



Guide to Gardening in Parkfairfax

Helpful Hints to Make Your Garden Thrive



Revised 2010

Inside

- *Starting your garden*
- *Maintaining your garden*
- *Landscape design ideas*



Acknowledgment

Thanks to the members of the 1993 and the current Landscape Committees for their hard work in creating and reviewing the Guide. A special thanks to Debra and Dave Livingston for the original editing and the garden designs.



Recommended Plants

PERENNIALS			
Common Name	Botanical Name	Exposure	Other Notes
Green-and-Gold *	<i>Chrysogonum virgini-</i>	shade	evergreen
Hairy Alumroot *	<i>Heuchera villosa</i>	shade	evergreen
Hosta	<i>Hosta spp.</i>	shade	
Lambs Ears	<i>Stachys byzantina</i>	sun	
Lavender	<i>Lavandula angustifolia</i>	sun	
Mountain Stonecrop *	<i>Sedum ternatum</i>	shade	evergreen
New England Aster	<i>Aster novae-angliae</i>	sun	
Rosemary	<i>Rosmarinus officinalis</i>	sun	evergreen
Sage	<i>Savlis spp.</i>	sun	
Sedum	<i>Sedum spectabile</i>	sun	
Snakeroot *	<i>Cimicifuga racemosa</i>	shade	
Spiderwort *	<i>Tradescantia virginiana</i>	sun	
Tickseed *	<i>Coreopsis verticillata</i>	sun	
Violets *	<i>Viola pedata</i>	sun/shade	
Virginia Bluebells *	<i>Mertensia virginica</i>	shade	
White Wood Aster *	<i>Eurybia divaricatus</i>	shade	
Yarrow	<i>Achillea millefolium</i>	sun	

* Native to eastern U.S. / mid-Atlantic region



Recommended Plants

DECIDUOUS SHRUBS

Common Name	Botanical Name	Exposure	Other
Smooth Hydrangea *	<i>Hydrangea arbo-</i>	shade	
Sweet Pepperbush *	<i>Clethra alnifolia</i>	sun/shade	
Winterberry *	<i>Ilex verticillata</i>	sun	need male & female
Witherod *	<i>Viburnum cassinoides</i>	sun/shade	

PERENNIALS

Common Name	Botanical Name	Exposure	Other Notes
Appalachian Sedge *	<i>Carex pensylvanica</i>	shade	
Barrenwort	<i>Epimedium spp.</i>	sun / shade	
Beebalm *	<i>Monarda didyma</i>	sun	
Black-eyed Susan *	<i>Rudbeckia spp.</i>	sun	
Blazing Star *	<i>Liatris spicata</i>	sun	
Bleeding Heart *	<i>Dicentra eximia</i>	shade	
Butterfly Weed *	<i>Asclepias tuberosa</i>	sun	
Candytuft	<i>Iberis sempervirens</i>	sun	
Catmint	<i>Nepeta fassennii</i>	sun	evergreen
Christmas Fern *	<i>Polystichum acrostich-</i>	shade	evergreen
Clematis	<i>Clematis spp.</i>	sun	
Columbine *	<i>Aquilegia canadensis</i>	sun/shade	
Coneflower *	<i>Echinacea purpurea</i>	sun	
Daylily	<i>Hemerocallis spp.</i>	sun	
Evergreen Shield Fern *	<i>Dryopteris marginalis</i>	shade	evergreen
False Indigo *	<i>Baptisia australis</i>	sun	
False Solomon's Seal	<i>Polygonatum falcatum</i>	shade	
Goats Beard *	<i>Aruncus dioicus</i>	shade	
Goldenrod *	<i>Solidago spp.</i>	sun	



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Introduction

Gardening in Parkfairfax provides residents a most relaxing hobby. Designing, selecting, planting and maintaining a garden can provide hours of enjoyment and a sense of accomplishment. A resident's contribution to the beauty of our community provides all residents with a pleasurable environment.



The Committee and the Association Board encourage you to create a garden at your unit. We hope this Guide will provide you with the information you need to get started.

This Guide was originally developed by the Parkfairfax Landscape Committee in 1993. The current Committee has revised the Guide to bring it up to date and to make several additions.

A copy of the Guide can be found on the Parkfairfax web site at www.parkfairfax.info along with photographs of successful gardens.



