



Perennial and Rose Gardening Newsletter

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Things to remember:

1. *Making notes during the growing season can help you in bed preparation the following spring.*
2. *Put a reminder in your electronic calendar – “make garden notes” twice per year. Once in early spring and again in the summer.*
3. *Aerate the soil at least twice per year in problem areas.*
4. *It’s hard to remember where plants grew and how they performed—making notes resolves this issue.*
5. *Journal your garden’s progress—it’ll help in making it better year after year.*

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Planning NOW for Next Spring!

Have you ever walked out into your flower or perennial garden in the early spring and asked yourself, “Now where did I put that Coreopsis, or where is that new coneflower plant that I planted last summer?”? If you’re like me you do it quite often. Once you obtain more than a handful of plants and your yard or garden becomes a collection of perennials and other plants it becomes rather difficult to remember where everything is located. If you find yourself in this predicament I’ve found a useful, simple way to avoid this gardening dilemma. One way is to document each plant in your garden with a simple map. But if you’re like me, your plant locations change frequently and it’s time consuming to maintain a map of plants. So, I elect for what I think is an easier, more realistic method.

Each spring and summer, I put an entry on my calendar—once for late spring and one entry for summer. This entry reminds me to make notes on garden plant locations and “to do” areas for next season. I have placed samples of my notes on my website, www.PerennialAndRoseGardening.net. Click on the “Garden Journal” section to see a sample of my notes beneath entry for July 8 (sample drawing follows this article).

When the calendar reminds me that it’s time to make the more formal rounds in the garden with notebook and pen in hand I begin the simple process. I typically begin with a quick freehand drawing of the landscape on a sheet of blank paper that resembles an aerial view of our home and gardens. Be sure to draw in where fences, driveways and flower beds exist in your yard. Next, as I begin walking through the garden I take notice to things such as non-performing plants, plants that I didn’t like, plants that were too high or too short for its location, too sunny or too shady, and even things like soil that needs amending, etc. When I find a section in the garden of which I want to make personal notes and not forget about I simply insert a letter of the alphabet into my landscape drawing in the spot that best correlates to that specific location in the landscape. Inserting a single letter rather than wordy phrases keeps your drawing less crowded and more organized and legible. Then, on a second sheet of blank paper I list the letters that I used in the landscape drawing and write any associated notes beside the letter. Finally, the following spring all I have to do is retrieve my notes by looking at the letters associated to the drawing.

Doing this each year is a great way to remember where you planted things and also can help remind you of things you need to do to the garden come spring—things you may not otherwise have remembered. Below are some examples of entries I made this year for the upcoming spring of 2008:

A – Soil needs built up more and needs more organic matter. Heavy clay—plants performance suffered.

