green & lush. The blossoms really *are* this brilliant blue & it blooms for close to 4 weeks around July - outdoing the average perennial blossom period of only 2 weeks! The seed heads are interesting enough to leave on the plant after blooming but are easily clipped off if desired.

This little gem of a plant grows easily from seed - either started indoors or do as I did & sow it directly into the ground after danger of frost is past. Why, you could even plant some this week!

Feel free to forward this to any friend ! ( & did you know - your email address is kept entirely confidential?)

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**MOON GARDENS** - seeing your yard by the Light of the Moon!



.... more in June's **GARDENDESIGN** - appearing soon on a computer screen near you! ;)

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**Your Comments, Tips, Questions & Garden Quotes** are always invited! OR perhaps you have a PIC from your own yard you'd like to share!

Let me know if you've any to share or if there is a particular topic you want to hear more on.  
Questions & Answers will be published in future E-NEWSLETTERS.

Would you like to see BACK ISSUES of GARDENDESIGN? Simply reply to this email with BACK ISSUES PLEASE & they will magically appear in your inbox!

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