

# GARDENS Four Seasons

**GARDENDESIGN**  
**- April/May/June 2021 -**

## DEVELOPING your YARD in STAGES

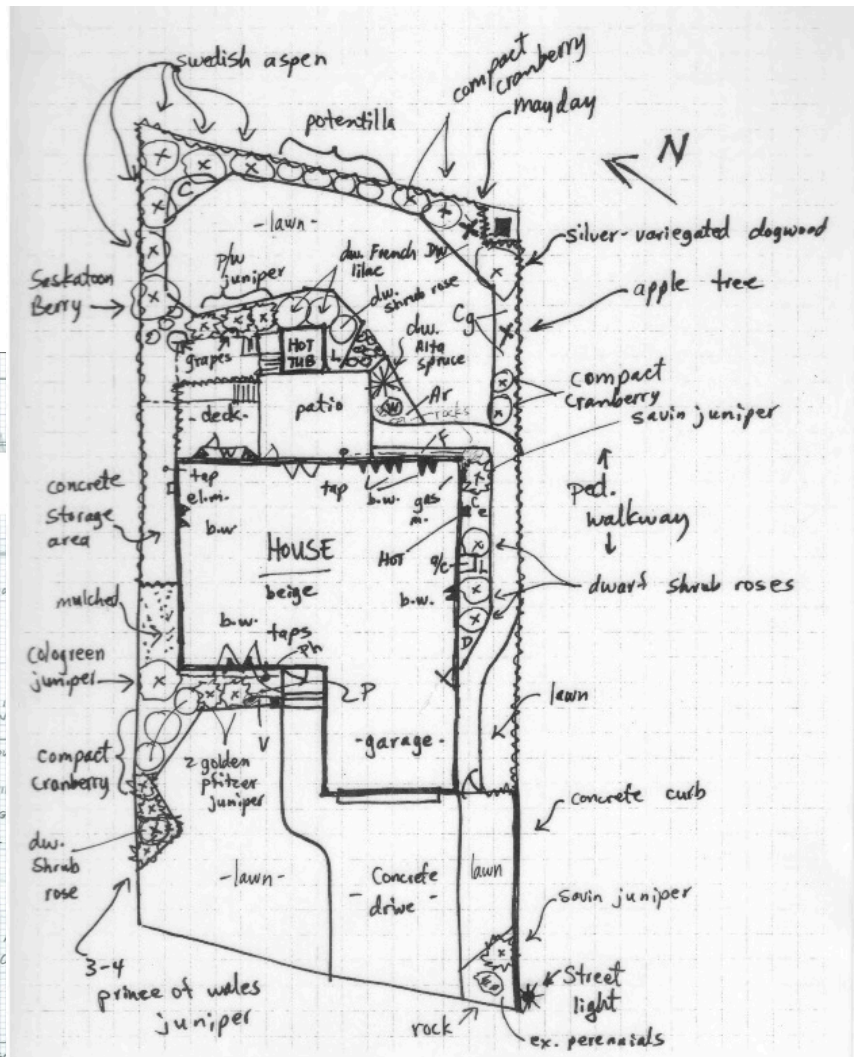
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*“It's a beautiful morning, yaaaa-a-aahhh!  
I think I'll go outside for a while  
& just smile.....  
Just take in some clean fresh air, boy!”*

**The Rascals - A Beautiful Morning**



# Let me help you out!





## First off - **NEW YARDS**

**1.** Start with your **LAND**. Ensure any weeds that have popped up are permanently removed. This also goes for any home construction debris. Make certain any of this stuff is not 'buried' in your soil or shoved under a porch or deck. Then have your final grade done - usually by the homebuilder. This is the surface you'll end up with prior to having topsoil added.



This is also the stage where drainage is taken into consideration. Drainage is critical to the success of your entire landscape & the future of your house itself. I have seen many, many instances where it has to be corrected after the fact. It's not only costly but time consuming, not to mention having to possibly make heartbreaking decisions to remove newly installed trees or shrubs. (I cover Drainage in more depth in an edition of GARDENDESIGN & will list the link at the end.)





**2. Consider your **EXISTING SOIL**** - Rosewood & Buena Vista neighbourhoods were built on land that were previously sloughs, so the soil is largely heavy clay. Other neighbourhoods in Saskatoon can range from heavy clay to sandy to loamy to rocky. Rocks & boulders are the rule in Evergreen & Aspen Ridge. Once you know what you are dealing with, you can & should amend it accordingly for planting.