Recommended Plants

EVERGREEN SHRUBS			
Common Name	Botanical Name	Exposure	Other Notes
English Boxwood	<i>Buxus sempervirens</i> 'Suffruticosa'	shade	grows very slowly
False Holly	<i>Osmanthus heterophyllus</i>	sun	can be pruned as hedge
Foster Holly	<i>Ilex x attenuata</i> 'Fosters # 2'	sun	can be pruned as hedge
Heavenly Bamboo	<i>Nandina domestica</i>	sun/shade	
Hemlock *	<i>Tsuga canadensis</i>	shade	can be pruned as hedge
Inkberry *	<i>Ilex glabra</i>	sun/shade	
Japanese Holly	<i>Ilex crenata</i>	sun	many cultivars available
Leatherleaf Mahonia	<i>Mahonia bealei</i>	shade	
Mountain Laurel *	<i>Kalmia latifolia</i>	sun/shade	
Rhododendron *	<i>Rhododendron maximum</i>	shade	
Schip Laurel	<i>Prunus laurocerasus</i> 'Schipkaensis'	sun/shade	good hedge between patios
Yew (many types)	<i>Taxus spp.</i>	sun	
Yucca *	<i>Yucca filamentosa</i>	sun	
Winterberry *	<i>Ilex verticillata</i>	sun	need male & female
Witherod *	<i>Viburnum cassinoides</i>	sun/shade	

DECIDUOUS SHRUBS			
Common Name	Botanical Name	Exposure	Other Notes
Beautyberry *	<i>Callicarpa americana</i>	sun	
Big Leaf Hydrangea	<i>Hydrangea macrophylla</i>	shade	
Black Haw *	<i>Viburnum prunifolium</i>	sun/shade	
Bluemist Shrub	<i>Caryopteris x clandonensis</i>	sun	
Carolina Allspice *	<i>Calycanthus floridus</i>	sun/shade	

Recommended Plants

SMALL FLOWERING TREES		
Common Name	Botanical Name	Exposure
Corneliancherry Dogwood	<i>Cornus mas</i>	shade
Eastern Redbud *	<i>Cercis canadensis</i>	sun/shade
Flowering Cherry	<i>Prunus</i>	sun
Flowering Dogwood *	<i>Cornus florida</i>	sun/shade
Fringetree *	<i>Chionanthus virginicus</i>	sun/shade
Kousa Dogwood	<i>Cornus kousa</i>	sun
Pagoda Dogwood *	<i>Cornus alternifolia</i>	sun/shade
Serviceberry *	<i>Amelanchier canadensis</i>	sun/shade
Star Magnolia *	<i>Magnolia stellata</i>	sun
Stewartia	<i>Stewartia pseudocamellia</i>	sun/shade
Sweetbay Magnolia *	<i>Magnolia virginiana</i>	sun/shade
Witchhazel *	<i>Hamamelis virginiana</i>	shade

EVERGREEN SHRUBS			
Common Name	Botanical Name	Exposure	Other Notes
American Boxwood	<i>Buxus sempervirens</i>	sun/shade	
American Holly *	<i>Ilex opaca</i>	shade	grows very slowly
Andromeda	<i>Pieris japonica</i>	shade	
Arborvitae *	<i>Thuja occidentalis</i> 'Emerald'	sun	
Aucuba	<i>Aucuba japonica</i>	sun/shade	
Azalea (evergreen)	<i>Rhododendron cvrs.</i>	shade	
Camellia (fall blooming)	<i>Camellia sasanqua</i>	shade	
Camellia (spring blooming)	<i>Camellia japonica</i>	shade	
Dwarf Cherry Laurel	<i>Prunus laurocerasus</i> 'Otto Luykens'	sun/shade	
Dwarf Heavenly	<i>Nandina domestica</i>	sun/shade	

Five Steps to Getting Started

By following the step-by-step process below, your garden will have a greater probability of success.

1. Read the Association Guidelines

The Association has established guidelines for planting gardens. Briefly, you may plant foundation gardens in front and on the side of buildings within 10 feet of your unit. You may also plant patio gardens within 20 feet of a unit having limited common element space behind it. The guidelines include advice on the height of plants, avoiding obstruction of pathways, use of raised beds against the walls of the unit and establishing common element extended gardens.

