

## Gardening in Small Spaces

By: Scott Hininger  
University of Wyoming  
Cooperative Extension Service  
Sheridan County  
12/1/2010

Oftentimes I am asked I would like to garden but I do not want to take up a large portion of my yard for that. There are many innovative ways to handle this particular question. One of the less used ways is to take an existing flowerbed and put some vegetables in those areas. There are many benefits by utilizing this planting technique. Such as early in the season when some of the perennial flowers may not be up growing yet or least have not reached their full summer size, planting early season vegetables such as carrots, radishes and lettuce, can fill in those spaces.

By adding vegetables to a flowerbed or planting area, this can add diversity to those areas but if this is carried all the way around the property, it is amazing the amount of actual garden space that can be utilized in this particular manner. Many people are not looking at gardening say half an acre but would like to have some fresh vegetables or herbs available and this would certainly provide that opportunity. The other advantage this would provide is when you are out attending the flowerbed you can also be attending or harvesting vegetables. There are some definite benefits by planting vegetables with certain flowers such as marigolds as they can help deter or repel deer rabbits and insects.

One of the biggest design criteria that needs careful attention is providing adequate sunlight for vegetables, many times either the perennial plants or the location may shade these vegetables so the production may not be as great as it would in full Sun. Another advantage of utilizing small locations in the landscaping around the perimeter of the property is that this can provide an opportunity to contain some potentially invasive herbs such as mint.

Another option is to use different types of containers in your landscaping design. There are many advantages to using containers such as adding variety and diversity to your landscaping in the soil in the pots can be amended to accommodate a wider range of plant needs. Say for example you want to grow blueberries, which require a very low pH, and most of Wyoming has a very high pH so you can amend the soil in the pot to provide that low Ph. Another advantage of using containers is the advantage they can be moved around periodically either during the day or during the growing season. Another advantage the pots have is the vegetables can be brought into the house during the winter time and provide fresh vegetables.

What about growing fruit trees and if someone does not have the space to grow full-sized fruit trees. There are many other options available. First of all one can grow a dwarf fruit tree or you can just prune a standard fruit tree to whatever size that will accommodate your space. Another option is to utilize walls and fences and to prune the fruit trees in what is called espalier, which is pruning the fruit tree in a vertical flat style, which in many cases can be a design. This technique can utilize a wall or fence and thereby saving space in the landscaping for other uses but it is very functional. The use of walls or

fences can also be used to grow many vegetables such as beans, peas, cucumbers.

So if you are looking for some new ideas for landscaping work to better utilize small spaces for growing fruits and vegetables there are many options available just have to use your imagination.

The University of Wyoming and the United States Department of Agriculture, Sheridan county Office cooperate. The University is an equal opportunity/affirmative action institution.