

Payne's Nurseries Workshop

Presenter	Lynn Payne
Topic	Gardening for Beginners
Date	March 15, 2014

Gardening is a healthy and rewarding hobby that is very easy if you simply start with the basics. If you don't already have garden tools, you need a

- Shovel, hoe and rake
- good pair of pruners
- wheelbarrow or garden cart
- hand trowel
- pair of gloves, hat and sunscreen

The most obvious benefits of gardening include

- providing an excellent form of exercise by both strengthening muscles as well as aerobic exercise, both of which burn calories
- breathing fresh air and enjoying the warm rays of sun
- enhancing the environment and in turn enhancing our sense of well-being from our accomplishments

People who raise vegetables can take pride in knowing they and their families are enjoying the freshest and healthiest food because you know exactly where it came from and exactly what type of fertilizer and pest control has been used.

The first thing to do is prepare the soil for planting. Simply stated, northern New Mexico's native soil should be mixed with compost and/or mulch at a ratio of 50-50. A vegetable garden needs more compost or mulch each spring to improve the condition of the soil.

Often times we plant flowering shrubs, perennials and annuals all in the same garden so that we have season-long color. With this combination of plants it's very important to prepare the soil adequately the first time because you can't dig-in additional organic conditioners each year because that would disturb

the plants' roots. However, in the spaces where annuals are planted, it's fine to go back every spring to add more organic compost or mulch and dig it into the soil. After the beds have been planted, place an inch or two of mulch on the surface. This helps moderate temperature fluctuations and retain moisture.

After the soil is prepared, it's time to move onto plant selection. What do you want to grow?

If the answer is vegetables, choose a place that gets at least six hours of direct sunlight every day. If the answer is flowers, both annuals and perennials will do just fine with 3 to 4 hours of direct sunlight but, of course, many of them can take full sun all day long. If the answer is shrubs or trees, be sure to check Payne's Plant Library on our website to learn how large the plant will be at full maturity, where it should be sited (full sun, partial sun, etc.) and how much water it will require.

To help with selecting what to grow, here are a few plant definitions:

An **annual** is a plant that only lives one year. Once it starts blooming it will continue until succumbing to a hard freeze.

A **perennial** is a plant that dies back to the ground after a hard freeze but will re-sprout the following spring from the roots that have survived through the winter.

A **shrub** is a plant that develops woody stems that remain year after year. In spring, leaves emerge from the same stems that bore leaves and flowers the previous year.





Easy-to-grow **annuals** include the following:

geraniums
marigolds
petunias
zinnias
portulaca

Easy-to-grow **perennials** include the following:

yarrow
catmint
Shasta daisies
coreopsis
salvia

Easy-to-grow **shrubs** include the following:

forsythia
lilacs
Butterfly Bush (Buddleia)
Rose of Sharon (Althea)
Mahonia

How to plant annuals and perennials:

When planting small plants from a 4-pack, 6-pack or a 4" pot, gently remove the plant from the container and use a trowel to dig a small hole to put the plant into. Take care to place the root ball at the same depth it was growing in the container. Be sure to water thoroughly within 30 minutes after planting.

If you're planting a plant from a 1-gallon container, using a shovel to dig a hole is more efficient. Then plant according to the above instructions.

How to plant shrubs and trees:

- Dig a hole 2 times wider than the plant's root ball and about 2 inches deeper.

- Mix the soil from the hole 50-50 with compost and/or mulch.

- Gently remove the plant from the container and if you notice a lot of roots, make two or three 1" deep cuts in the root ball from top to bottom. This will aid in new root growth. Put about 2" of the soil mixture in the bottom of the hole and lightly tamp it down. Now set the plant in the hole.

- Finally, backfill the hole with the soil mixture while simultaneously running water from the hose until filled. You may have to add a little more soil after the water has drained and the soil has settled. Mix root stimulator according to directions and give your newly planted plant about 2 gallons of this mixture.

