

Organic Gardening in Northeast Ohio 101

Kevin McCausland, Senior Construction Supervisor

What is organic gardening? Organic gardening consists of many basic ideas and practices, but I would like to focus on only the main principles.

Organic gardening starts in the soil; this is the key to lush, full plants. Nutrient-rich soil typically has an abundance of microorganisms, nutrients and earthworms. Healthy soil also retains water and nutrients as well as allows drainage and good airflow. All of these are a must for "healthy" soil. Most yards do not have the perfect soil waiting to be planted. The good news is that there are plenty of options to get us started to a healthy garden for fruits and veggies all summer and fall. Here are my steps to get started on your first garden.

- Pick out the perfect area with good sunlight and airflow.
- Mark out the size area you want to have a garden in.
- Perform a deep tilling of that area. Clean out and dispose of rocks, roots and debris that was turned up in the tilling process.
- Perform a soil test to see what type of soil you have and what nutrients should be added to balance the pH of the soil and give your plants the best opportunity.
- Since you are going with organic gardening, you will want to be clear that all soil amendments must be natural composts, manures or elements.

I till in a layer of compost and sand to my garden every spring. The sand gives the soil a loamier composition. This allows air to flow easier through the top layer of soil, allows better drainage, keeps soil compaction down which helps roots spread faster and farther, and allows nutrients to be absorbed easier by the plants.

Till again after all soil amendments have been spread evenly. Till several times in a checkerboard pattern to allow for the best cultivation and spread of nutrients. Rake out the soil into evenly spaced rows, leaving plenty of room for air circulation when plants are mature. I like to leave rows 30" apart in my garden.

After this last step, you are ready to get planting. Follow directions for all your seeds and potted plants. Spacing and depth are the most important. Good luck this year!

Plan. Design. Build. Enjoy.



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A LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

Our Commitment Is To Exceed Your
Highest Expectations The First Time

As you can well imagine, writing a letter every quarter can sometimes be a taxing exercise especially coming up with topics to write about. So, I use life experiences to generate most of my writing. Where do I start this time? Oh yea...so everyone has heard about the shoemaker and his shoes being worn out. Well there are many similarities between the shoemaker and a landscaper. Point in case, I finally did my own back yard. I want to give a big shout out to my team because they did an amazing job and finished it in time to enjoy my youngest daughter's 16th birthday. I was also lucky enough to have a Memorial Day party where I could invite over many friends and family. That's where this story begins.

Sometimes you take things for granted and unfortunately, that usually includes your friends and family. We had over 100 people in our back yard; I am still amazed that many people even like me! What I will say is I spent most of the evening bouncing around talking to our guests about this story and that memory. Of course, you always say where has the time gone and can't believe it's been so long since I saw some of our friends. Unfortunately, as you get older, your friends don't change, life just gets in the way...kids' sports, work, marriage, school, etc.

It was nice to have ALL our close friends together, and the crazy part about it is that many of them knew each other from previous experiences. The old verse is, "Life is 7 degrees of separation", but in Cleveland, I think it's more like 3 degrees of separation.

I want to say THANK YOU to all my friends for 31 years of great memories. It was nice to have all of you together to celebrate Memorial Day, a day that most of us probably take for granted. I can't even begin to imagine losing a son or daughter serving our country. All I know is, if it wasn't for those soldiers who made the ultimate sacrifice, we may not be able to enjoy the memories we do. Thank you to all members of the armed services, past and present, who put their life on the line every day to keep this great country free.

Mark Mazzurco, President

"Spend time with those you love. One of these days you will say either, I wish I had or I'm glad I did."

Zig Ziglar

OVERHEAD STRUCTURES

Dean Cook, *Construction Supervisor*

It's that time of year when everyone wants to be outside as much as possible. With an overhead structure at your house, you can do so rain or shine! Think of your outdoor space as an extension of your home. At H&M Landscaping we offer a vast array of styles. From modern to contemporary, the possibilities are endless with the right imagination. Outdoor structures — pergolas, outdoor kitchens, fireplaces — can completely transform the look of a deck or patio and turn a seldom-used space into a stylish outdoor room. An overhead structure can also prolong the enjoyment and pleasure that the outdoors provides. If the look you are after isn't being offered to you the way you see it in your head, then contact H&M Landscaping and get the vision you see and deserve.



