

MoPlants
Garden Guides

BACKYARD WEDDING MAKEOVER

Maureen "Mo" Gilmer



MIO

MoPlants *Garden Guides*

BACKYARD WEDDING MAKEOVER

Maureen “Mo” Gilmer

Thirty years experience in landscape design and horticulture is the foundation for Maureen “Mo” Gilmer’s success as one of America’s top garden communicators. Among her many accomplishments are fifteen books, a nationally syndicated column, and national television show. Her dedication to empowering people to create more beautiful and satisfying gardens inspired Mo to develop the new E-Book Series: *MoPlants Garden Guides*. *Backyard Wedding Makeover* is designed to help you transform an ordinary yard into the garden of your dreams for that very special day.



Contents

	Page
The Big Idea – Consider your time frame and goals.	1
Evaluating Your Yard – The good, the bad and the fixable.	2
Organizing The Wedding Space – How it all lays out.	5
Places For Plants – Planting design guidelines.	7
Color On Your Canvas – Wedding colors relate to garden colors.	9
Seasonal Flower Bloom Color Lists – Color choice, flower choice.	10
Creative Restoration – Build, repair and repaint.	13
Ambiance and Amenities – Elements of garden décor.	15
The End of The Beginning – What’s next?	16



Copyright ©2006 Maureen Gilmer, Published by MoPress, All Rights Reserved
All photos courtesy of Maureen Gilmer Media Design by Revert Graphics



Flowering plants turn any backyard into a beautiful garden.

The Big Idea

Few weddings rival the beauty of those held in an intimate garden setting. When the garden is your own backyard, the wedding may cost less and prove far easier to organize. But few backyards are wedding ready, and most need a little help to look their best on that special day. The biggest challenge is simply getting started. This book is designed to point you in the right direction and give you a firm set of guidelines to get you started on your way to a complete backyard transformation.

To achieve a makeover, the landscape must be created in a way that ensures the garden is at its color peak by a certain date. This means cleanup must come first so that the plants are in the ground in time to adjust and resume blooming vigorously by the designated date.

The key to a backyard wedding garden is defining the window of opportunity to achieve your goals. These time limitations will influence every decision you make from start to finish. For example, if you're planning a garden party and have just a week to spruce up the yard, then your palette of plants will be limited to high-profile annual flowers purchased in larger container sizes that assure they are already well into their blooming season. These plants cost you more because of their age, which is the price you pay for short notice. In contrast, if it's January and you're planning for an August wedding, you have all spring and most of summer to prepare. You'll be able to save money by growing some plants from seed, which costs just pennies. Other color bedding plants may be purchased as very small container-grown seedlings for a fraction of the cost of the older blooming ones. Don't forget that in the long run they all reach the same size at maturity.

Whether you are working toward a special occasion or a makeover, design fundamentals remain the same;

the only difference is the size of new plants and extent of preparation activity.

Consider your outside space or yard as a garden room. The walls around your outdoor rooms consist of fences, existing shrubs and trees. There may be windows in these walls looking onto the street or into the neighbor's yard, or, best of all, they open onto a pleasant view. Your ceiling is the sky or tree canopies, while the floor coverings are typically groundcovers, paving and lawn. And, similar to indoor rooms, you have decorative art in the garden combined with attractive outdoor furniture arrangements. Whenever you feel overwhelmed by the task of redecorating your yard for a wedding, go back to this outdoor room concept and you'll find solutions based upon what you already know about interiors.

There are also important differences which make outdoor makeovers a bit more complex and intimidating. First, there is the problem of time. You can paint



A garden room is designed much like you would decorate any room in the house.

or paper a bedroom in a weekend to completely transform its character, but even the fastest-growing annual plants require a few weeks to have a similar impact. Second is the fact that a garden is alive while a room is inanimate. Anything that is living requires some degree of nurture and attention if it is to thrive. Third is the problem of skill. It is much simpler to roll paint over a wall than it is to choose plants, prepare soil, and plant. Despite all these differences, redecorating the yard for your wedding can be one of the most satisfying home improvement projects. It will give you pleasure for years after the big day is over.

Evaluating Your Yard

The first and perhaps the most important step in this process is to take a realistic look at your yard. It's not as easy as you think; spaces we've looked at year in and year out tend to lose their clarity. Changes in a yard are subtle: plants become over-grown, the lawn dies out in patches and the fence boards bleach out and crack. Yet all these are critical factors in overall visual quality. To help you see the details of your yard better, consider all the elements discussed below and assess whether they present assets or liabilities in your own garden. Separate the landscape into two categories: the first is hardscape or constructed elements; the second is the status of the plants. Both elements are equally important no matter how large or small the yard.

Hardscape is a word used by landscapers to describe a variety non-plant materials and structures from small buildings to fences and paving. Hardscape is one of the most expensive parts of the garden to replace, so it is wise to preserve and improve what you have rather than replace it.

Paving is used to create walkways, patios and sports courts. Paving can be made three basic ways: a continuous pour such as concrete, unit pavers and loose bulk material like pea gravel.

Concrete slabs are rigid and often crack due to soil heaving under extremes of weather. The cracks should be patched and sanded to create a single unvarying surface. Then paint or stain the slab to even out the color. The slab may be divided by expansion joints designed to control cracking by taking up the stress. The material in the joint may be wood or felt, and this can often disintegrate over time to create a shabby appearance. Simply pushing fresh molding wood into the joints can give an old slab new life.