Gardeners are encouraged to consult with their neighbors before undertaking a major planting. Some residents have even developed a design incorporating the entire building. If your garden will include perennials and foundation plants (shrubs or trees), you must submit your plant to the Covenants Committee for approval. Annuals (plants that last only one growing season) may be planted without approval.

Complete guidelines can be found in the Association's Administrative Resolution Number 2 (AR No.2) on the Parkfairfax web site at www.parkfairfax.info.

2. Design Your Garden.

If this is your first garden, the designs included in the Guide can provide ideas for laying out a foundation or patio garden. These designs use symmetry, proportion, perspective and other elements of design to produce a pleasing look. The plants included in each design were selected on the basis of winter hardiness, fitting available space (height and spread) and their success in growing throughout the community.

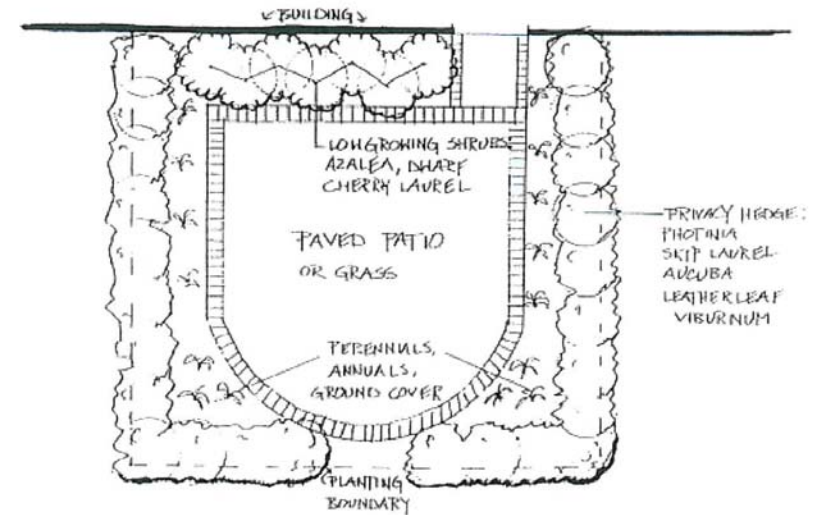


If you're an experienced gardener or simply wish to be creative, you may want to develop your own design. This Guide offers a list of plants that are good choices based on their proven success in Parkfairfax. You may also want to consult one or more garden plant books which describe the attributes of the plants of interest to you. Some suggested books are listed in the Guide.

If you select one of the Parkfairfax designs, simply attach it to the Application to the Covenants Committee for a quick approval.

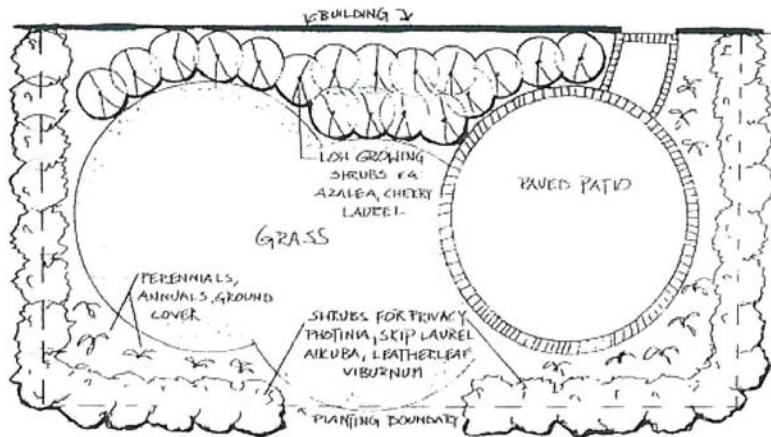
Small Patio

These patios range from 18 to 22 feet and are associated with some one-, two- and three-bedroom units. The design provides privacy, a space for dining and entertaining, a grassy area and seasonal color with annuals or perennials. Your planting cannot extend more than 20 feet from your rear wall, the boundary of your limited common element. Construction of patios and decks requires prior approval from the Covenants Committee.



Large Patio

These patios range from 35 to 39 feet and are associated with some one-bedroom units and Lincoln (two-bedroom) models. The design is based on three interlocking circles, 14-1/2 feet in diameter. The design provides privacy, a space for dining and entertaining, a grassy area and seasonal color with annuals or perennials. Your planting cannot extend more than 20 feet from your rear wall, the boundary of your limited common element. Construction of patios and decks requires prior approval from the Covenants Committee.



