

**CARVER SCOTT EXTENSION MASTER GARDENERS****2017****DESIGN OPTIONS: GROWING UP (VERTICAL GARDENING)****ADVANTAGES**

Aside from the larger trees and shrubs in the landscape, we often look to other means of adding vertical interest to our gardens.

CAMOUFLAGE

Plants may be used to cover eyesores, such as growing a vine up a dead tree, placing a vine-covered trellis to block the sight-line to a neighbor's parked car, or simply covering an unsightly fence.

CHANGING POINT OF INTEREST

Actual vertical gardens or container plants simply hung on structures serve the purpose of drawing the eye upward and away from ordinary plantings below them.

ADDING DRAMA

Interesting containers or large vertical gardens can add drama to otherwise plain structures such as walls or fences. Recycled materials such as wood pallets may be painted with bold colors and used to hold foliage plants, or left natural and planted with bright annuals.

Window boxes come in many sizes, shapes, and colors, and make a great addition to an otherwise dull house facade. The plants that will grow well in a window box and provide color are almost limitless, but you can't go wrong if you start with Geraniums, Petunias, or Sweet Potato Vine.

Standard plant pots may be painted and hung on fences or any number of recycled items may be planted and placed on walls, tables, fences, chairs, or even hung from trees. If an item will hold enough soil to support a plant, it's fair game as a plant container.

Actual vertical gardens are generally made from shallow wooden boxes with a chicken wire grid to hold soil and plants in place. Start your garden flat on the ground or a

table, and wait to hang it in place once the plants are well-rooted. Be sure to take the garden down weekly for watering.

SPACE LIMITATIONS

Today's smaller yards don't need to frustrate a gardener. Trees and shrubs may be pruned to a flat plane against a fence or wall (espalier). Or look to a variety of supports which may be used to train vining vegetables so they don't consume the entire lawn space.

VINES

A designer's delight, vines come in both annual and perennial form, with leaves, flowers, and fruit in almost every color. Some are even edible!

Vines climb by several means, and the type of vining structure for each vine determines the necessary support. Those that climb by tendrils must have small string or wire to wrap around, while those that have twining stems can climb larger poles. Plants with stick-tights can even scale flat surfaces.

The appropriate supports are best installed at the same time, or before, the vine is planted

By looking at your property with a critical eye, and considering vertical gardens or vines, you can add additional layers of function and beauty to even the smallest yard.

RESOURCES

1. <http://www.extension.umn.edu/garden/yard-garden/trees-shrubs/vines-growing-a-living-screen/>
2. "Vines for Minnesota" by Jackie Smith

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