Unit pavers are brick, interlocking units or concrete

paving units. In recent years a number of great looking unit pavers have come onto the market to expand this as a stylish option for hard garden surfaces. Unit pavers can be laid over a foundation slab of poured concrete and the joints filled with mortar. A faster, cheaper alternative that can look just as good is to lay them on a setting bed of packed coarse construction sand and dry mortar. This becomes the leveled base for a new patio. Unit pavers are the best way to create new paving areas for a wedding because they are solid and little advance time is required.

Loose materials make the best choice for dealing with expansive areas due to low cost. In Europe, pea gravel and decomposed granite have long been the gold stan-



Pea gravel with brick edging is classic and timeless.

dard for manor houses and chateaux drives and terraces. This kind of surfacing is a great problem solver for creating a clean surface for seating areas but it is vulnerable to instability over rain softened ground. It can be particularly problematic for those in stiletto heels!

Wood decks do not enjoy the same life span as standard paving. Even high-grade redwood decks suffer from loose connections and warping, plus wear and tear, which makes them unattractive after a few decades. Just like concrete, wood also expands and contracts with the weather, forcing nail heads up and out of position. Nail heads and splintering are real hazards of older decks, along with the loosening of steps and stairway connections.

Some decks at homes near the ocean are painted to protect against salt air. Others are left to weather naturally because the homeowner loves the aged gray patina of redwood or cedar. Using new paint or heavy stains on an old deck can quickly upgrade its appearance. The color of your surface can also contribute toward the feel of a style or theme of a wedding.

Overheads are shade arbors and trellises that may or may not support climbing plants. Typically constructed out cedar or redwood, they may be painted or simply sealed to weather naturally. These structures take a real beating from the elements, but those with big posts and beams will last many decades. Lath and 2-by-2s have a tendency to warp or twist and crack over time.

Until the 1970s, arbors and trellises were painted, most often white. Later the desire for natural wood look and a rustic feel brought weathered redwood into gardens. When refinishing, painting or staining an arbor, keep in mind that dark colors absorb light while paler hues enhance it.

Wood fences enclose the vast majority of American backyards. In many landscapes it is the single largest constructed element. If discolored, worn, leaning, or damaged, a fence can become an eyesore. Replacing posts and boards will spruce up an old fence, but it's the color you give it that makes a real difference. Not only can you stain a fence to unify the old and new parts, veneers of grid trellis add contrasting color for greater interest. Another cool trick is to top the posts with flat finials, or balls to give it a more elegant appearance.

Masonry walls can be discolored over time, stucco and plaster chips away leaving an unsightly mess. Patching the plaster and repainting the wall can render it renewed by integrating the surface. You can also add a cap stone to the wall for more visual design interest.

Do not overlook other less common features in yards and gardens. Most of these may require repainting for a unifying color effect. You may want to remove them entirely or screen them off with temporary fencing or hedge materials.

- Utility boxes, vents, crawl space access, propane tank, and power poles.
- Swings and play equipment.
- Outbuildings include a play house, gazebo, shed, barn or older freestanding garage.
- Utility areas such as compost bins, clothes line, garbage cans, fire wood piles.
- Pond, fountain, wading pool, swimming pool, spa, cistern.

Softscape is composed of all the existing plants in your yard from lawn to trees and everything in between. Keep in mind that every tree, shrub, or vine you have is important since they required many years to mature. Replacing them isn't so much a matter of money – it's a matter of time.

Trees have a big impact on your homesite. Your goal is to take advantage of the best your trees offer and eliminate as many of the problem trees as you can. If you don't feel comfortable making an evaluation on your own, contact a certified arborist. You'll find an arborist via the International Society of Arboriculture web site.



Color, window boxes and decorative accents can turn a forgotten shed into a charming backdrop.

Mo Resources for Helpful Organizations

International Society of Arboriculture

www.isa-arbor.com

Find a local Certified Arborist and learn about tree care and rehabilitation.

National Gardening Association

www.garden.org

An excellent general reference for information on gardening and climate zones.

Western Red Cedar Lumber Association

www.wrcla.org

Dozens of great looking free plans and instructions for building garden structures.

TIPS & TRICKS

Use paint to even out the color of a damaged tree trunk or to disguise the stumps of recently cut limbs. Interior latex paint tinted to match the overall color of your tree's bark can be painted directly on the unsightly areas to make them visually disappear.

One of the most common problems for a garden party is big oppressive trees. While often beautiful, they can make gardening beneath their canopies virtually impossible due to both dense shade and surface roots. Do not top these trees. Thinning the canopy by removing interior twigs and branches will allow more sunlight to penetrate the ground below and enhance air movement without sacrificing the natural beauty of the tree.

When there are too many trees in your yard, overcrowding can result in the same conditions as well as ill-health for the trees. Dripping sticky matter from leaves is a common symptom of pests often caused by overly dense groves and canopies. Removing a tree can open space and enhance the overall health of those that remain.



Adding high contrast accents to shrub beds adds a more vibrant dynamic.

Shrubs in your garden are the skeleton of the landscape. They are long-lived, sizable, and offer a variety of foliage that becomes vital greenery for the garden wedding. Older shrubs are often poorly pruned to fit into too-small spaces. They lose their natural shape and lower branches leaving exposed “legs”.

This is especially common among old junipers and other coniferous shrubs. It is tough, if not impossible, to remedy except by creatively pruning the plants into bon-

sai or topiary-like shapes. This can improve the appearance and allow light to penetrate through the branches so you can grow smaller plants to cover the ground below.

