A Step-by-Step Guide to Garden Design

Step 1: Get inspired!

Look at gardening magazines, websites and photos and figure out what elements stand out to you. Look at leaf and plant sizes that might work in your space as well as colors and patterns.

Step 2: Doodle on a picture of your space

Print out a picture of your space and let your ideas come to life. Experiment with broad shapes and patterns to see what feels good in your space. From this rough sketch you can start narrowing down the details.

Step 3: Consider these basic design principles

- *Layering plants* of different heights and shapes can make your space feel more lush and scaled to the surroundings.
- *Create simple patterns* with plants to create a cohesive feel to the landscape.
- *Mix coarse-textured plants* that have large leaves *with finer-textured* plants that have smaller growth, like grasses, to add visual interest.
- *Massing or grouping plants* — or planting one type of plant tightly together in a set space — helps to balance and proportion the landscape.
- *Think about color last* — it's the most fleeting element of a garden.
- *Plant with winter in mind* — If you don't plant to pull up your garden before winter, make sure to include plants that will retain their shape in the cold.

Step 4: Ask an expert

Whether you're new to gardening or a seasoned pro, an expert can give you helpful feedback on your plan. Try taking your ideas to a garden center and asking an employee which plants might be best for you and your garden.

Step 5: Don't get carried away

It will be tempting to get all the plants, but try to limit yourself to what will be manageable — especially if you're new to gardening. An overcrowded landscape will be hard to keep up with, and it can invite unwanted disease and competition.

Whether you intricately plan every detail of your garden or not, ***don't forget to experiment and have fun!***