Plan a Theme Garden For Added Interest
Donna Aufdenberg, Horticulture Specialist

Theme gardens can be a fun way to get everyone, especially kids, involved in a gardening project. They can be as simple or complex as you want to make them.

Theme gardens can be based on a color, plant names, type of plants, or a specific topic or story. They can give small glimpses of a historic period: a garden of medieval times, colonial times or the Shakespearian era. They can deliver a sanctuary for wildlife or even people seeking tranquility and peace. A place where old fashioned plants reside can bring back memories of days long past of grandparents and great grandparents.

Use your imagination and see what fun ideas you can come up with for your own theme garden. Here are some of the themes I have found and some basic tips to keep in mind when you are planning.

**Theme Garden Tips:**
* Include plants that enjoy similar growing conditions
* Choose a theme broad enough to allow you latitude when choosing plants
* Filler plants are okay, even if they do not strictly fit the theme
* When planning the garden, don’t forget to use the basic fundamentals of landscape design: Height, Texture, Color, Focal Points, Fillers, Borders, etc.

**Ideas for Theme Gardens:**
- **Alphabet Garden:** plants with names starting with all the letters in the alphabet from asters to zinnias.
- **Scent Garden:** plants that have fragrant leaves or flowers from lavender, rosemary, roses, or honeysuckle to name a few.
Food Allergies and Food Intolerances
Judy Lueders, Nutrition and Health Education Specialist

It is fairly common to hear people say they have a food allergy. A true food allergy can cause serious illness, and even death. A food allergy is a body’s immune response when a certain food is consumed. A protein in the food causes the release of antibodies. The antibodies trigger a reaction.

Food allergies are more likely if there is a family history of any type of allergies. Food allergies are most common in children under the age of three years, and they may out grow some allergies. Six to eight percent of children have food allergies and close to four percent of adults have food allergies.

In adults the most common allergies are to fish and shellfish (such as shrimp, lobster and crab), peanuts, tree nuts (such as walnuts) and eggs. The most common foods that bring about allergies in children are eggs, milk, peanuts, and tree nuts. Peanuts and tree nuts are the most common cause of deadly allergic reactions. Other foods can also lead to allergies.

Food Intolerances can cause reactions to food that result in symptoms similar to allergies, but they are not a result of the body producing an antibody.

Histamines are chemicals that form in some types of food, such as cheese, some wines, tuna or mackerel. Usually the histamines in fish are the result of improper refrigeration. Food poisoning from microbes, bacteria or toxins can also cause symptoms similar to allergies or intolerance.

Lactose intolerance affects 10% of the population. When a person does not have enough of the digestive enzyme lactase, the lactose in many dairy products causes abdominal pain, bloating, and diarrhea. Lactase can be added to milk to prevent symptoms.

Food additives may result in reactions similar to an allergy. MSG is a flavor enhancer, which can cause flushed skin, feelings of warmth, headaches, chest discomfort and feelings of detachment in some people. Sulfites are naturally in some foods, but may also be added for crispness or as a preservative. People with severe asthma are most susceptible to bad effects from sulfites. Sulfites can no longer be used as a spray on fresh produce.

Gluten intolerance is associated with celiac disease. Gluten is in some grains including wheat, rye, triticale, and barley. Celiac disease runs in families and can be triggered by surgery, childbirth, an infection or other stress. Symptoms are abdominal bloating and pain, chronic diarrhea, vomiting, constipation, weight loss, anemia, fatigue, joint pain, dermatitis, canker sores, depression, numbness of hands and feet, and other symptoms. When reading labels, there are many ingredients that are part of grain to avoid, so for a complete list go to http://www.celiacdisease.net/gluten-free-diet/

If you suspect you have an allergy or intolerance, make notes of symptoms and how soon they occur after consuming the foods to assist the doctor in trying to diagnose the problem. Read labels, particularly the ingredient list very carefully. You will need to learn all the terms for the food or it’s components that might be included in the ingredient list to avoid having reactions.