Shrubs repeatedly sheared over the years develop an outer green leaves while the inside of the plant is thick with dead twiggy growth. Big, overgrown broadleaf shrubs can look much better if carefully thinned from the inside out. This again stimulates a new flush of growth if watered and fertilized immediately after.

Vines such as honeysuckle and Carolina jessamine can mound up into nests of dead leaves and twigs. Only a fraction of this accumulation is actually supporting foliage since the nature of vines is to continually put out new runners on top of old. If the vine is thinned out and relieved of its dead twigs, you will rediscover its original graceful growth habit. Be careful going about this task since what may appear to be dead can support a flush of foliage at the tip. Therefore always work your way back from the far ends to the main trunk to avoid accidentally cutting the most prolific of the runners.

Herbaceous plants lack woody parts. Most are perennials, and those that will be in bloom around the time of the wedding should be given high priority in the new planting scheme. These are portable plants compared to trees and shrubs. They can be moved to better locations in the garden. Big clumps of them can be split up and spread around. You can also move them into pots to clear beds out for the renovation process, then replant where and when you wish.

Lawn is integral to any backyard wedding. It's the shag carpet of the event and makes one of the best surfacing materials provided you're not wearing stiletto heels. Older lawns can suffer from a variety of problems that mar



Echinacea purpurea Prairie Coneflower

its green beauty. The notorious “female dog spot disease,” brown out from compacted soils, bald areas from heavy foot or vehicle traffic and inadequate irrigation are all common. You have two choices, you can renovate and over seed the old lawn to give it new life. This is a lot of work, but not nearly as rigorous as planting a new lawn. A new sod lawn is a popular solution for extending lawn to larger areas or replacing a battered old one. There is also the option of removing the old lawn entirely and replacing it with care-free paving.

There are two reasons for such a detailed evaluation of all that exists around your home. The first is to get you thinking about each element, because when you take the tree or the fence or the flower bed out of the garden context and study it alone, you can be more objective about whether to improve, repair or replace it.

The second reason is to help you see the spaces as a designer would. While you catalog everything, you become intimately aware of all sorts of little details. Perhaps you never noticed the ugly crawl space below the electric meter before, or the lilac shrub that has become mostly dead wood. Maybe you have always seen your trees collectively rather than the individual living things they actually are.

Organizing the Wedding Space

The first step in your backyard transformation is to visualize your wedding space. Ask yourself where will the vows be exchanged? That location is the focal point of the entire project. Its placement, orientation and scale will dictate how all other layout decisions will be made. It determines where everyone will sit. It tells you how the bride will approach her walk down the aisle. To get this point nailed down, you must consider the entire space and how it all works together.

- First determine the directions east and west. Any person or thing facing east will have the sun in their face during a morning wedding. Those who sit facing west will have the same problem in the afternoon. Like a tennis court, orient your focal point on a north-south axis if possible. This helps to avoid glare. You won't want your photo album filled with the bridal party and guest squinting in every picture. This also helps to reduce the incidence of high contrast, burn outs and overly dark shots.
- Next consider side tables or stations. A gift table, a buffet or bar will each require their own space within the backyard. These stations will need the same consideration as the focal point in order to solve any problems with backgrounds and any unsightly situations. If they are in full sun you should plan for umbrellas or pop-up shade structures.
- Consider the background. All your guests will be looking forward at the focal point, which must stand within the garden space. Pay attention to the background, what guests see beyond the focal point. If the background is unsightly, you can either relocate the focal point or plan to supply a different background using plants, fencing or screens.
- Identify eyesores. From the point of view of your guests, study the remainder of the yard and use a critical eye to find any less-than-ideal views, both within your fence line and outside it. You can mitigate these with a variety of techniques once they are identified.
- Analyze paving and circulation. Your backyard is likely a mix of lawn, paving and dirt. It's important to consider where people will be congregating and if the existing surfacing material is suitable. This may be strongly related to whether you are using chairs or tables, and the size of the wedding overall. Once you have the basic space laid out functionally, you will know where the high traffic areas are. Consider whether the existing surfacing is suitable, or if you need to make a change.



A focal point looks best against a background of dense greenery.

Places For Plants

The use of beautiful, vibrant plants will set the stage for a memorable garden wedding. The more greenery and flowers there are the more gardenesque the wedding will feel. Seasonal color with annual flowers is the best way to reflect your wedding style and its colors in the tone of the garden. Buying large specimen plants or even renting them for the event is ideal for strategic problem solving such as providing backgrounds and disguising ugly views. Knowing where plants belong and why will guide you in where to concentrate your greatest planting efforts.

Foundation planting is a term used to describe the planting around the base of a house. It covers up vents, exposed footings and utilities. Foundation planting concepts also apply to the edges of decks to disguise the supports if there is no siding. Here are the most common problems and how to fix them:

- Gaps in planting. To fill in gaps and add density to foundations, rely on big bushy plants that grow quickly. Ornamental grasses are among the best.
- Older shrubs in foundations can develop ugly exposed trunks. Cover these up with lush medium sized fast growing foliage and flowering plants such as zonal geraniums and impatiens.
- Too much bare ground in planting area. To cover bare ground try prostrate plants that grow quickly and cover well such as verbena or nasturtiums.
- Dull uniform shrubbery. A good choice for spicing up these areas is tall spike flowers such as perennial delphiniums or hollyhocks. Foundation beds become more visually interesting when broken up by these vertical accents.

