

gardening

Take a long range view

By Pat Leuchtman
leisure Columnist

Gardeners plan ahead. Before they plant that first pea seed in the spring they are already planning how they will handle the harvest in the fall. And when they plant berry bushes or fruit trees they are thinking even further ahead than the end of the season.

Long range planning can be very valuable to the gardener. It can save many errors that can cost a lot of energy and money to correct. A lot of thought is required to decide where to put the asparagus and rhubarb patches because once they are planted they are set for many years.

Autumn is a good time to start

thinking about long range plans. There is finally time to rest, but the things that need changing or improving are still fresh in the mind. You may not be able to do everything at once, but if you can create a complete vision in your mind, or better yet on paper, of what your garden space could look like, you've taken a big step in making that vision a reality.

And vegetable gardeners are not the only ones who can benefit from long range planning. Land is an investment, whether it is a city house-lot or a 100-acre farm. Homeowners will want to think how it can be maintained and improved just as they do their houses. Also, with a little thought, land can provide space for many family activities or just plain relaxing in a comfortable and attractive environment.

One way to start your planning is to sit down and make lists of all the things you would like to have. Each family will have its own ideas about what is desirable. One family might want to have a larger garden and fruit trees. One might decide they need a tool shed to house all the equipment and tools that seems to proliferate so quickly. Another will want to upgrade the landscaping and plan a large perennial border.

While we are making lists we can try and make projections about family growth and changes. Babies are born and a fenced-in play yard in sight of the kitchen windows becomes a priority. Children grow and require a climbing apparatus and swings. A wife discovers herbs and longs for an 18th century knot garden. A husband discovers the

barbecue and wants to have an outdoor grill and a patio so that he can cook and entertain in style. All these things have to be considered when making a plan.

Once you have your list, you can start to doodle on sketches of your property so that you can get a sense of how things will look and fit together. An integrated plan will help you achieve a handsome and considered effect even when several years are required to finish.

I know of one family that took three summers to build a swimming

pool. The first summer they cleared away trees and brush. The second year they excavated and the third summer they put in the pool. It took a while but none of them would deny that the waiting and the work were worthwhile.

After you have sketched your whole plan you can begin to set some priorities. You may want to do some things before others because they are most needed. A fenced-in play yard may be more necessary than new foundation plantings. Or you may want to do some things

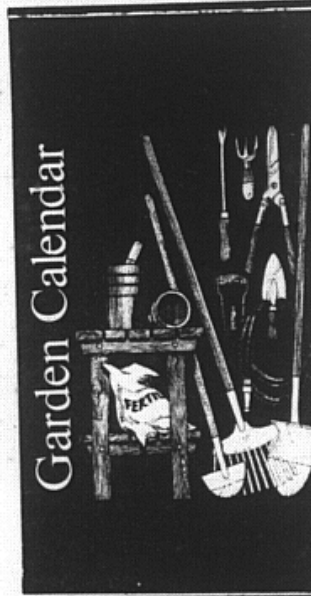
The following information is provided by the Franklin County Extension Service:

Now is the time to:

- Screen tender plants from winter winds.
- Store leftover seeds in a cool dry place.
- Fertilize houseplants.
- Put up mouse and rabbit guards around apple trees.
- Clean up underneath grape vines.

Note:

- Still time to lime lawns and gardens.
- When the heat goes on, houseplants dry quickly.



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NEXT AT THE GARDEN "DIVINE MADNESS"

first because they will take a while to develop.

For instance, you may want to start planting dwarf fruit trees before you enlarge the vegetable garden. Obviously, priorities will reflect not only the desirability of a project, but the limitations of time, energy and money as well.

Rarely are limitations so severe that no progress can be made at all and that is the delight of a long range plan; you have the vision and no matter how many little steps you have to take, you are on the road to achieving that vision.

Things are rarely as perfect as we would like them to be, but through careful evaluation and planning we can make reality more perfect all the time.