Information for this article came from “Food Allergy An Overview” http://www3.niaid.nih.gov/topics/foodAllergy/PDF foodallergy.pdf
Choosing the Type of Elder Care YOU Need
Mary Gosche, Human Development Specialist

There are many long term care options for the elderly. For example, services are available in the home or in different types of facilities. Talk with your family, doctor, or a social worker to help YOU decide on what elder care that you need.

Elder Care Choices

- **Community Services** - includes adult day care, Meals-on Wheels, Senior Citizen centers.

- **Home Care** - can be nursing or attendant care in the home.

- **Subsidized Senior Housing** - may be for low or moderate income. Rent payments are usually a percentage of your income.

- **Group Homes** - are for people who can’t live alone but do not need nursing home services. Help with daily living activities are usually available.

- **Assisted Living Facilities** - help with daily living activities, meals, and distribution of medicine. Residents live in their own room or apartment with shared common areas.

- **Continued Care Retirement Communities** - offer more than one kind of housing and different levels of care. There may be individual homes or apartments, assisted living facility, and nursing home care. These communities may require a large payment and charge monthly fees.

- **Hospice** - is a special way of caring for people who are terminally ill and for the families. Care is provided at home, hospital, or in the nursing home.

- **Nursing home care** - is for the frail elderly. Follow these steps to find the elder care facility or nursing home that is best for you:

1. **Find the elder care facilities in your area.**
   - Medicare’s Nursing Home Compare web tool has information to help you find and compare nursing homes. Visit www.medicare.gov/NHCompare. Search by name, city, county, state, or ZIP code.
   - Ask people you trust like friends, neighbors, family or clergy.
   - If you are in a hospital, ask the social worker for a list of local nursing homes or elder care facilities with an available bed.
   - Contact your local Area Agency on Aging for a list of long-term care choices. The number is 573-335-3331 or toll free 1-800-392-8771.

2. **Compare the quality of the nursing home or elder care facility** - by looking at health inspection and fire safety reports, nursing home staffing rates, and quality ratings. Find out how many stars the facility you are interested in received on their quality rating.

3. **Visit the nursing homes or care facilities** - to give yourself a chance to see the facility and ask questions of the residents and staff.

   Before visiting a care facility, consider what is important to you:
   - Can you participate in social, recreational, religious, or cultural activities?
   - Do you get to choose what time to get up, go to sleep, and bathe?
   - Is transportation provided?
   - Can you keep your doctor?
   - Is it close to family and friends so they can visit?
   - Can you bring your pet?

The list is of questions that need to be considered is long, so consider your priorities.

4. **Choose the facility that meets your needs.**

   Moving is difficult but do not stay in a facility that is not right for you.

For more information go to: Guide to Choosing a Nursing Home by Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services. 1-800-633-4227.
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- **Herb Garden**: a common theme garden that is also useful in the kitchen.
- **Native/Wildflower Garden**: plants that are native to the area such as coneflowers, Missouri primrose, rose verbena, etc.
- **Topiary Garden**: depending on your skill level and need of a challenge, shaping shrubs into recognizable shapes can be fun.
- **Rock Garden**: discussed in last month’s newsletter—using readily available rocks to form your garden
- **Color Garden**: plants of one specific color—a pink garden, white garden, etc.
- **Animal Garden**: plants that have animal names such as bee balm, cardinal flower, butterfly weed, hens and chicks, monkey grass, lamb’s ear, etc.
- **Fourth of July Garden**: red, white, and blue plants of course!
- **Outer Space Garden**: grow vines on a rocket fashioned of bamboo canes, and plants like cosmos, rocket flowers, moonflowers, and moon and stars watermelon.
- **Chocolate Garden**: look for chocolate varieties of plants or plants with chocolate in the name such as “Chocolate Soldiers” columbine, chocolate cosmos, chocolate-mint scented geraniums, etc. and mulch with cocoa beans.
- **Edible Garden**: bet you did not think of your normal veggie garden but it is also a theme garden!

The only limit is your imagination and the amount of work you are willing to do to create a healthy, flourishing theme garden.