Perimeters should always be well planted to soften the visual limits of a garden. No one wants to look at the bottom of a fence, particularly if it has been discolored



Fast growing plants and flowers can cover up a multitude of building problems.

Fast Growing Space Fillers

Fountain Grass	<i>Pennisetum setaceum</i>
Variiegated Maiden Grass	<i>Miscanthus sinensis</i> hybrids
Green Leaf Euryops Daisy	<i>Euryops pectinatus</i> 'Viridis'
Lantana hybrids	<i>Lantana camara</i> hybrids
Mexican Sage	<i>Salvia leucantha</i>
Canna	<i>Canna generalis</i> 'Tropicanna'
Princess Flower	<i>Tibouchina urvilleana</i>

by moisture. A lawn that ends next to vertical barriers such as fences and walls makes it tough to mow and edge cleanly. Most landscapes are composed of a central lawn surrounded by plantings that run along fence lines. This will soften the gardens and allow fences to disappear behind mounding plants and flowers.

The key to beautiful perimeters is realizing that plants at the far back of the yard need to be larger than elsewhere in the garden. This is because small plants get lost at that distance. Even if you use big plants, use lots of them to ensure the visual effect is bold enough. Whenever you plan perimeter beds, be sure to think on many levels. Tall plants against the fence such as Italian cypress or perhaps a clematis vine need shorter elements in front. Think of a tiered system with layers that drop down to lawn level in waves of color.

Islands break up expanses of lawns with flowers and sometimes trees and shrubs. Islands increase your flower-gardening area and add interest to an otherwise



Perimeter planting in three levels - columnar background cypress, a bed of daylilies and petunia edging.

Fast Growing Ground Cover

Bottle Gourd	<i>Lagenaria siceraria</i>
Scarlet Runner Bean	<i>Phaseolus coccineus</i>
Morning Glory	<i>Ipomaea</i>
Spreading Lantana	<i>Lantana spreading</i> hybrids
Yam Vine	<i>Ipomaea tricolor</i>

dull lawn. They are also valuable in controlling the lawn space for a wedding by creating short range backgrounds and screening, or to direct the eye to a focal point. The tendency is to make these perfectly round, which projects a very formal look that sometimes fails to complement the rest of the landscaping style. Your islands may take any shape you wish, but keep them in a flowing, graceful shape for best results. Combining two or more islands in creative natural forms makes a green lawn drift in and around them, like the ocean separated by rocky outcroppings. Use low-growing plants around the edges of the island, then medium-sized flowers, and finally tall spikes or bushy flowering shrubs at the center.

Edgings transform an ordinary feature into one highlighted by color. You may add color plant edging to practically anything be it a sidewalk, flagstone path, patio or picket fence line. Edging with plants creates more than just a better defined boundary; it enhances the space with bands of one or more flower colors. A simple sidewalk bound by lawn becomes a yellow brick road when you cut out strips of turf and replace it with edges of dwarf marigolds or violas. If there is nothing in place to edge with flowers, add a simple set of concrete stepping-stones, or edge the base of a birdbath, sundial or simple fountain.

The key to edging success is using fast growing plants that are arranged very close together so the effect is continuous. Using a double offset row not only ensures that a few dead plants won't ruin the effect, but flower color will appear more intense.

Vertical gardening allows you to plant on a whole new plane. Most people see their garden plan in just one dimension: the ground plane. But there is a second dimension that is a wonderful problem solver which allows you to add more plants without sacrificing precious floor space. To really take advantage of vertical gar-



Vines add more foliage and flowers without sacrificing ground space.

dening, use fast growing vines to train onto fences and walls, or a wall mounted trellis. Morning glory and bottle gourds are incredibly fast to put on size and foliage, and can render a formerly ugly wall or fence into a leafy bower. You can also buy a five gallon container grown mature bougainvillea for

intense seasonal color even if it won't survive the winter.

Wherever there is a wall, there is an opportunity for vertical gardens – an especially effective way to create landscapes in the city. To beautify dull blank walls use a decorative trellis in willow, copper, iron or lattice. Plant your vines at its base in ground or in pots and train them up for a beautiful solution to a very ugly vertical surface.

Containers allow you to add flowers and foliage to any part of your home or garden whether there's soil or not. These are your most valuable problem solvers because they can be used to cover up a variety of problem spots. A pair of beautifully planted pots can flank a focal point, door, gate, buffet table or virtually any important point in the wedding garden space.

It's important to choose the containers themselves in a style in keeping with your wedding theme. For example, pedestal urns are ideal for Victorian weddings while terra cotta would be suitable for a Latin or Mediterranean theme. Maintain the same look and feel with all your containers used for the wedding in order to project an integrated appearance. Above all, be sure the containers



Ferns, potted white lilies and fuchsias enliven a shaded veranda.



Use uncommon window boxes and plants for a stylized effect.

TIPS & TRICKS

Use paint to even out the color of a damaged tree trunk or to disguise the stumps of recently cut limbs. Interior latex paint tinted to match the overall color of your tree's bark can be painted directly on the unsightly areas to make them visually disappear.

For a free color guide log on to Color Matters® at www.colormatters.com to find a color wheel and a great discussion of color. Tells you how to create a palette outdoors that fits your wedding color scheme.

are LARGE because you'll want them to accommodate big bold combinations of foliage and flowering plants.

