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Think Green Gardens and Window Boxes

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Tired of the freezing white stuff? It's time to think spring which means green and all the colors that go with it. Now is the time to plan the coming year's garden beds and containers.

Think about putting in a row of flowers in your vegetable garden. Growing up on the farm, my grandmother always had a long row for flowers and in it were zinnias, marigolds, cosmos and bachelor buttons. They added interest, fragrance, and color, not to mention insecticide-repelling properties for some, such as marigolds. If you don't have room for a row, maybe some spot plantings would work for you.

Another way to bring interest and color to your garden is to add structures like a tepee made from poles or saplings for pole beans. Mounds made by shoveling the soil can be shaped into large crescents, triangles and squares, etc. (Mounds are basically raised rows or beds and are great for root crops that need soft soil to do well).

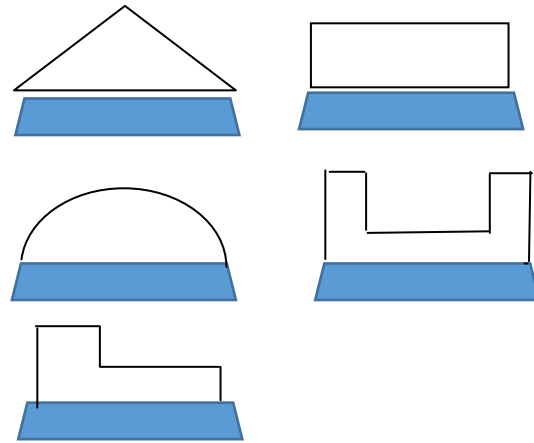
A few edible flowers sprinkled here and there in the garden can be harvested when you pick greens and other salad makings. Calendula and Johnny Jump Ups are easy to grow and a delight to add to tossed salad. They bring color and surprise, not a lot of taste but a lot of "Am I supposed to eat this?" and then "That's pretty good!" Nasturtiums are very good in salad but do have a bit of a kick, so try them out before adding a lot. All parts of the Nasturtiums are good to eat—leaves, blossoms, and green seeds.

I always have favorite varieties for the vegetable garden: Jade green beans, Sugar Ann peas, Detroit Dark Red beets, Oak Leafed lettuce, Patty Pan summer squash, Candy Roaster winter squash, the list goes on. Each year I plant the tried and true but also put in some other varieties to give them a test. Not only do I grow for the taste, but also for the yield and quality of preservation. The vegetables that I consistently grow must have all three of these factors. It's fun to come up with new favorites.

How about window box designs? Veggies like lettuce and herbs can be grown in window boxes. An herbal window box that produces all summer can come in for the winter and you can

have fresh herbs for potatoes and salads all season long.

Window boxes can be designed with plants of all shapes and sizes that fit into a planned shape as shown below.



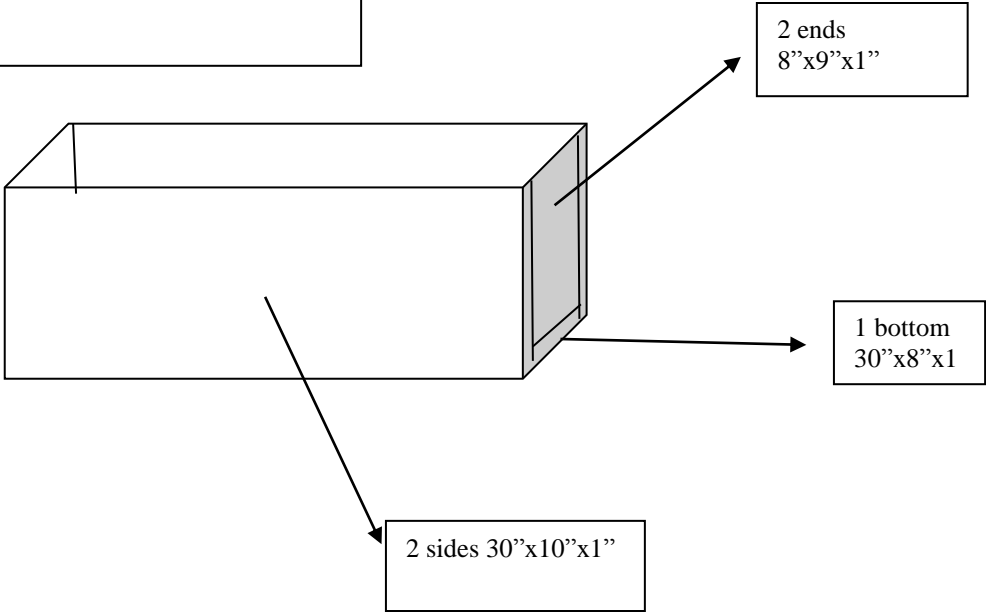
These basic shapes can help you plan your window box. Your plans for plants should include color, bloom time, texture, functionality, site conditions and plant requirements.

Window boxes can be filled with flowers, herbs, and vegetables. They can have mini trellises and draping vines.

Be creative, try something new, start planning now and bring your produce and creations to your county fair as a horticulture exhibit. I'd love to see them at State Fair. Spring won't be here soon enough but it will be here before you know it.

For more information stop by your local Cornell Cooperative Extension.

Large Window Box
30"x10"x 10" outside dia.



Medium Window Box
24"x10"x8" outside dia.

