

KPOV – *The Point*  
Gardening: Get Good at It  
“Edible Landscaping”  
June 12, 2018

When people think about growing food, the first idea is generally to hide the vegetable garden somewhere in the backyard. Edible landscaping offers an alternative to conventional residential landscapes; edible plants can be just as attractive while producing fruits and vegetables. One can install an entirely edible landscape or incorporate edible plants into existing gardens.

Edible landscaping is the use of food producing plants in the landscape. It combines fruit and nut trees, berry bushes, vegetables herbs, edible flowers with ornamental plants in pleasing designs.

By adding edibles into your landscape, you can:

- Enjoy the freshness and flavor of home-grown fully ripened fruits and vegetables
- Control the quantity and kind of pesticides and herbicides used on the foods you consume
- Increase the food security of your household
- Save on grocery bills
- Grow unusual varieties not available in stores
- Get outside, interact with the natural world, and have fun

Planting edibles in your garden is no different than designing a garden without edibles, but the benefits are remarkable. There are so many plants with a wide variety of textures, shapes and sizes. Thoughtful placing of hardscape (pathways, stepping stones, a bird bath, an arbor) keeps your garden landscape interesting. Consider our Central Oregon environment and what is already growing in your microclimate and in your garden. What edibles can you incorporate?

Make a list of the edibles you like and what their cultural needs are. A water guzzler and a drought tolerant plant may not be good neighbors in your garden. After you have your list of what edibles you would like in your garden, create special areas of interest. Maybe you'd like a walkway lined with blueberries, which will reward you with tasty summer fruit and blazing fall color. Maybe you have a single juniper tree or maybe several.

Last year, I finally added rhubarb with its big sun loving leaves to my edible garden. In all my summer canning and jamming, I never considered marrying the juniper's berries and rhubarb, but the compatible flavors in my rhubarb and juniper berry jam were delicious. Juniper berries can make a delicious cup of tea, too.

Edibles need 6-8 hours a day of sunshine and will require better soil, artful watering, and fertilizing at the right times, and the vigilant management of diseases and insects... especially when the plants are young. Ornamental plants offer a wide range in flower colors, foliage, shape and texture. With a little research it is possible to find edibles with the characteristics you value. Love the blossoms on a dogwood tree? Apple trees and crabapple trees have beautiful pink or white blossoms. Enjoy the shape and deep red color of the leaves on a Japanese maple? Black elderberry has beautiful lacy leaves and the benefit of those yummy berries used for jelly, syrup and wine. The elderberry has an added benefit as a good fire-resistant plant.

After you have your list of what you would like to incorporate into your garden, draw yourself a map of what is currently growing in your landscape. Knowing what is growing and where it is located along with what permanent objects are in your garden will go a long way when placing your desired edible. And start small. There is no great rush to plant everything you think you might want at one time. Allow ample room between your plants so that they can grow without the hindrance of its neighbor.

Although there are many ideas and concepts to consider when planning the edible landscape, the outcome can be glorious. The smell of fragrant flowers in the air and the taste of strawberry on your tongue may just be your little bit of heaven.

For more information on edible landscaping and other gardening topics visit our website at [www.gocomga.com](http://www.gocomga.com) and click the KPOV tab on the orange bar. Thanks for listening to "Gardening- Get Good at It! on KPOV, The Point.

### Resources

Oregon Vegetables: Herbs and Spices

<http://horticulture.oregonstate.edu/content/herbs-and-spices-0>

Edible Landscaping

[http://extension.oregonstate.edu/mg/metro/sites/default/files/edible\\_landscaping.pdf](http://extension.oregonstate.edu/mg/metro/sites/default/files/edible_landscaping.pdf)

Edible Landscapes

<https://u.osu.edu/cfaescapstone/>