Other containers often used in weddings include window boxes to dress up a house. Hanging baskets dripping with lush color are also excellent ways to upgrade a shade arbor, or you can hang them underneath a shade tree canopy.

Mo Resources for Gorgeous Large Pots, Planters and Windowboxes

Garden Furnishings www.gardenfurnishings.com
Beautiful upscale pots and planters.

Plant Containers www.plantcontainers.com
Great lightweight resin look-alikes with stylized collections!

Campo de Fiori www.campodefiori.com
Gorgeous and romantic pots – wholesale site with a retailer finder.

Color On Your Canvas

Your wedding color palette will have a lot to do with the flowers you plant in the garden. While the garden need not directly reflect the wedding palette, it should be carefully considered to complement the wedding decorations, flower arrangements and bridal party attire.

Colors can be classified as warm or cool. Warm colors include red, magenta, orange and golden yellow, all of which are bold and powerful. They are exciting to look at and lend a festive character to plantings. Cool colors include a spectrum of blues, violet, purple, white, soft pink and lemon yellow. In gardens, green is the one universal color that blends with both warm and cool hues.

Mo Resources for Flowers, Shrubs, Trees and Roses

Monrovia www.monrovia.com

Premier grower with excellent well illustrated plant database, theme garden suggestions with retailer locator.

Jackson & Perkins www.jacksonandperkins.com

Top American mail order supplier of roses and more

Star Roses www.starroses.com

Extensive resource for hot varieties with retailer locator.

Classy Groundcovers www.classygroundcovers.com

A great source for low growing plants to cover difficult spaces.



Bold color adds a festive feel to wedding gardens.



Versatile petunias offer the widest color range in a single plant type.

Seasonal Flower Bloom Color Lists

Height: **B** = big and bushy **T** = tall spike **M** = medium **S** = short **V** = vine **H** = hanging plant.

Type: Annual grows for one season, Biennial grows for two season, Perennial grows for many.

PLANTS THAT BLOOM IN RED, BROWN AND BURGUNDY

Name	Height	Exposure	Type
Begonia, wax	S	Shade	Annual
Cosmos	B	Sun	Annual
Dahlia, bedding	M	Part Sun	Annual
Fuchsia	H	Shade	Perennial
Geranium, zonal	M	Sun	Perennial
Geranium, ivy	H	Sun	Perennial
Gladiolus	T	Sun	Bulb
Hollyhock	T	Sun	Biennial
Impatiens	S	Shade	Annual
Marigold, French	S	Sun	Annual
Marigold, African	B	Sun	Annual
Pansy	S	Sun	Annual
Petunia	S	Sun	Annual
Primrose	S	Part Sun	Annual
Rudbeckia	M	Sun	Perennial
Scarlet runner bean	V	Sun	Annual
Scarlet sage	M	Sun	Annual
Snapdragon	M/T	Sun	Annual
Sunflower	T	Sun	Annual
Sweet pea	V	Sun	Annual
Tulip	M	Sun	Bulb
Verbena	S	Sun	Perennial
Viola	S	Sun	Annual
Zinnia	T	Sun	Annual

PLANTS THAT BLOOM IN PURPLE OR VIOLET

Name	Height	Exposure	Type
Aubretia	S	Sun	Perennial
Columbine	M	Sun/part shade	Perennial
Dahlia, bedding	M	Part Sun	Annual
Foxglove	T	Sun/part shade	Biennial
Fuchsia	H	Shade	Perennial
Hollyhock	T	Sun	Biennial
Morning glory	V	Sun	Annual
Pansy	S	Sun	Annual
Periwinkle	S	Sun	Annual

Petunia	S	Sun	Annual
Primrose	S	Part Sun	Annual
Snapdragon	M/T	Sun	Annual
Stock	M	Sun	Annual
Sweet Alyssum	S	Sun	Annual
Sweet pea	V	Sun	Annual
Verbena	S	Sun	Perennial
Pansy	S	Sun	Annual
Petunia	S	Sun	Annual
Primrose	S	Part Sun	Annual
Viola	S	Sun	Annual

PLANTS THAT BLOOM IN BLUE, COBALT AND AZURE

Name	Height	Exposure	Type
Ageratum	S	Sun	Annual
Bachelors button	M	Sun	Annual
Blue salvia	M	Sun	Annual
Delphinium	T	Sun	Perennial
Larkspur	T	Sun	Annual
Lobelia	S	Sun, part shade	Annual
Pansy	S	Sun	Annual
Petunia	S	Sun	Annual
Primrose	S	Part Sun	Annual
Pansy	S	Sun	Annual
Petunia	S	Sun	Annual
Primrose	S	Part Sun	Annual
Viola	S	Sun	Annual

PLANTS THAT BLOOM IN YELLOW, GOLD AND ORANGE

Name	Height	Exposure	Type
Calendula	S	Sun	Annual
California poppy	S	Sun	Annual
Columbine	M	Sun, part shade	Perennial
Daffodil	S	Sun	Bulb
Dahlia, bedding	M	Part Sun	Annual
Daisy, euryops	B	Sun	Perennial
Dusty miller	M	Sun	Annual
Geranium, zonal	M	Sun	Perennial
Gladiolus	T	Sun	Bulb
Hollyhock	T	Sun	Biennial
Marigold, French	S	Sun	Annual
Marigold, African	B	Sun	Annual
Nasturtium	V	Sun	Annual
Pansy	S	Sun	Annual
Primrose	S	Part Sun	Annual
Snapdragon	M	Sun	Annual
Sunflower	T	Sun	Annual
Sweet pea	V	Sun	Annual
Tulip	M	Sun	Bulb
Viola	S	Sun	Annual
Zinnia	T	Sun	Annual

