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*From Our Family to Yours*

## **BLUESTONE PREPLANNED GARDENS**

All the planning is done! Perfect for new or experienced gardeners. These plans can be freely adapted to your particular site. You can spread them out to include existing plants, bend them around corners or break them into sections to fit selected areas. Have fun and enjoy! Here are some additional tips for your gardening success:

**GROUND PREPARATION** - A little time spent in soil preparation will be well rewarded. Your plants will appreciate your efforts and reward you with healthy growth and lots of flowers. You will want to first remove any weeds, debris, leaves, etc. from your site. If there is lawn where you want to plant, you will want to take a shovel and 'skim' off the top 2" or so (great for filling low spots elsewhere in your lawn). If the soil is hard to dig with a hand trowel, it will benefit from being loosened up. (It will also make planting much easier, too!) Take a shovel or garden fork and dig a deep shovelful and flip it over in the hole you just made. Repeat about 6" away—working your way across your planting area. If the flip doesn't break up and loosen your soil, you may need to chop a few times with your shovel/fork. This is a great time to incorporate soil amendments. Just spread any needed amendments on the surface before the 'flip'. (Compost is always good!) You can purchase it in bags or make your own for the next year. Work it in so that the result is 'mostly' existing soil but you can still see the compost in the soil.

**PLANTING GUIDE** - We suggest that you water the plants well the day before planting, especially if they have been held for any period of time after arrival. Mark the bed off in four foot sections and lay two wooden yardsticks along the bed, as shown in the planting layout, following the one foot squares on the diagram. With these in place, it is easy to estimate the proper planting position for the various plants. Locate the plants for the first section and place each one on the spot it is to be planted.

When that section is placed, cut off the plastic wrap (if any) at the top of the pot. Plant your plant - pot and all. The roots will quickly grow right through the 100% biodegradable pot and into the surrounding soil. Place the top of the pot a little below the soil line and firm it gently. Build a ring of ridged soil 6" from the plant - it will help you water-in thoroughly. Next, you should water deeply to 'settle' the plant and remove any air pockets around the roots. Progress to the next section and repeat. When the whole bed has been planted, set a sprinkler or water by hand for at least 30 to 40 minutes. Be sure to water deeply around and away from the plant. You want the plant to be 'reaching out' to find water.

**FEEDING** - As you gain experience, you will soon be able to tell if your plants lack nutrition by how they are growing. Dull foliage, anemic growth, yellowing—these are all signs of hunger. If annuals have grown well in the bed before without fertilizer, then no additional fertilizer will be required for the perennials beyond an annual maintenance light feeding each year. If you go with an organic fertilizer, be sure that it is composted well and aged. Fresh manure can actually harm your plants. Since it needs to be worked into the soil, manure is more useful for a new bed.

Most of us don't have access to cow, horse, or chicken manure so a store bought fertilizer can be the way to go. You'll have two types to choose from: water soluble (ex. Miracle-Gro) or a solid feed (ex. Osmocote). We prefer the solid feed type, which looks a bit like bird seed—a time-release variety works the best. This will slowly feed your plants every time you water or it rains. It will typically be good for 100 days or 3 months. Whichever product you choose will give you detailed instructions on application and rates. On established beds, we like to feed in the spring about the same time you see dandelions beginning to flower. For shrubs: Early spring is best - don't feed from mid-summer on as winter will harm fresh late season growth.

What you will be trying to achieve is a garden that is established and can basically get along without any great effort each year. This is a very realistic goal, and we hope that these plants and instructions will give you a good start in that direction.

*Happy Planting!*