

ENTRY GARDENS - BEYOND THE OBVIOUS

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1. Gardens are more than 'plants around the edges' – Think about why you place plants where you do. Try to create drifts and groupings as opposed to lines or rows.
2. Remember to allow for circulation and functionality. Can you get around the house? Do you need to? Do you trip over plants when you get out of the car? How will you get to the hose and how do you maintain plants at the back of the bed? Can you safely mow that front slope? What about the mail carrier? Is there a way to incorporate a path from next door?
3. Make the main walk to your house wide and welcoming. Can two people walk side by side to the front door? Is there an opportunity for an alternate route? Is night lighting adequate and safe?
4. Even entry gardens need a theme, something to unify it and make it a comfortable and inviting space. Think about how you want it to feel – Intimate or open? Natural and woodsy or like an english cottage garden? Lush and tropical or formal and trim? What style of Architecture is the house? Is there any opportunity to incorporate Art or garden structures? What about the sound of water or someplace to put down packages (or remove muddy boots) before you open the door?
5. Know your property. Are there any drainage problems? Where is the sunniest spot in the summer? Is there a good 'morning spot', 'sunset spot', or 'nighttime spot' for hanging out? These may be in unexpected places. Do you know the most protected place for tender plants – the first place the snow melts and the last? Where are the predominant winter and summer winds?
6. Think about what you are trying to achieve, then choose plants and structures to accommodate that. Involve the whole family in the planning process: Year-round interest, Fragrance and textures, Food for people and wildlife, Improving views which are unappealing, Privacy, Fostering community...Let these ideas suggest design possibilities. Be adaptable and flexible. Have fun!