3. Select Plants

Local garden centers are filled with beautiful plants, but not every plant is right for every location. The following are some general guidelines to keep in mind when selecting plants for your garden:

- Site Conditions.** Some plants naturally prefer sun; others shade. This basic requirement is almost always addressed on the plant's nursery tag. A plant growing in its preferred conditions will require less help from you to thrive.
- Drought Tolerance.** Our region has become increasingly prone to dry spells, especially during the summer growing season. Although we have unlimited access to water in Park-fairfax, it's important to conserve wherever possible in part because water usage is one of the largest line items in the budget. When selecting plants for your garden, pay attention to the plant's ability to weather heat and drought.
- Native Plants.** Using native plants that are naturally adapted to our particular climate can be advantageous because they have long-established relationships with wildlife and other organisms in our local ecosystems and are a critical component in maintaining a healthy ecological balance. Having a diverse selection of native plants in your garden will provide more food, cover and nesting options for the many native songbirds and butterflies. Note: not all native plants are drought tolerant.
- Layers.** A multi-layered approach to planting is not only more aesthetically attractive, but it will also make your garden more water efficient. The strata of foliage created by an un-



derstory (such as small trees), a shrub layer and an herbaceous layer (perennials and annuals) will shade the soil and slow evaporation. The multiple layers of foliage will also lessen the impact of rain during the heaviest downpours, thus helping to prevent erosion.

The following categories comprise the layers of a well-designed garden.

Trees. Small ornamental trees (15-25 feet) may be appropriate in a large patio garden. Large trees (30 and above feet) would not fit into patio space. Trees of any size would not be appropriate in a front or side foundation garden within 10 feet of the building. **If you want to plant a tree, call the Administrative Office to request the Landscape Director's review and approval of your selection and planned location prior to submitting your garden plan to the Covenants Committee.**

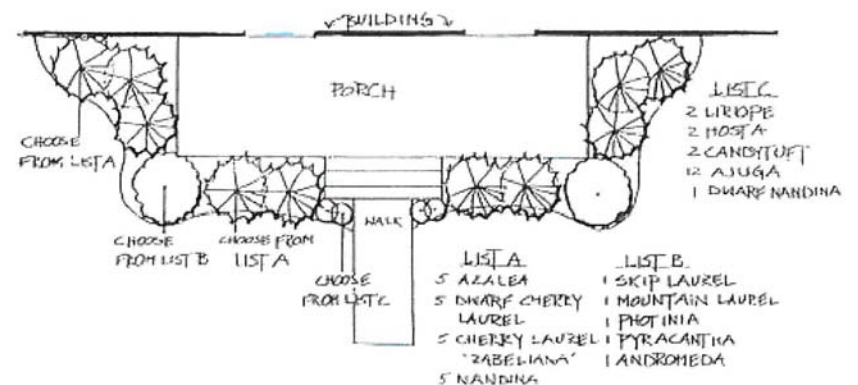
Shrubs. Shrubs are perhaps the most important element for your garden. A combination of evergreen and deciduous shrubs will provide year-round interest. For front or side foundation gardens shrub height should be no taller than 4-5 feet with a spread of 6 feet or less. Patio garden shrubs, particularly those used as privacy hedges, can be taller.

Perennials. Perennials provide blooms or other attractions year after year at various times in the growing season (even in winter for a few). A selection of several with varied blooming times can fill in a foundation or patio garden. Many perennials have the ability to go dormant during times of increased stress (such as drought), so they're good choices for



Shared Porch — 2 Units

The drawing shows a planting coordinated by the two residents sharing the porch. The plant lists indicate the number of plants needed for one side of the porch. The design is suitable for ground level or raised porches. If there is a unit below, take care that your plants do not block the windows of the lower unit. Choose ground covers, low-growing perennials or low-growing annuals for planting in front of windows. You will probably have more space on one side of your porch than the other. Never plant more than half of the space between your porch and your neighbor's unless you have consulted with your neighbor.



