

Five Things Needed By Novice Gardener

(Editor's Note: The following dispatch, the first of three, contains tips for new gardeners and reminders for old-timers.)

By PATRICIA O'CONNOR
United Press International
Washington - (UPI) - Every novice gardener needs five things: a suitable plot, proper tools, a plan, know-how, and things to plant - seeds or seedlings.

Consider the plot. Big oaks from little acorns don't grow unless the acorns fall on suitable land.

The ideal plot gets at least six hours of sun a day, is well drained and covered with fertile soil. Close by there should be a source of water.

City gardeners especially need to beware of land pocked with rubbish. But here's a rule of thumb: if it produces a quick growth of weeds or grass, the plot's suitable for a potential garden.

Simple Tools
Now consider tools. The typical home gardener requires only a few simple tools. The basic tools include a spade or spading fork, a steel rake, a seven-inch hoe, a hose and cord for row-marking.

You add tools to meet special needs. For example, a trowel's handy when transplanting. A wheelbarrow is a must for larger gardens - to save strain on the back.

Buy well-made, high-grade tools that will last. Well designed implements can save labor as well as money.

Like the family car, tools last longer if kept clean. A good wiping with heavy oil after cleaning prevents rust. Cutting edges need to be kept sharp.

Fireplace Wall Improvement Can Modernize Rooms

If you want to give your living room a "new look," then look at the entire fireplace wall first - rather than the room itself.

By simplifying the design of the fireplace such as removing a protruding mantel or modernizing bookcases or possibly even paneling over any existing small windows, you can give the whole room a modern appearance.

Determine whether you want to actually "modernize" or just simplify the design of your room. Easy to install pre-finished wood wall paneling is available in Early American "pegged board" effects as well as contemporary wide-panel strips. The warmth and texture of wood will contrast beautifully with existing plaster walls in the room.

Best Bet
Your best bet for a colorful and practical resurfacing material for hearth and fireplace is ceramic tile. Sparks won't damage a tile hearth; smoke or soot can be wiped off quickly from ceramic tile facing.

Your choice of color, texture and even size in ceramic tile is virtually endless. Real tile comes in individual units, so you can be your own designer to create your own one-of-a-kind decor.

Here are some other ideas: Add a low but raised ceramic tile hearth along the length of the wall. At the fireplace opening it will serve as a genuine fireproof hearth; on either side it becomes a practical and decorative built-in seat. Install a recessed wood box. If your fireplace is on an outside wall, you can add a "back door" for easy loading. And if the floor is surfaced with real tile, even the grimeiest log won't damage its colorful finish.

GYMS SAFE
Outdoor jungle "gyms" of rugged steel are safe muscle builders.

A rubber hose will last longer if it's neatly coiled and hung on several pegs to distribute its weight.

Your local garden store can help with latest information on new tools and steer you away from fads - or poor investments.

Where the plan's concerned, there's something to be learned from veteran hay-seeds. They make a scale drawing of the garden plot, noting where to put annuals without disturbing perennials. They try not to plant tall-growing crops in a way that will shade shorter plants. **Plant Too Soon**

Novice gardeners often plant too much too soon because they didn't plan in the first place. It's no fun to have a refrigerator full of lettuce one week and none the rest of the season.

A good blueprint includes a plan for successive planting. Follow one crop with a later maturing variety - or maybe with an entirely different crop. You'll get maximum use of land and growing season and a variety of fresh food on the table.

Timing is vital. Choose the variety of seeds for your own area and soil.

Ask your dealer or county agricultural agent about new

disease-resistant seeds. The U. S. Department of Agriculture has developed new strains this year. For example - vanguard lettuce is a brand

new type that's extra large, top quality, slow maturing and resistant to tipburn.

Tendercrop is a new snap bean that resists mosaic and pod mottle. If you want a pink-fleshed tomato, there's a new variety called pink-shipper. It is wilt resistant.

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