**3.** Now spread **TOPSOIL** - I recommend a good blend of sandy loam that has contains a healthy amount of organic matter. Ideally a 6” depth is best but go for at least a minimum of 4” deep over the entire area that will be dedicated to lawn, perennials, shrubs & trees.



**I cannot stress how very important the right soil is** to the success of your vegetation. The largest part of any plant is the root system. Aside from sunlight, warmth & water, soil is right up there in importance for an amazing yard!



4. Now you are ready to do what is know as **‘HARD LANDSCAPING’** *aka* anything manmade. Decks, fencing, driveways, walkways, patios.....anything that is not ‘live’ should be installed prior to any planting. That way you won’t risk damage to any new greenery.



**5.** Next - put in '**SOFT LANDSCAPING**' (*aka* any live plant material). Start with your **TREES**. They take the longest to become established, so get them into the ground as soon as possible. You will want to amend the soil of each hole where any tree or shrub will go.



A good rule of thumb is digging the hole twice to three times the size of the root ball - deep & wide. Then use only 1/3 of the current soil along with 2/3 of a combo of well-rotted manure, compost, peat moss & loamy topsoil to fill the hole. (See the link at the end for Denise's GARDEN PRIMER - complete planting instructions!)



6. Now **SHRUBS** get your attention & the installation method is the same as trees. Once they are in the ground you can start outlining your beds.



7. To shape **BORDERS** I suggest taking a rope or hose to outline your bed edges. My favourite method is filling a 'ziploc' bag with flour & cut off a small part of corner. Use dots of flour to mark wherever the line changes direction & then simply connect the dots to get a satisfactory visual. (Or use both as in the photo!)



**8. PERENNIALS** can be installed once the shape of the beds are set. Note you will require a good 1' depth of topsoil in those areas. You may wish to dig those spots down to add quality soil, or you can work the present soil by adding the proper amendments. When positioning plants I generally allow 1' square foot for any with a mature height of 2 1/2' or under. For those that reach 3' & over allow 2 - 3 square feet per plant. This will give you a pretty good coverage in the first year if you are aiming for a lush look. Of course space them wider if you want a more 'open' look to your beds.



Set pots in the configuration you desire prior to planting, instead of doing what I once did - got a few in the ground & then realized I wanted to change my plan around! Eeeps!



**9. Then - MULCH!** I advise only mulching trees & shrubs. If you wish to mulch perennials - know that they will not spread as you may want them to. Better to leave perennial beds open soil & weed them until they fill in unless you want the look of



each perennial separate from each other. (I have also done an edition of GARDENDESIGN on Mulch & Landscape Cloth & will add that link at the end of this article.)

**9.** Lastly comes the **LAWN!** When I did actual landscape installations the lawn always went in last so those working in the yard would not damage it as they walked back & forth. You can use sod or you can sow seed. Sod is the quickest as it can be useable within 2-3 weeks. Seeding takes 4-6 weeks to establish enough to be walked upon plus it must be watered regularly or it will take longer. It is definitely cheaper than sod. I have done both & they each have their pros & cons. Preparation of the area is done exactly the same so it really is up to your personal preference.





**11.** Water, water, water & did I say **WATER?!**

It is crucial to the development of your plant material to be regularly watered the first season in order to become established.



**12.** As with anything else, **MAINTENANCE** is key if you want greenery to thrive. I plan yards so they will fill in more & more each year to eventually cover the soil & prevent weeds.



## **EXISTING YARDS**

**1.** If not done already - you may have to start from square one as in a new yard. If **GRADING & SOIL** are up to snuff then proceed to Step 2 below.



**2. REMOVE ANY ‘SOFT LANDSCAPING’ - EXISTING TREES, SHRUBS & PERENNIALS** as required.

You may have shrubs or perennials you want to keep so the best time to move them is either when they are going dormant (Autumn) or coming out of dormancy (Spring). They can be moved while actively growing but with less success. Trim back 1/3 to 1/2 of the foliage & any flower or seed heads prior to moving to increase your chances of having them survive.