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PEOPLE BLOOM

Chris White, *Executive Vice-President*

People often ask me, "Why have you spent your whole career in landscaping?" One of the best things about being in the Green Industry is obviously the observance of flowers. Many people take up gardening simply to see the beauty of flora and the reward of hard work to achieve them. For me there's more and I'm grateful every day.

I get to see the sun rise every morning; we landscapers are up pretty early. The phrase about making hay while the sun shines holds true for this industry. I often get to see the sun set. Sometimes crews must work until dark, or meetings with customers happen later to accommodate schedules. Being able to see the beginning and the end of each day is a small miracle.

Another benefit is the people. I've found most of the population of this industry are humble folk. Most got into the craft because of an artistic itch or a desire to help others. The job requires intelligence, perseverance and being able to work as a team. I admire all these qualities in people and try to raise my own skills in these areas too.

The last item is watching nature take its course over time. I've designed and maintained countless landscapes. There are many symbolic references that apply to life such as "building a solid foundation" of a retaining wall or "setting roots" of a tree. These lessons and phrases can apply to life and remind us of why we are here. In my opinion, it is to help others and help them bloom. This is just like the flower of the orchid which took countless hours to feed, grow and bloom. Sounds a lot like helping people grow and "bloom" into something special.

"The lesson I have thoroughly learnt and wish to pass on to others, is to know the enduring happiness that the love of a garden gives."

Gertrude Jekyll

Creating a unique landscape design is a collaborative effort between you and our design specialists. The **H&M Landscaping** design team takes pride in creating a work of art with your property as its canvas. Together we will transform your vision into our next award winning project.

DID YOU KNOW?

Nick Tinik
Director of Maintenance Operations

- There is growing evidence that horticulture is important on a human level. Plants lower blood pressure, reduce muscle tension related to stress, improve attention and reduce feelings of fear and anger or aggression.
- A dense cover of plants and mulch holds soil in place, keeping sediment out of lakes, streams, storm drains and roads while reducing flooding, mudslides and dust storms.
- A study cited in *Smart Money Magazine* indicated that consumers value a landscaped home up to 11.3% higher than its base price and that landscaping investment is nearly always recovered and can help reduce time on the market.
- Well-maintained trees and shrubs can increase property value by up to 14%.
- Each average-sized tree provides an estimated \$7 savings in annual environmental benefits, including energy conservation and reduced pollution.
- Trees provide shade and shelter, reducing yearly heating and cooling costs by 2.1 billion dollars.



GET TO KNOW...

Tommy Milde
Maintenance Supervisor



My name is Tommy Milde and I have been in the landscaping industry for over 22 years. When you are in a profession that long, you tend to think you know it all, that is until you become a supervisor.

At H&M Landscaping you run a small portion of the company like it is your very own. A good supervisor will inspire, challenge and motivate their employees. I think one of the best qualities a supervisor can possess is the skill to recognize talent and potential in others. Your employees look to you for inspiration, advice and leadership. Always have confidence and be positive in the decisions you make. While a confident and positive outlook is important, not every decision you make will work out well. When an Enhancement sale fails or a choice backfires, accept responsibility and learn from your mistakes; I will be the first one to say I've made plenty. I always get through situations like that by keeping a positive attitude and learning from my mistakes.



THE NEW H&M SIGN IN NEWBURY

As promised in our last newsletter - We are debuting our new sign at the entrance to our Newbury location. The large sandstone wheel is 6" thick and was engraved by Sheffield Monuments in nearby Chagrin Falls. This new addition to our building frontage was designed by our own Kevin McCausland, Assistant Production Manager and Steve Petersen, Senior Construction Supervisor.

Think of adding a customized stone entry to your own driveway. Call our professionals for a free estimate!