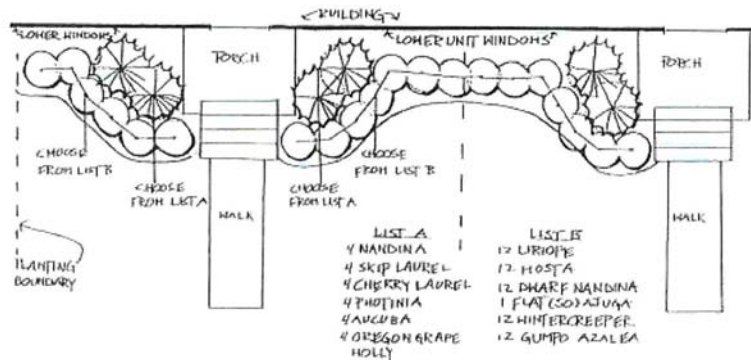


Raised Porch With a Unit Below

Before you decide what to plant, locate the windows of the unit below. Take care that your plants will not block the windows in any way.

Choose ground covers or low-growing annuals for planting in front of the windows.

Consult with your neighbor.



conserving water. Perennial plants may need one or two years to mature before blooming. Most perennial flowers die to the ground at the end of the growing season.

Bulbs. Bulbs for early spring bloom (daffodils, hyacinths, tulips, etc.) are also a good choice.

Many small bulbs and daffodils naturalize readily thus requiring little maintenance.



Annuals Annual flowers are a good selection to fill in while shrubs and perennials are maturing. They give immediate color, continue to bloom throughout the summer and are generally less expensive than perennials. However, as the name implies, annuals die at the end of the growing season, so they have to be replaced every year. Annuals also tend to be very thirsty, requiring lots of extra water during dry spells.

Perennial ground covers. Ground covers are useful in filling space that is too shady to produce blooms on flowers, too steep or too dry. Ground covers are particularly useful for retaining soil in areas given to rapid erosion. They are also a good selection to plant under mature trees where it is difficult to grow turf grass. However, care must be taken in planting ground covers near the edge of the woodlands. If not tended, the ground covers can invade the woodlands, crowding out native species.

Purchasing plants. The Northern Virginia area abounds in nurseries where almost any plant can be purchased. At some of the larger nurseries, staff can also answer gardening ques-



tions and provide suggestions for purchase.

In addition to retail outlets, there are a number of local plant sales. For years, Parkfairfax has held an Azalea Day plant sale open only to residents. Azaleas in various sizes, as well as a variety of annuals and perennials are offered. There is also a Native Plant Sale held in spring and fall on the Parkfairfax grounds. This event provides numerous native species grown by nurserymen from around the area. Watch the Forum newsletter for announcement of these sales. Also check newspapers for notice of plants sales sponsored by local parks, organizations and garden groups.

One final note in choosing plants. Talk with your neighbors or even residents of the adjacent building to get comments or concerns if you're planning a large or elaborate garden. You may also want to speak with the Parkfairfax Landscape Director about your selections. (Call the Administrative Office at 703-998-6508 to request his help.) Your final design should not only meet technical design standards but also be acceptable to neighbors. Height and spread of shrubs is of particular importance.



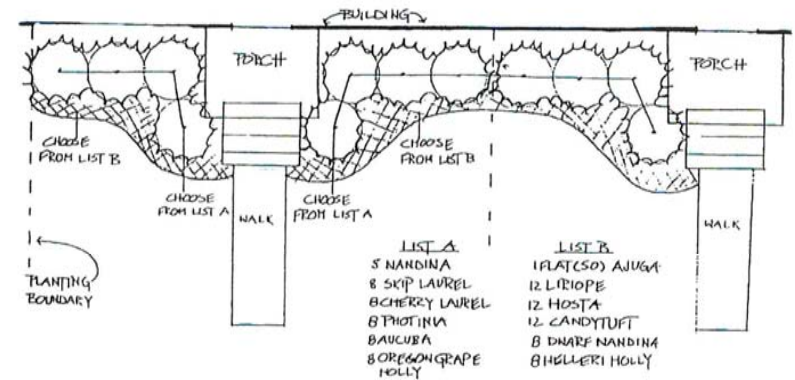
Raised Porch – No Unit Below

The space between your porch and your neighbor's may be a little as 10 feet or as much as 20. Most likely you will have more space on one side of your porch than the other. Never plant more than half the space between your porch and your neighbor's without consulting your neighbor.



The right side of the drawing below shows a planting coordinated by two residents. The drawing assumes a maximum space of 20 feet between porches, or 10 feet of planting space on each side. Measure your area and adjust the number of plants needed.