**3. REMOVE ANY ‘HARD LANDSCAPING’** not wanted. Easier said than done - it might involve an old fence, broken concrete or even an old shed or outbuilding.



**4. INSTALL the NEW ‘HARD LANDSCAPING’** be it paving stones, deck or deck additions, retaining walls & such.



**5. Then simply proceed to STEPS 5 to 12 for NEW YARDS.**

Before you know it - your work will be complete & you will be sitting back enjoying the fruits of your labour.

It is simple to list the steps needed but a lot more work to actually complete them. Steps can be varied as required for your particular site but ideally you'll not want to do any planting near areas under construction. Also, in an existing yard, you'll likely want to redo or improve your lawn - so I have listed the procedure for that at the end.



*- my backyard Rockery :)*



# Here is the **LAWN RENEWAL** advice I promised:



## **LAWN RENEWAL**

Lumps in a lawn are usually individual tufts of Creeping Fescue. Along with Kentucky Blue Grass, it makes up the major components of almost every lawn seed mix. When grasses aren't close enough together - particularly the Fescue, the lawn looks lumpy. Soil isn't missing but grass plants are. Re-seeding is the answer. (Lumpy grass can also suggest poor soil bed preparation & can only really be remedied by lifting the sod, doing proper soil levelling & packing & then relaying sod or seeding the surface)

Use a **power rake machine** & then remove dead grass buildup (called thatch) with a thorough raking. Then aerate the lawn using a **core aerator**. This machine actually pulls 2" - 3" long plugs or cores of compacted soil from the surface to allow air, moisture & nutrients to be better absorbed. (water the lawn well prior to aerating - you'll end up with deeper 'core plugs' & an easier job of it!) Aerating also loosens up old, packed down soil thus creating a better medium for new & existing grass roots. With an aerator, cover the ground in two passes, the second pass at right angles to the first.

Remove any weeds manually or by using a proper lawn chemical application. (I am not a fan of any chemicals but if using a solution - wait 2 weeks before reseeded). Remember - the thicker, more healthy your lawn is the less chance weeds will appear!

Use **top quality seed sown thickly & evenly**. Use seed meant for specific conditions (ie: shade mixture, full sun mixture.....)

Spread 1/4" of high quality **compost** or peat moss over the reseeded area. (Peat moss is my second choice as there is no real nutrient value in it.) Roll with a lawn roller or if it is a small area - do what I do - stomp it well to ensure the seed is in good contact with the soil & is level & firm. **Water well & keep moist** until lawn is satisfactorily established. It takes 10 - 14 days for grass seed to even germinate!

Remember, if you are rejuvenating an old lawn, you may have a number of factors contributing to the poor growth. Old, compacted soil is usually the number one problem but you may also have to contend with shade, lack of moisture, poorly fertilized grass & possibly mature tree or shrub canopies. If you are trying to encourage grass to thrive beneath a spruce tree, you have a very tough battle on your hands because you also have the acidic soil (caused by spruce needles) to hinder you. Grass can be grown in this situation but it requires 3 or 4 times the maintenance as grass grown elsewhere. An alternative would be to use large rocks or a nice mulch to define the space beneath the Spruce.



**& here are the links for additional info:**

**Denise's GARDEN PRIMER**

<https://www.gardensfourseasons.com/garden-primer/>

**GARDENDESIGN Back Issues**

- Mulch <https://www.gardensfourseasons.com/mulch/>
- Landscape Fabric <https://www.gardensfourseasons.com/landscape-fabric-debate/>
- Drainage <https://www.gardensfourseasons.com/drainage-issues-mar-apr-2017/>

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**I've been asked this question:**

“Can one use the **Saskatchewan Home Renovation Credit** for Landscape Design Services?

You most certainly can!

Simply get your Design done prior to Dec. 2022



<https://www.saskatchewan.ca/residents/taxes-and-investments/tax-credits/home-renovation-tax-credit>

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## PLANT OF THE MOMENT

### ANNUAL SALVIA

Often when I decide which flora to feature I come up with obscure ones - ones not grown or seen. This one has been around for years but should be used more often as it creates a colourful addition to any bed or pot.





Not only do they add an often much needed vertical shape in pots but they bloom as most annuals do - ALL - SUMMER - LONG! They thrive in full to part sunshine.



