



Trowel Talk!

January, 2013

Out of this world

Have you ever thought of building a garden based on a particular theme? There are many from which to choose. For example you could have a small fragrant rose garden, a colourful butterfly garden or a serene Japanese garden. Theme gardens can be tucked into just about any corner of your landscape – the more variety the better. My favourite is the "moon" garden.



Photo: Kelly Noel

A monochromatic garden of white flowers brightens up the north side of the house.

A moon garden is crescent shaped and planted with white flowers. At night the white flowers help to illuminate a garden path or your driveway. In the daytime white reflects a feeling of coolness. A lamppost may be positioned at the widest part of the crescent, preferably slightly off to one side. A tidy edge and a raised bed will neatly define the garden's crescent shape. The garden is best viewed from inside the crescent with flower heights graduated. It is wise to start your design on paper so that you can take into consideration the many varieties of white plants, their height, and their blooming season. Close by should be a list of your favourite white plants. Spring blooming bulbs are some of my favourites. Most of them are available in white. Of these, crocus and early snowdrops are among the first flowers of the season. Fritillaries, narcissus and daffodils bloom in mid-

spring, as do many tulips. Japanese iris with columbine planted in front of it may be featured towards the middle of the garden. White bleeding heart with its heart shaped petals that look like tear-drops grows tall and blooms in May. Annual petunias and perennial candy tuft also come in white and are suited for the front of the garden.



A white peony would also fit into a moon garden

White delphiniums such as 'Innocence' can be planted at the back of the crescent and will bloom in June. Mid season varieties of phlox and day lilies may be suited for the middle and back of the crescent. For an accent flower the oriental lily Casablanca will grow 3 or 4 meters and bloom in July/August. Casablanca is very fragrant and adds a wonderful perfume to the evening air. Baby's breath, nicotiana and cosmos perform in mid to late summer and white swan echinacea will come along just after them.



Photo: Kelly Noel

The Apollo lily is another white form of lily that would work in a white garden

If part of the garden is in the shade then consider the hosta called "loyalist". The leaf is primarily creamy white with a thin green border. You can repeat patterns of plants in this garden, and for greater impact, I like to plant each type of flower in odd numbers. To add different texture to the garden there are grasses available that come in green and white, for example, 'Evergold'. Naturally you will want to choose varieties with the largest amount of white on the leaves.

White asters, chrysanthemums, hostas, and grasses along with a selection of white annuals will help extend your white garden into the fall. In fact the ideal time to prepare the bed for a moon garden is in the autumn. Spring blooming bulbs can go in at the same time. The rest of your plants can go in come spring.



Photo: Monique Paré

The old fashioned Shasta daisy is a good performer in any garden

There are so many beautiful flowers that come in white, for example – shasta daisies, peonies, gladiolas, snapdragons, foxgloves, spiderwort, and roses. You can also select shrubs that will produce white blossoms such as mock orange, hydrangea, bridal wreath spirea, and flowering dogwood. All of these are potential team players in a white moon garden.

Jean Bedford
Master Gardener (Deceased)

January TO DO List

- Start planning your 2013 garden. Check on-line nursery catalogues to find out what is new for the coming season. Plan on growing at least one new plant or vegetable from seed. This is the most economical way to 'experiment' with new plants.
- Check any stored tubers/corms/bulbs to make sure they are not too dry or too moist. Drying out completely could diminish their viability. Too much moisture can cause them to rot.
- Decrease the watering and feeding of houseplants as they will experience dormancy due to the reduced amount of light at this time of year.
- If you have a gardening or plant identification question, ask a Master Gardener (contact information to the right).



Master Gardeners of Ottawa-Carleton

Where to find us this month for free gardening advice!

ONGOING:

Telephone Help Line: 613-236-0034

- Wednesday and Thursday 1-3 pm (all year)

E-mail Help Line: mgoc_helpline@yahoo.ca

- monitored daily
- send photos of garden pests, diseases or plants for ID

CLINICS:

No clinics until Spring 2013.

SPEAKING EVENTS & WORKSHOPS:

The Gardens of Cuba – January 22, 2013 – 7:30 p.m.

Mary Ann Van Berlo, Master Gardener

Tom Brown Arena, 141 Bayview Avenue, Ottawa, Ontario

Hosted by the Ottawa Horticultural Society (guests welcome)



For information on arranging a lecture for your group: speakers@mgottawa.mgoi.ca

For more information on Master Gardeners, visit us at: <http://mgottawa.mgoi.ca>

Tip of the Month:

As discussed in our feature article, there are many other garden design themes that you can include in your home garden. To get inspiration, visit botanical gardens when you travel as they generally feature many separate garden areas for visitors to explore and be inspired. Here are a few themes you might want to consider.

Japanese or Asian gardens emphasize shape and form. Flowers do not feature prominently in this style of garden. Many shades of green foliage combined with the textures of stone and wood create a serene and calming atmosphere. [Jardin botanique de Montréal](#) has some excellent examples of Asian inspired gardens.



A view of a Japanese garden bed at Jardin botanique de Montréal

Everyone loves butterflies for both their beauty and their benefits as pollinators. Gardens that provide a source of nectar from spring through to fall as well as water and shelter will have butterflies as permanent residents. The [Canadian Wildlife Federation](#) has good information on creating a butterfly garden.



A monarch butterfly on a Buddleja davidii (butterfly bush)

Alpine or rock gardens are a good landscape choice for a variety of reasons. They are drought tolerant, feature plants with interest through all the seasons and can be adapted to small or large spaces. Alpine gardens can have many of the components of conventional gardens – bulbs, perennials and shrubs. A good resource is the [Ottawa Valley Rock Garden & Horticultural Society](#).



The alpine gardens of John & Lynda Soper of West Carleton are inspirational to all who visit

So our tip this month is to consider a theme for a section of your garden this year. Do some research and explore a new garden style.

COMING SOON!

Do you feel your landscape lacks appeal or perhaps doesn't flow well? Then consider attending our Garden Design Workshop coming in April 2013. We will feature a full day of hands-on garden design. Watch future issues for more details.