

Creating your own Rock & Crevice Garden

Natural landscaping for stony spots.

A rock garden can be a beautiful solution to landscaping problems such as eroding slopes, areas that are difficult to mow, and awkward grade changes. The goal is that the rock garden look like a slice of a natural, rocky landscape. A crevice garden is a garden within the crevices of a rock wall, often a retaining wall, built as part of a solution to a steep bank.

An informal rock design is always effective, and simplicity is key. The ideal arrangement looks as if nature had a hand in its creation. That being said, try and use only one kind of rock.

Rock positioning.

Position the largest rocks first to create the garden's structure, then add more rocks for balance. Partially bury the rocks so at least a third of each rock is underground, so they look like a natural outcropping, but also, and critically, for stability. Avoid placing them on top of the soil. Place medium stones in groups of two or three, and then, smaller stones together to give the impression of larger masses worn away by time.

If water isn't available to create a rock pool or a mini stream, try creating a dry streambed, which is a stream made of crushed rock or gravel for a pleasing visual.

Plan the rock garden with ease of maintenance in mind by leaving an adequate number of large flat or rounded stones as a path to work or access the garden.

While constructing the rock layout, ensure you provide a good amount of soil for your plants in the pockets between and around the rocks. Having well draining soil around and beneath the garden is important.

Plant selection.

Be sure to identify the amount of sunlight your garden will receive so that you can plant accordingly. Choose plants that are in scale with the size of your rock garden and the rocks in it. Plant a small rock garden with fine textured small plants and very dwarf conifers and small bulbs. A large scale garden can accommodate larger plants.

Arrange plants naturally so they spill down and nestle around the rocks.

Plants for the rock garden should require a minimum of care, once established. Plants are used to compliment the rocks and should not hide or overpower the beauty of the stones.

All of the plants listed on the next page are either naturally small or dwarf versions of plants you are probably familiar with...

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Into your garden or landscape.

Plant selection (continued).

Bulbs

Allium, Crocus, Daffodils, Iris, Tulip

Perennials/Annuals

Aquilegia/Columbine, Artemisia, Asperula (Woodruff), Campanula, Coreopsis, Delosperma, Dianthus, Euphorbia, Geranium, Heuchera, Candy Tufts, Oenothera, Creeping Phlox, Platycodon, Potentilla, Pulmonaria, Salvia, Scutellaria, Sedum, Sempervivum, Silene, Stachys, Thymus, Veronica.

Shrubs

Cotoneaster, Deutzia, Forsythia, Fothergilla, Mock Orange, Roses, Spirea

Dwarf Conifers

Arborvitae, Chamaecyparis, Juniper, Spruce, Pine

*There are many plants not listed that are quite useful in a rock garden.
You can also get quite creative and try new combinations!*

Want to plant a Native Plant Rock Garden?

Visit this link for tips on planning your garden:

www.grownative.org/learn/native-landscape-plans/rock-garden

The following plants were used in various grouping sizes for the rock garden design below:

Butterfly Milkweed, Switchgrass, Rattlesnake Master, Leadplant, Lanceleaf Coreopsis, Eastern Blazingstar, Purple Poppy Mallow, Pale Purple Coneflower, Evening Primrose, Prairie Dropseed, Purple Prairie Clover, Beardtongue.