Heights range from 12" to a full 48", comes in reds, blues, purples, pinks & whites & are quite plentiful at local nurseries, even in June. So whether you want to jazz up a present planter, are getting a late start on your pots or want to brighten up a space in your yard with a mass planting - Salvias are a noteworthy choice!



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## BEFORE & AFTERS !

‘K - I am excited to be able to showcase my OWN yard for this edition of Before & After!

I have a few trusted contractors that I refer to clients & I want to showcase one of the best - Noel Roeger of BAYARD LANDSCAPING & CONTRACTING!

(Text only #306-262-0187)

A few years ago Noel redid my front walkway using both new & existing old paving stones.

BEFORE -





AFTER!





Then - this Spring he lifted & stacked the old patio blocks with which I had created my side yard path years ago.  
(yep - laid every one of those myself - Whew!)

BEFORE -



He laid down  
protective boards on  
my front path. (how  
many contractors take  
THAT much care?!)



The the side yard was excavated & filled with a base layer of gravel & crusher dust. I had a pile of old clay bricks I'd salvaged & he fashioned them according to my plan into an equally quality surface... cleverly combining the different shades to create a masterpiece!

DURING -





In both jobs he nailed the design I had come up with. (The curves turned out just beautiful Noel!)



An excellent landscaper & primo hard landscaping artisan!  
Call Noel - BAYARD LANDSCAPING & CONTRACTING if you  
want the job done right in a timely manner!  
- TEXT ONLY 306-262-0187 -





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& here is a **NIFTY GARDEN TIP!**

**PEONIES + ANTS = FRUSTRATION**



I so LOVE these jaw dropping showgirls of the garden but the ants, not so much. I cut my blooms late in the day & put them in a vase of cold water & set them in a spot that will get no morning sun. By the time morning rolls around - most, if not all the ants are gone! Works like a charm - you're welcome :)

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## DESIGN BRILLIANCE

A super cool way to bring nature into your home - functional & charming even outside! Shelf fungi can be found in any woodland setting or you can purchase them ready to hand online. I know I would like to make some for the outside wall near my patio door.

Once you have your treasures - here are the instructions on how to preserve & fasten them to any a vertical surface:

<http://findermaker.blogspot.com/2009/09/mushroom-shelf-tutorial.html>





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**July/August/September 2021**

**GARDENDESIGN**

will find us considering

**- WINDOW WELLS -**

Why you don't have to settle for galvanized steel anymore!



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In addition to the [Back Issues](#) of **GARDENDESIGN** I listed for this article - here are a few more I have covered: Send me your favourites & I will zip them on over to ya! (The balance of topics will show up in in the July/August/September issue of GARDENDESIGN)

**GARDEN DECOR**  
**GARDEN GIFTS**  
**GATES**  
**GRADE CHANGES**  
**GRASSES**  
**GREEN WALLS**  
**HERB GARDENS**  
**HOUSE NUMBERS**  
**ISLAND BEDS**  
**LANDSCAPE DESIGNS I'M HAPPY  
TO SHARE**  
**LANDSCAPE FABRIC DEBATE**  
**LAWNLESS LANDSCAPES**  
**LIGHTING**  
**MEDITATION GARDENS**  
**MOON GARDENS**  
**MULCH**  
**NEST SECRET GARDEN TOUR**  
**ONLINE SEED & PLANT SOURCES**  
**OUTDOOR KITCHEN IDEAS**  
**PET FRIENDLY YARDS**  
**PLANTS AS DECOR**  
**PRIVACY PLANTING**  
**PRIVACY SCREENS**





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Please check out my Social Media postings on Landscape Design & Mother Nature in general:

## **PINTEREST**

<https://www.pinterest.ca/gardens4seasons/boards/>



## FACEBOOK

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## INSTAGRAM

[https://www.instagram.com/gardens\\_4\\_seasons\\_land\\_design/](https://www.instagram.com/gardens_4_seasons_land_design/)

## TWITTER

<https://twitter.com/gardens4seasons>

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**Thank you for sending GARDENDESIGN to friends!**

**Why not save a step & show them this bit..... perhaps they will ask me to have their own email added to my regular contact list?!**

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**DID YOU KNOW?**

**- I never, Ever, EVER share my email list - NEVER! :)**

\* to UNSUBSCRIBE from GARDENDESIGN please reply to this email with  
**NO THANKS!**

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