

Farm gardens should be practical, striking and easily maintained



* Denise Minnaar

Do you as a farmer have your own favourite spot in the garden where you drink your first cup of coffee in the morning and last drink in the evening; where you reflect on the day's events and future prospects...?



- Focal points in the garden are always placed before your windows – so your soul is touched first thing in the morning and before you sleep.
- Entertainment: Have a table outside, with the relaxing sound of a water feature.
- Braai area: Is it near the kitchen? What are the conditions - shade, sun, out of the wind? Too many times braai areas are too far away from the house and therefore are never utilized.

Is this where you have your first cup of coffee?



Basic rules for a successful farm garden

a First and last impression of your garden

- What is the first and last impression of your home?
- What do guests feel when they arrive?
- Is there a definite entrance to the farm or front gate?
- Where do you park?
- What impression are you creating to others?



b Your soul in your home

- What colours do you use in your home... red, blue? Use the same favourite colour in your garden.
- Is your home formal or informal? Your garden should reflect what your home presents.
- What do you see or feel when you look out of your windows?
- What are the views from your diningroom, bedroom, patio, entertainment area, and kitchen?

c How does your garden influence your family?

Examples:

- A client has her front garden planted in memory of her beloved brother – she picks a rose every morning in memory of her beloved brother.
- Have a personal garden for each child – you can even find plants that may have the same name as your child example: Charlotte rose, the same name as a daughter.
- Husband – loves red and purple. Garden in front of office planted in reds and purple.
- Mother's love their children: place a water feature of children near her workroom.
- If someone is disabled, create a garden at the level of a wheelchair; make wooden pots at wheelchair level and a ramp out of the house.
- Grandparents: small gardens, raised; no bending etc.
- Children: fairy garden; for boys who play games: cricket pitch; teenagers: their own secret garden.

d Focal points

- How many focal points do we have in our gardens? You could have three or five features depending on the size of your garden. The rule: look at your jewelry – too much looks over the top. The right jewelry creates a sense of style, sets an image!
- Where do we place our features? Create a view from the diningroom, sittingroom, patio, bedroom or kitchen.
- Select a feature to satisfy your soul: A client loves cheetahs, so I selected a cheetah sculpture which looks beautiful, suits my client and was placed among different grasses in line with the front door!
- Different ideas. You can use pots, sandstone water features or statues, depending on what you like.
- Features have no rules but must tickle your soul! A woman in Steytlerville put wire ostriches and a vintage bath in her garden. That satisfies her soul!
- Ugly walls can be disguised with a trellis or a feature.
- Features must blend in with the garden, not stand like a white elephant e.g. a bridge in the middle of lawn with no water or plants.
- Swimming pool – must be seen as a feature and become part of the garden.

**Soul food for the garden****Basic rules**

- Plan your garden! Write a plan and make a file. Useful tip: tear out pictures from magazines that appeal to you – it saves money, time and prevents frustration, as then you know exactly what you want.
- Know your microclimate! West side – that's hot, East – that's cold and shady, sun, shade, wind, frost!
- What plants grow in your area; which plants grow in sun or shade?
- Plants must hide unsightly views and make a window for beautiful views like mountains.
- Plant correctly! Big holes with 3.1.5. and super phosphate. Water every 2nd day for the first two weeks.
- Apply 2.3.2 at the end of every month during autumn and winter to strengthen roots.
- Apply 3.1.5 at the end of every month during spring and summer.
- All plants benefit from a regular application of foliar feed e.g. seagro or kelp.
- Brak, Salty soils: Lift gardens higher than the lawn so brak can drain to a lower area. Plant the correct plants for brak, e.g. duranta.
- Apply manure only during spring and autumn - manure heats the soil!
- Climbers only flower on horizontal shoots, so tie them from side to side to the top, to ensure flowers from the bottom to the top.
- Plant plants in odd numbers! 3 – 5 - or 7's; When planted in ones or two's, it creates a restless soul.

- The Karoo has a shortage of nitrogen and iron. Apply iron chelate twice yearly and ammonium sulphate when leaves appear yellow.
- Select a theme or image for your garden – a fruit salad is restless!
- You are what you eat - plants will also thrive when given the right food!

**Conclusion****You should ask yourself today:**

- Does my garden reflect my soul, does it stimulate my family, do they feel part of my garden?
- Have I used my favourite colours in my garden; and my spouse's colours?
- Does my home and garden form one image?
- Are my focal points placed correctly?
- Does my garden affect me, make me happy or frustrated? - follow the basic rules to achieve soul food!
- If someone had hold a bunch of flowers, would they say: "That looks like you or your garden!" Then you know your soul is in your garden!

Is this where you will reflect on the day or on the future?



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