

GARDEN QUICKTIPS

Investigate the cost of having a professional produce a design plan for your garden. Some garden centres provide the service for a nominal charge (anticipating that you will purchase supplies from them) or many have contact details for local designers and it is sometimes possible to get a plan produced (which includes the correct plants for the area) for a very realistic price – in some cases under \$200!	<input type="checkbox"/>
For low maintenance plant drought resistant shrubs which have limited growth and a structured shape.	<input type="checkbox"/>
If you install garden irrigation (which is very useful for young plants) consider a built-in timer.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Investigate what grows well in the location of your property.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Densely plant garden beds with small shrubs and ground cover.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Include mowing strips on lawn to garden boundaries and edging around shrubs and trees (such as tree rings).	<input type="checkbox"/>
Pebbles or stone chip can be tidier than bark unless you re-bark every year until your ground covers takes over. Pebbles and stone chips will need refreshing, usually not quite as often as bark unless they are used on a slope or an area with high water run-off.	<input type="checkbox"/>
When you drive around your neighbourhood – take a note of the shrubs and plants which look neat and tidy and thrive in the district.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Introduce colour with shrubs – there are many attractive low maintenance NZ natives on the market – check with a garden centre located close to your property.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Work out the ultimate width of the shrub and ensure you or a tradesperson will be able to fit between the shrub and the external walls of your property for maintenance tasks.	<input type="checkbox"/>
When planting multiple shrubs which are not contained within a garden bed ensure they are planted far enough apart so when they are fully grown a lawnmower can easily pass between them. Most contractors base their price on the time it takes to mow a lawn – if they have to spend extra time navigating around inconveniently planted shrubs and trees, there will be an extra cost involved.	<input type="checkbox"/>
If your property is located on a noisy road and fencing plus hedging is too costly, you can consider a mound garden of earth on the roadside boundary. A mound with a minimum height of around 1.5m planted with ground cover, shrubs and some landscaping rocks can be a very effective sound buffer as well as providing an attractive garden feature. (One source measured the before and after results with a sound recorder and reported a 75% reduction of everyday annoying sounds coming from the road and a substantial muffling of the harsh or unexpected road sounds).	<input type="checkbox"/>
Weed matting can be useful in some areas however it is by no means maintenance free and can look very shabby if you do not regularly apply fresh layers of thick mulching material. Unless you plant a sizeable number of ground cover plants, many struggle to fully develop, and the more cuts you make in the matting, the more opportunities it provides for rogue weeds.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Watch out for shrubs or trees which send out roots to China.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Don't become over zealous with polythene ground cover – it can substantially dry out the ground and many plants will wither and die from lack of moisture.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Weed matting a sloping garden is often unsuccessful as generally mulch washes away leaving unattractive bald spots throughout the garden.	<input type="checkbox"/>
Don't mound up soil directly against the base of your building structures unless the surfaces are damp and rot proof.	<input type="checkbox"/>

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