

STUDY GUIDE

# CHOOSING GARDEN ELEMENTS

DESIGNING A GARDEN

SHORT COURSE

PERENNIAL  
FLOWERS

# HOW TO WORK THROUGH THIS COURSE

Over the following pages, you will move through a logical, self-paced learning experience that can enlighten and educate you on choosing garden elements.

It is important from the outset to understand that learning about something is not the same as just reading about it. Learning implies a permanent change in what you know and can do.

Anyone can read a book and understand it; but for most people the detail of what you read is largely forgotten.

Reading something once only puts information into short-term memory. It is soon lost if you don't 'work' on it. Studying the same information takes longer, but by thinking about it and processing it you can transfer that information to long-term memory. This way, you will enhance your ability to recall and apply that information for years to come. If you take your time to work through the 5 lessons that follow, you will learn.

**HOW DOES THIS COURSE WORK?**

**WATCH THIS VIDEO FIRST**

<https://vimeo.com/441179158>

## Read, Reflect, Research, Revise

Throughout the following pages, you will find not only things to read about, but also things to do:

1. Throughout each lesson, there are suggestions of things to do under the headings "Learn More". These are all sorts of ideas about things you can do in order to explore the subject further.
2. At the end of each lesson, there is an interactive self assessment test (assignment), for you to undertake. When you click on this, your computer needs to be online. You will be taken to our cloud-based online school. The answers you choose will be evaluated immediately, and your results can be seen on completion of each test. You can return and repeat tests if you wish.

Undertaking these tasks will involve reflection, research and revision of the topics you read about. By repeatedly encountering each topic in different ways, your perspective on each subject will broaden, and the commitment of information to longer term memory will strengthen.

You don't need to undertake all of the suggested tasks if you don't want to; but we strongly recommend that you do some in each lesson, and that you take all of the self-assessment tests.

The more time you spend doing these things, the stronger your learning will be.

## Completing the Course

After completing all 5 lessons you will be presented with a final assessment which can also be undertaken online.

Do not attempt to do this until you have worked through all 5 lessons, and feel like you have learnt the subject well.

Upon finishing this final assessment you will immediately see your final results, and you can save a pdf copy of those results as a "Certificate of Completion".

## Welcome Audio

Click the button below to listen to the welcome audio for this course. This feature is supported by most computers and some mobile devices.



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# LESSON 1 SURFACING IDEAS

*Choosing the right surfacing material for your lawn, work or access areas (such as paths and driveways) can not only save you a great deal of time and effort in future maintenance requirements, but it can also contribute greatly to the overall appearance of your garden design. Surfacing materials can be grouped into two major types, known as 'soft' and 'hard'.*

## SOFT MATERIALS

These materials have some degree of 'give' in them. They have a softer feeling for walking, sitting or playing on. Soft materials are generally less durable than the harder types, particularly to heavy foot or vehicular traffic. Soft surfacing materials are widely used in play areas to reduce the likelihood of injury.

### Lawns

Growing a lawn is perhaps the first, and most common idea people have when starting a new garden. Lawns have a natural, pleasing appearance and are popular to play and walk on. They are a living, oxygen producing, surface that allows water to penetrate into the soil where it can be reached by the roots of larger shrubs and trees.

The front lawn of an average house has the equivalent cooling effect of around two average-sized air conditioners. An area of 250m<sup>2</sup> of lawn (approximately) generates enough oxygen for the needs of a family of four.

Lawns require fairly regular maintenance, particularly in growing season where they may require mowing every two to three weeks or even more regularly for high quality lawns. They are generally

quite cheap to install, although costs will rise if in-ground sprinklers are installed. This will help reduce watering time and keep the lawn in good condition.

Turf grasses fall into two main groups:

- 1) Tussock forming grasses (which grow into a clump, but don't spread very much).
- 2) Creeping grasses which spread.

Tussock grasses grow tall and look good, but alone they rarely make a good lawn. Inclusion of creeping varieties is needed to bind the lawn together.

Your lawn can consist of either a single variety or be a mixture of different varieties. The advantage of a single grass variety lawn is that it is easier to maintain. If you know the ideal conditions for growing that variety, you only need to create those conditions and the lawn should grow well. When you use a mixture of several different varieties the picture becomes more complicated. Each variety has different requirements, and you need to find a compromise between the needs of each.

It is very important to not only choose the right grass varieties for a lawn, but also to have them blended in the right proportion.

## Suggested Tasks: ▼

*Throughout this course you will be provided with suggested tasks and reading to aid with your understanding. These will appear in the right hand column. Remember: these tasks are optional. The more you complete, the more you will learn, but in order to complete the course in 20 hours you will need to manage your time well. We suggest you spend about 10 minutes on each task you attempt, and no more than 20 minutes.*

The following tables provide a generalised comparison between different turf varieties.

**Table: Turf Varieties Selection**

VARIETY	HABIT	USE	AESTHETICS	CLIMATE	TIME & PLANTING REQUIREMENTS
Common Couch	C	Hard wearing	Natural effect	W DT	Sprigs/sods in spring/summer: or seed in spring
Perennial Ryegrass	UT	Hardy & establishes quickly	Informal	CC	Seed in spring/autumn
Chewings Fescue	U	Hardy - light or shade	Informal/semi-formal	CC DT PS	Seed in spring/autumn
Red Creeping Fescue	C	Hardy - light or shade	Informal/semi-formal	CC DT PS	Seed in spring/autumn
Kentucky Blue Grass	UR	Finer leaf - more tender than above varieties	Semi-formal	CC	Seed in autumn
Browntop Bent Grass	UT	Fine - not hard-wearing & susceptible to diseases	Formal	CC - good drainage & light soil	Seed in spring/autumn
VARIETY	HABIT	USE	AESTHETICS	CLIMATE	TIME & PLANTING REQUIREMENTS
Creeping Bent Grass	UT	Fine - not hard-wearing & susceptible to diseases	Formal	CC - good drainage & light soil	Seed in spring/autumn
White Clover	C	Fairly hard-wearing	Informal/natural	CC - also, heat tolerant	Seed in spring/autumn
Kikuyu	C	Hard-wearing - thick stems	Natural	W (OK in CC but less vigour)	Runners in spring/summer
Annual Ryegrass	T	Hardy - establishes quickly but only lives 1 year	Semi-formal/informal	CC	Seed all year - best in spring/autumn

## LEARN MORE >>>

### Suggested Tasks

Contact a local garden centre or turf supplier, or investigate a turf or lawn seed supplier on the internet. Find out what varieties of grass they sell, either as seed or as turf.

Also, find out what blends they offer and what the options are for a shady lawn. Make notes.