

The background features a light beige color with several thick, rounded lines in various colors (light blue, green, yellow, red, purple, dark blue) that meander across the page. Small, simple green leaves are scattered throughout the design.

What to plant where

BY JOHN MASON

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CHAPTER 1 PLANT SELECTION

Plant selection is an important part of creating a beautiful and functional garden. With careful selection and well thought out planting schemes you can minimise maintenance, minimise disease and prevent over-planting. Over-planting is one of the most easily made mistakes in a garden. This is especially so for large trees that could end up being very costly to remove. Tangled trees (through over-planting) are never attractive, and also create a hostile environment for many plant species that may have been planted beneath them, when the trees were still small.



Different plants are available at different times – choose when to plant accordingly.

With careful plant selection you can create a garden that will still be beautiful decades from now. A well-selected plant is more likely to survive establishment and should also be more easily maintained. As long as you remember that the success of a garden

is largely determined by the suitability of the plant to the situation, the conditions that they are to grow in, the planting techniques that you use at the outset and your garden maintenance capabilities (i.e. the time you can input and expertise you have).



Araucaria heterophylla lives perhaps hundreds of years, and withstands coastal conditions; but is a very tall tree.

You can use the following points to help you when considering what plants you should grow:

- Pre-planning considerations - including the site characteristics i.e. slope, soil etc., as well as the location of services and buildings, local by-laws and personal preferences.
- Use - what particular task do you want the plant to fulfil i.e. shade, appearance, windbreak etc.?
- Climatic considerations - which plants are best suited to the particular climatic conditions in which the landscape is situated? This includes the frequency, strength and duration of rainfall, winds and frosts as well as temperature and humidity levels.
- Growth characteristics - how big does it grow and how quickly, does it have invasive roots that are likely to block drains or lift footpaths, buildings etc., is it deciduous so that it provides shade in summer and allows light through in winter, could the plant become invasive i.e. a weed?
- Longevity - how long is the plant likely to live?
- Safety - do the plants have thorns or prickles that may cause injuries, can it cause an allergic reaction, are parts of it poisonous, is it likely to drop branches, is it likely to burn easily (i.e. Eucalypts)?
- Maintenance - does it require pruning, staking and regular feeding, does it drop leaves or fruit that may need to be swept or raked etc.?

- Hardiness - is it prone to attack from pests and diseases, is it readily affected by pollutants etc.?
- Appearance things such as flower and leaf shape, colour and texture, or the overall shape of the plant itself.
- Availability and cost - are the plants you desire readily available, what do they cost, are substitutes readily available?

Other things you should consider are related to the use of the plant i.e. the overall look are you trying to achieve for your garden and what function the plants are required to perform.



Lavenders are hardy and fast growing, but rarely last more than a decade.