

Have you started to plan out your garden for next year? Whether you plan to have a flower or vegetable garden or perhaps both, success in gardening starts with planning. Begin by becoming aware of the characteristics of your garden. Understanding the characteristics of your garden will determine which plants will thrive and which plants will suffer. Is your garden mostly sunny, partly sunny, or shady? Is the garden in a part of your yard that receives good rainfall or is under a roof overhang resulting in dry growing conditions? When selecting the plants you want to grow, pay attention to the description that is provided. It will provide information about how tall the plant will grow, the sun requirements, and also the amount of water the plant requires which will make it easier to select plants suitable for your garden.

Once you have in mind the plants you wish to grow, you should map out the layout of your garden. If you are planting a flower garden, make sure the taller, bushier plants are in the back while the shorter, smaller plants are in front. By mapping out the flowers you wish to grow, you are able to visualize what your garden may look like and can easily change your flower selection if you realize that you wish to have more contrast in the plants heights or possibly the flower colors before you actually purchase the flowers. If you are growing a vegetable garden, a map can help you remember what vegetables you planted where in the previous year. That way you can be sure that you are rotating the placement of your vegetables which can help reduce the amount of pest problems you may encounter.

A great way to help aid you in your planning process is to attend gardening workshops to help you learn new tips and gain new ideas. Every year the Grand Forks County Extension service and the Grand Forks Horticultural Society host a Gardening Saturday workshop that has several gardening sessions throughout the day as well as commercial garden exhibits. This year the **Gardening Saturday is on April 27<sup>th</sup>** from 8:00 am to 4:00 pm at the Alerus Center in Grand Forks. The keynote speaker topics are “Just Add Water: Anyone Can Have a Backyard Water Garden” and “Annuals and Perennials: What’s New and What Works.” In addition to the keynote speakers, there are three breakout sessions in which you choose from several different topics during each session. The breakout session topics range from weed control in flower beds to attracting birds in your garden to recipes for common garden vegetables to tree insects and control. Preregistration is required (registration will not be accepted at the door). To register either contact the Extension office for a brochure, contact the Grand Forks Extension office at 701-780-8229, or go online at <http://tinyURL.com/gardeningsaturday>. If you have any additional questions, feel free to contact me at Extension office at 701-524-2253 or e-mail me at [alicia.harstad@ndsu.edu](mailto:alicia.harstad@ndsu.edu). NDSU is an equal opportunity institution.