PLANTS THAT BLOOM IN PINK, MAGENTA AND MAUVE

Name	Height	Exposure	Type
Aubretia	S	Sun	Perennial
Bachelors button	M	Sun	Annual
Begonia, wax	S	Shade	Annual
Columbine	M	Sun/part shade	Perennial
Dahlia, bedding	M	Part Sun	Annual
Foxglove	T	Sun/part shade	Biennial
Fuchsia	H	Shade	Perennial
Geranium, zonal	M	Sun	Perennial
Gladiolus	T	Sun	Bulb
Hollyhock	T	Sun	Biennial
Impatiens	S	Shade	Annual
Larkspur	T	Sun	Annual
Margeurite	B	Sun	Annual
Pansy	S	Sun	Annual
Periwinkle	S	Sun	Annual
Petunia	S	Sun	Annual
Primrose	S	Part Sun	Annual
Snapdragon	M/T	Sun	Annual
Stock	M	Sun	Annual
Sweet Alyssum	S	Sun	Annual
Sweet pea	V	Sun	Annual
Tulip	M	Sun	Bulb
Verbena	S	Sun	Perennial
Viola	S	Sun	Annual
Zinnia	M	Sun	Annual

PLANTS THAT BLOOM IN WHITE, BEIGE AND CREAM

Name	Height	Exposure	Type
Bachelors button	M	Sun	Annual
Begonia, wax	S	Shade	Annual
Columbine	M	Sun/part shade	Perennial
Dahlia, bedding	M	Part Sun	Annual
Geranium, ivy	H	Part sun	Perennial
Geranium, zonal	M	Sun	Perennial
Gladiolus	T	Sun	Bulb
Gourd, bottle	V	Sun	Annual
Hollyhock	T	Sun	Biennial
Impatiens	S	Shade	Annual
Larkspur	T	Sun	Annual
Margeurite	B	Sun	Annual
Pansy	S	Sun	Annual
Periwinkle	S	Sun	Annual
Petunia	S	Sun	Annual
Primrose	S	Part Sun	Annual
Snapdragon	M/T	Sun	Annual
Stock	M	Sun	Annual
Sweet Alyssum	S	Sun	Annual
Sweet pea	V	Sun	Annual
Tulip	M	Sun	Bulb
Verbena	S	Sun	Perennial
Viola	S	Sun	Annual
Zinnia	M	Sun	Annual



Creative restoration transforms tired outdoor spaces into enchanted garden rooms

More Resources for Seeds, Perennials and Bulbs

Wright Gardens www.wrightgardens.com

A super resource for annual bedding plants and perennials.

Blooming Bulb www.bloomingbulb.com

A wide selection of bulbs, grasses and vines.

Brecks Bulbs www.brecks.com

Wide variety of spring and summer Dutch bulbs.

Henry Fields www.henryfields.com

Great selection of fast growing flower seed plus plants and roots.

Spring Hill Nursery www.springhillnursery.com

Wide assortment of plants and flowers by mail.

Creative Restoration

Creative restoration is the process of reviving as much of the hardscape as you can, and solving specific problems with constructed elements. There are many ways to restore things, so you'll find options described here which give you the biggest bang for every buck in the shortest time span.

As stated above, fences are the most common element in American gardens and they can really look great with a little revamping. The first step is to repair it to the best of your ability. If it's leaning, chances are the posts have rotted out at the bottom. One solution is a simple repair that fixes it long enough to work for the wedding, the other option is to replace the post entirely for a more extensive fix.

If your posts reach to the top of the fence boards, you can give them simple little finials to upgrade the overall

look of the fence. Hardware catalogs offer wood ball finials, or you can buy more expensive copper ones. These will weather to verdigris over time for a beautiful aged appearance. You can save the finials for corners or gate posts where they are most visible.

You'll find a marked improvement overall if you stain or paint the fence. The color you choose can either make the fence more apparent or cause it to fade back. Dark hunter green is a great color dark enough to cover most discolorations. Painting a fence white can give it a most charming look that is ideal for cottage and country garden themes as well as more formal looks.

Wood Stain for Fences and Decks

Wood stain soaks into lumber so it rarely peels no matter how old it is. Paint, on the other hand is a surface coating which will break down. Stains are the best way to give old wood new life whether its fences, decks, an arbor, trellis or outbuildings. This is the backyard renovator's secret weapon and the color you choose should be carefully chosen to work with your colors and to achieve the kind of look you have in mind.

Stains designated for exterior use fall into three categories that relate to their opaqueness and color intensity.

- A **transparent** stain has some color but it's muted. These are typically used on new fences as weatherproof sealer which allows the grain and texture of the wood to show through clearly.
- A **semitransparent** stain has more color, but still allows a little of the wood grain to remain visible. This is the most noncommittal option since it exhibits both transparency and a noticeable color.
- **Solid** stain acts more like paint and can do a thorough job in obliterating the wood color while its texture remains. Solid stains have the greatest unifying effect since they have sufficient color to blend new boards with old and obliterate stains.

