

# Great Gardens in Small Spaces

## Washington County Master Gardener™ Association

### Getting Gardening Right: Place — Plant — Care — Help

Successful gardens have the *Right Plant* in the *Right Place* with the *Right Care*.



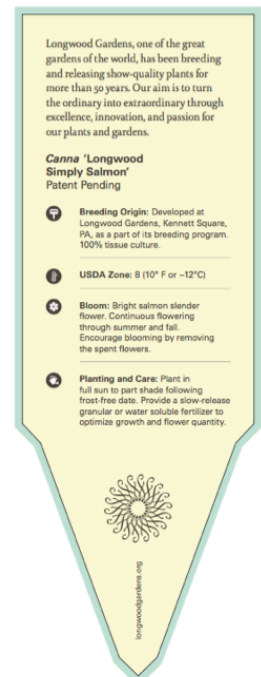
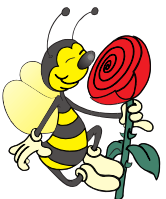
#### Right Place — Locating plants in your garden where they will grow the best.

- Consider
  - ◇ Space — area available for plants and/or containers will determine the number and size of plants that will fit happily
  - ◇ Light — amount of direct sun and/or shade the plant will get
  - ◇ Soil — type of soil will influence which plants will do best
    - \* Type — sticky or muddy clay soil, or light sandy soil, or somewhere in the middle
    - \* Soil tests are helpful to see the pH of the soil (how acidic or alkaline) and whether added nutrients are needed.
    - \* If planting annual flowers or vegetables, amending the soil can be helpful.



#### Right Plant — Choosing the right plants for a space cuts down on the maintenance.

- Decide if you want a plant that is
  - ◇ Evergreen or deciduous
  - ◇ Has flowers or attracts birds/butterflies
  - ◇ Uses little water or is drought tolerant
- Read the plant label carefully. It provides information about the plant and what it needs to grow well.
  - ◇ Height and width noted on tree and shrub labels is estimated height and width at 10 years, depending upon growing conditions
- Look the plant over carefully.
  - ◇ Select plants that have some new growth and look healthy
  - ◇ Check the pot, few or no roots should be growing out of the bottom and the top should be weed free.
  - ◇ Look at the leaves to see if there are any holes that indicate insect damage.
  - ◇ Look for excessive yellowing of leaves. Some yellowing is natural as the plant puts its resources into new growth.
- If possible, avoid flowering plants treated with neonicotinoids, to protect pollinators. Some plant labels include the phrase “Bee Safe.”



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**Right Care** – Many plant problems, including diseases or insects, start with improper care.

- Watering — frequency and depth of watering depend on moisture requirements of the plant and the type of soil. Compacted and clay soils drain slower and sandy soils drain more quickly.
  - ◇ To minimize water use and to decrease risk of plant problems, use drip or soaker hoses rather than overhead sprinklers.
  - ◇ Hand watering works for plants in pots or those that need more water than other plants in the garden.
  - ◇ New plants need more water the first 2-3 years that they are in the ground
- Fertilizing – get a soil test to determine what nutrients might be needed, if any.
  - ◇ Major nutrients are Nitrogen, Phosphorus and Potassium (N-P-K) They are listed on the front of fertilizer packages by the amount of each (e.g., 10-5-7)
  - ◇ Regular use of compost and fertilizers with phosphorus (P) contribute to excess phosphorus in the soil which can inhibit the plant's uptake of nutrients.
- Herbicides – use sparingly to avoid harming beneficial insects or other plants and always follow application directions on the label.



**Right Help** – Even with the right place, the right plant, and the right care, gardening questions arise from time to time. The following resources provide reliable information:

- Master Gardeners™ <https://bit.ly/MetroMG>
- 10-Minute University/Clackamas County Master Gardeners™ <https://bit.ly/ccmghandouts> (in English)
- Planttalk Colorado™ – [https://bit.ly/garden\\_topics](https://bit.ly/garden_topics)
- California Department of Pesticide Regulation <https://bit.ly/herbicidealternatives>
- Clemson Cooperative Extension <https://bit.ly/soiltestinformation>

**More information:**