Go to the Parkfairfax web site, www.parkfairfax.info, to see drawings enlarged.





Landscape Ideas

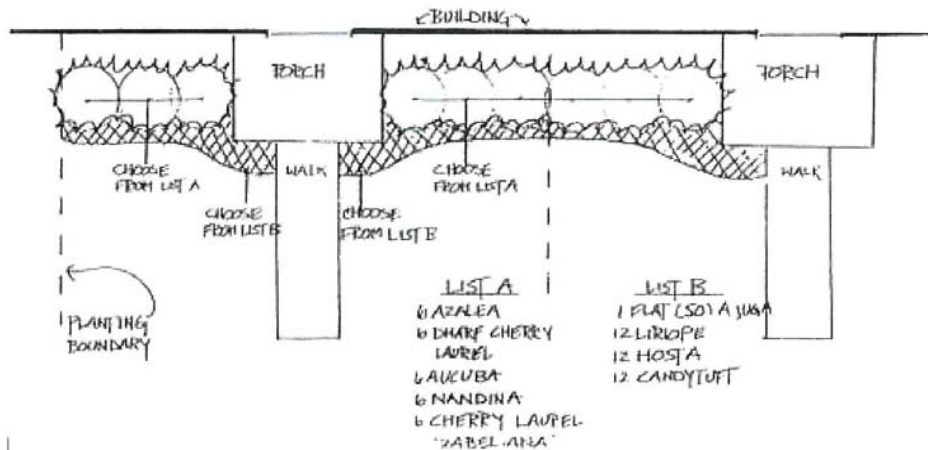


Ground-Level Entrance

The space between your porch and your neighbor's may be a little as 8 feet or as much as 16 -1/2 feet. Most likely you will have more space on one side of your porch than the other. Never plant more than half the space between your porch and your neighbor's without consulting your neighbor.

The right side of the drawing below shows a planting coordinated by two residents. The drawing assumes a maximum space of 16 feet between porches, or 8 feet of planting space on each side.

Go to the Parkfairfax web site, www.parkfairfax.info, to see drawings enlarged.



4. Improve the Soil

Improving the soil will give you a much better chance of creating a successful garden. The soil in Parkfairfax is mostly clay, lacking sufficient organic material to aid plant growth as well as producing poor drainage. Plan to mix an equal amount of organic material such as humus or compost with the soil in your planting area. In some cases you may find it necessary to remove pure clay (a red-dish/yellowish plastic-like substance) and replace it with a mixture of humus and purchased top soil. In the fall, you can shred the fallen leaves and use them as a mulch to cover planting beds. They will break down over the winter, returning organic matter to your soil.

Soil that's high in organic matter provides nutrients for plant growth and holds moisture better than poor soil.





5. Plant

Note: Before planting, and independent of the Covenants Committee approval process, arrange for a representative from "Miss Utility" to check the planned garden area for electrical cables. Call 811 or 1-800-552-7001 at least three days prior to digging.

Planting shrubs requires digging a hole **twice** the width of the root ball and deep enough that the top of the root ball will be above the ground level when planted. Locate the hole at least **3 feet** from the building to allow for growth.

If the shrub came in a container, make 5 to 6 vertical cuts in the lower portion of the root ball and an X-cut on the bottom of the ball before planting to break any pattern of circular growth. If the shrub came in burlap, loosen the burlap at the top of the root ball, folding the burlap back away from the ball and plant making sure the burlap is covered in the hole. Fill the hole with amended soil as described above, build a small reservoir in the soil (like a moat around the plant), water thoroughly and then mulch.

If you're planting a foundation or patio garden with a mixture of shrubs, perennials, bulbs and/or annuals, you should dig the entire garden area to a depth of at least 9 inches, mixing organic material in as you dig. This will prevent disturbing growing roots later. Planting perennials and annuals requires much less effort than planting shrubs but should be done with care to spread roots in the hole.



plants for Parkfairfax, the Landscape Director can provide information on how to go about applying to the Covenant's Committee for approval of a garden plan. Contact him at the Administrative Office at 703-998-6315.

Several Committee members and other Parkfairfax gardeners can review and provide advice on your gardening plans at your request. Contact the Landscape Committee chairman for names.