TIPS & TRICKS

Log on to Materials World to access an online palette of exterior stain, paint and brick colors.

www.materials-world.com This site let's you know what's available before you get to the home improvement store. It's guaranteed to reduce confusion and ease decision making.

Building Wall Cover Ups

Many homes suffer from too many bare, unattractive walls. Such is often the case in urban neighborhoods with multistory buildings. Rather than fight the walls, take advantage of them by considering a wall as a blank artist's canvas. You can:

- Attach a beautiful trellis to the wall – train vines up for a beautiful effect.
- Hang an artistic element or choose a tall sculpture and frame with plants.
- Paint a trompe l'oeil mural or hire a local artist to do it.
- Hang an outdoor mirror and frame with lattice to create an illusion.
- Find a beautiful old window, frost the back side of the panes with spray and hang.
- Add a windowbox of flowers and shutters to enhance your old window.
- Install a wall fountain for the sight and sound of water without sacrificing space.
- Attach an old door and create a faux entry with a scheme of potted flowers.

Types of Lattice

Wood – The old standby that weathers poorly but is easy for short term effect.

Plastic – Long lasting, but up close it looks like plastic and has fewer opening options.

Diamond – Lattice grids are set diagonal to the 4' by 8' panel.

Square – Lattice grids are set square to the 4' by 8' panel.

Large gauge – Grid openings can be up to 6 inches square or larger.

See all prefabricated wood or plastic (PVC) lattice options and sheet sizes online at Ryan Forest Products www.ryanforest.com



A simple white grid against weathered siding changes the character of the entire surface.

Screening Problem Views

A screen fence is simply a panel of fencing that can be installed anywhere you need a visual screen. You can create these like a traditional fence to stand off building walls or enclose spaces and sections of your yard. They can be painted to match your house or board fence for a more cohesive look to the site.

In creating television backgrounds, set designers use movable screen panels to solve short term problems. They start with standard four by eight foot lattice panels from the home improvement store and frame them for sturdiness with two-by-fours. The panels can be diamond or grid lattice. Modern designers are using industrial corrugated galvanized steel or woven concrete or masonry reinforcement panels too. You can even use recycled frosted sliding glass doors.

When painted, these can look every bit as good as a standard fence. To install simply attach to steel posts pounded right into the ground. These make a great looking semitransparent quick fix that's easily moved around where needed.

These four by eight-foot panels are strong and large enough to make a big difference in a backyard. Stand on end to screen off neighbors windows or ugly RV. It will cover up an outdoor electrical box or other unsightly utilities. They are great for screening off garbage cans or blocking the view into your sideyard. Lie the screen down and you have a long low barrier that makes a good short term fence. It's ideal to instantly cover up foundations too large to camouflage with plants.

Roll Up Screening For Cover Up

- **Polished reed fencing** – Blond in color, available in 15 foot spans at home improvement stores. Tends to flop and loses its integrity quickly.
- **Willow twig fencing** – Darker brown in color, shorter spans about 10 feet, available at high end garden centers. Long lasting, well made but more expensive.
- **Bamboo fencing** – One inch diameter bamboo on heavy gauge wire, 6 foot spans. Expensive but holds against the elements.

Find the best selection of roll and panel fencing online at Bamboo & Rattan Works, Inc, www.bambooandrattan.com

Paving Where You Need It

As you planned your wedding space, you no doubt found places where you might need some paving. The area beneath your focal point or wedding arch is far more stable if the surface is hard material of soft grass. You may also decide to do away with some problem lawn and replace it with attractive and more versatile paving.

The thicker and heavier a paver is the more stable it will be to walk on. The same goes for the overall size. Consider a foot square the minimum paver size. Smaller units or interlocking ones will require a far more precise installation, which can turn into a huge job. Larger pavers stay put and you need fewer of them to cover a sizeable area.

Installing units right on soil is the cheapest way to install them, but it can result in an uneven surface if not perfectly level and drained. A setting bed of compacted sand or sand mixed with dry mortar is the best way to do it because you can level the sand and set each paver in place. The sand allows water to drain away from the pavers so they don't "squish" if the area is over-watered or doesn't drain well.



Inexpensive tumbled concrete pavers are a good alternative to expensive hewn stone.

Old Concrete Makeovers

If you have an existing concrete slab or walkway that has seen better days, it may have cracks and stains. First repair the cracks by filling them with a putty-like patching product so they won't be a tripping hazard. The patch will be fully visible however and won't offer much visual improvement. You can paint the slab, but be aware that floor paint will chip and peel with time. You'll have to repaint every few years, but it will cover up the patches and stains to render a whole new clean look

for the wedding. Avoid using strong colors. Stick with naturals well suited to your overall color scheme. Be sure to use paint designated for outdoor concrete surfaces.

Old slabs can also be stained. This is a super way to upgrade all your outdoor concrete paving to give your yard a big pre-wedding face-lift. Certain concrete contractors specialize in the application of these products.

Stain is not a paint but a chemical that reacts with the concrete to create color, therefore it won't chip or peel like paint. First they'll grind off the top fraction of an inch to get to the raw concrete. Then stain is sprayed on in the color of your choice. A good contractor can give you a great look that generally upgrades ordinary concrete into a rich faux patina. Check local concrete contractors in your area to find one that offers staining services for an instant upgrade of old paving.

TIPS & TRICKS

To learn more about the look and process of concrete staining, log on to Kemiko Concrete Products at www.kemiko.com

Ambiance Amenities

Consider the décor of your garden just as you would the interior of your house by adding elements that add beauty, whimsy and animation to an otherwise static composition. Choose these elements with styles that complement your wedding theme, or the overall character of the celebration. It's equally important not to over-do it. One or two well-chosen elements can be just as dramatic, if not more so than a dozen of them. Remember to keep scale in mind so the items are large enough to be seen and enjoyed without overwhelming the space.

Fountain Water transforms a patio into an oasis, a backyard into a stunning garden. It is soothing to hear the fall of water which masks other unattractive noises. As long as you need a fountain for the wedding, why not make it



Spanish style tier fountains maximize the sight and sound of water.

a wise investment in your permanent garden?

Choose well by studying the different ornamental features. Spanish style tier fountains tend to produce the most sound, and the taller ones will be the loudest, not to mention the most visible. For smaller spaces a wall fountain is a great problem solver. Some can be hung directly from the wall, but fountain and water will be heavy. Many walls are not strong enough to bear the weight. Wall fountains designed with their own pedestal are freestanding so you don't have to break into the wall.

The finish you choose is important to making the fountain appear as though it belongs rather than looking like you ran out and bought one for the wedding. Concrete fountains with bronze or verdigris finishes will blend in best. Beware of white fountains because they tend to look garish and overly formal.

The size of the fountain must be in scale with the space you have in mind. It is best to err on the side of a too-large fountain than a too small one. You will need electricity to safely power the fountain. It's also essential the fountain is installed properly to ensure it's level so the water flows perfectly. Therefore it's always a good idea to arrange for professional installation of your fountain. If there is no convenient power source, hire an electrician to install an outdoor socket at the location of the fountain. It is not safe to run outdoor extension cords to power fountains.

Lighting If you are planning an evening wedding, or a reception party that will go into the night hours, you'll have to consider lighting. Lighting can be simply festive, it can illuminate the night garden to make it seem larger, or it can be purely a safety issue.

More Resources for Garden Décor and Fountains

Garden Artisans www.gardenartisans.com

Uncommon, beautifully hand crafted with great style.

Outdoor Décor www.outdoordecor.com

Great finds, well illustrated, comprehensive.

Plow & Hearth www.plowandhearth.com

Festive and unique at affordable prices.

Green Piece Wire Art www.greenpiecewireart.com

Moss stuffed wire forms for instant topiary LARGE and small.

Garden Fountains www.garden-fountains.com

Outstanding classical designs, big selection of wall fountains.



A splash of twinkling white lights turns a nighttime wedding reception into a magical event.

Outdoor lighting can be applied using two techniques. Ambient lights have fixtures that are strategically hidden so all you see is the light itself. This is typically used to illuminate the garden or individual subjects on a broad scale. Safety lighting allows you to see the fixture, which are often located near access ways, steps or other hazard areas.

Twelve volt lighting systems are the best solution for ambient illumination, but if you don't have enough 110 volt outdoor sockets, you may want to have some additional ones installed. You'll have plenty of power to illuminate the entire yard for an enchanted party environment. Lighting sets that contain just four fixtures tend to offer a greater level of illumination and are suited for large scale applications. Those with numerous fixtures offer less illumination, but more numerous points of light. Here are some valuable tips for creating great lighting effects:

- Buy a few sets of adjustable bullet up-lights that you can position in your planting areas all around the garden to keep the color visible after sunset.
- Set your lighting to cast creative shadow patterns on walls and other surfaces.
- Run your low voltage lights up into shade trees and hide the fixture in a crotch where main branches intersect. At that height you can up-light the entire canopy for magical illumination with no discernable source.
- Line important walkways or paths with smaller mushroom-shaped lights to ensure guests can get around the garden safely.
- Position safety lighting at all outdoor steps even if it is just a single step up or down.
- String twinkle lights up onto arbors, rose trees, patio trees and into vines and mid-sized tree canopies for an elegant effect.

- Use strands of unique decorative lighting that fits with your wedding theme to create a more festive appearance.

The End of The Beginning

In these pages we've identified a simple process for getting your backyard spiffed up for a wedding, or any other special occasion. We hope you now have a solid foundation to start the transformation. Depending on your personal time frame, it may take from a week to as much as a year. Many of these ideas can be done in just a weekend or two, depending on the size of your yard, budget and labor force.

Remember that plants take time to mature, so whenever possible, utilize constructed elements if you're on a tight time frame. Don't underestimate just how much stain and paint can do to renew worn out woodwork.

Never forget that the central focal point should be your primary concern, so use special care to get that part right. Take advantage of the links we've provided within this book. They'll take you right to the things you need and save a lot of time. Ordering kits online will save you hours, even days driving around town looking for the right wedding arch. You can be sure all the pots you selected are available online in the quantity you need. Assembling your plant lists from online databases, then ordering the plants ahead of time helps you avoid the frustration of not finding exactly what you want locally.

Your garden wedding will be that special day when you get married amidst the beauty of nature. The hassle free choice of tying the knot at your home or that of a friend will be a memorable experience. Simply take as much care with your garden plants and décor as you do your dress and invitations. Then you'll be sure to receive that all-important blessing of Mother Nature to ensure it doesn't rain.

Visit www.MoPlants.com for more **MoPlants Garden Guides** – coming soon. We welcome your input on the subjects you would like Mo to cover in upcoming e-books. Please e-mail your comments to debbie.moplants@yahoo.com



Nothing is more beautiful than an elegant outdoor wedding.