Additional Resources

This Guide is only intended to help you get started in your gardening hobby. Most beginners (and even advanced gardeners) rely on good garden books to create and care for a beautiful garden. Look for a basic garden book. It will cover the same matters as covered in the Guide but in greater depth and with illustrations. Some good reference books usually available at local books stores and online include: [The Washington Post Garden Book](#), [Sunset Mid-Atlantic Top 10 Garden Guide](#), [Mid-Atlantic Gardener's Guide](#), [Month by Month Gardening in the Mid-Atlantic](#) and [Southern Living Garden Book](#). You can also find a good selection of gardening books at the Alexandria Public Library. A number of gardening periodicals provide helpful advice to beginners and advanced gardeners. One, **Horticulture**, provides comprehensive illustrated information on preparing soil, planting and tending gardens.

The local office of the **Virginia Cooperative Extension Service**, located across Quaker Lane in the Fairlington Community Center, is a useful source of information and advice on planting gardens in Northern Virginia. You can contact office staff at 703-358-6426.

A number of gardening associations can also provide advice to their members. One of the best, the American Horticultural Society, has its headquarters south of Alexandria at the George Washington River Farm off the Mount Vernon Parkway. The Virginia Native Plant Society is another excellent resource.

Two other sources of gardening help are local garden centers and the Association's Landscape Director. In addition to advising you on the best



Again, thorough watering and mulching should be done at the time of planting.

Planting under mature trees requires careful digging to avoid damaging the tree's roots. Most knowledgeable gardeners avoid planting within five feet of a tree. Use a hand trowel in this case rather than a shovel. Avoid cutting any root of two inches or greater diameter. In replacing soil on roots you have exposed, try do not to put more than two inches of soil on top of the root to avoid suffocating it. If not sure how to proceed, consult with the Landscape Director.

Early fall and spring are the best times to plant trees, shrubs and perennials. Annuals can be planted from May through the growing season.



Take care planting ground covers if your garden is near any of the woodland areas. While nice in a garden, ground covers can become a nuisance if they creep into the woodlands.

Avoid planting non-native invasive species. To find out what plants are considered invasive, contact the Woodlands Committee, the Landscape Director, or the Virginia Cooperative Extension Service.

Five Steps to Keep Your Garden Growing

Water

New plantings need water. Even the most drought-tolerant species need time to get established. There is no hard and fast rule for watering as there are many variables involved (temperature, rainfall, humidity, etc.). In general, less frequent but deeper watering is recommended for trees, shrubs and perennials. A good soaking encourages plants' roots to grow more deeply, giving them an advantage during occasional dry spells. The best times to water are early morning or late afternoon rather than mid-day when more water is likely to evaporate. Use soaker hoses rather than overhead sprinklers whenever possible to direct the water where it's needed—the plants' root zones—rather than onto the leaves or into the air where evaporation takes a portion before it ever reaches the ground.

Plants in containers need watering more frequently because the soil dries out more quickly. Annuals, because they typically have very shallow root systems, will also require more frequent watering.

After trees, shrubs and perennials are established in the second and following years, watering can be reduced to once a week except during extended periods of no rainfall. Annuals need water twice a week during their one-year life.

Mulch

Mulch helps your plants retain soil moisture as well as keeping the plant's roots cool, especially during the heat of summer. A two-inch layer is sufficient. Take care not to put the mulch up against the trunks of trees or shrubs. The Parkfairfax Landscape staff will deliver bags of mulch to your door or garden. Request delivery by phoning the Administrative Office.

Fertilize

Feed trees, shrubs and perennials in early spring for their continued growth. Carefully scratch a granulated fertilizer into the soil under the plant. Annuals, especially those growing in containers, benefit from regular feedings with a water-soluble fertilizer. It is not a good idea to fertilize plants in the fall since this would stimulate new growth which could be killed by winter cold.

Other Maintenance

The Association's landscaping contractor will prune and weed among the shrubs, remove fallen leaves annually and place mulch every three years. If you decide you would rather do these maintenance activities yourself, contact the Administrative Office to get yellow stakes to mark your garden as off-limits to the contractor. The Parkfairfax Landscaping staff will replace privacy hedges at your request.

Continued Care

If you sell or rent your unit, discuss the garden's continuing care with the new resident. A well-maintained garden should require little effort to keep up. If the new resident is amenable to assuming the garden chores, notify the Administrative Office of the agreement. If the new resident does not agree to care for the garden, notify the Administrative Office so the Landscape Manager can determine which plants can remain and which must be removed.