

# When planning landscape, leave no stone unturned

BY MAUREEN SQUIRES  
Copley News Service

Stones and rocks can be used in almost any way to add beauty and interest in any yard. What could be prettier than a rose bush cascading over a stone wall? Or viewing the serenity of a Japanese garden with its careful use of rocks? Or watching water rush over rocks in a fountain or pond?

Not many business cards read "Rock Broker," but that describes Bill Winberg's job. He buys rocks — millions of them — from suppliers, then sells them to contractors or residential buyers.

Winberg co-owns Chapman Stone and Marble on Chatham Road in Springfield, Ill., with Greg Foster, who says there are roughly up to 10,000 tons of

different rock in inventory. It's everywhere on the property — flagstone, boulders, pebbles, wall stone, crushed aggregate and rock of every shade, color and texture. Some are jagged and some are smooth, some are giant and some are tiny, but all have interesting forms.

They're purchased from wholesalers all over the country and represent stone from around the world; none is quarried on site. Granite for countertops is also available, as well as marble for bathrooms or fireplaces.

"Some is art-worthy, depending on the veins and colors running through it," Winberg said.

A do-it-yourselfer might purchase rocks to build a wall, foundation for a statue, lamppost, fountain or pathway. There are many

choices to make before proceeding.

You should first have some idea about the type of project you want to undertake and then consider the size of the area, as well as height and desired material. You will also need to consider such things as sloping and drainage when a wall is being built. Then, a rock dealer or landscape designer can tell you what kind of material would work and how much you will need.

"There's more math involved in this than people realize," Winberg said. He said if you know the dimensions and measurements, you can avoid either having too much or too little rock.

Questions for landscapers

1. How much do I need? This varies by the type of rock and square footage you

want to cover. Generally, small rock will require one ton per 100 square feet; larger rock requires one ton per 70 square feet.

2. What do I use for a retaining wall? This varies by height of the wall. If you want to go up to three feet, you can use natural dry stack. (You can go higher if you use mortar). If you need to hold back dirt, use a larger retaining block such as Keystone or Allan Block, which have man-made locking systems.

3. How do I describe what kind of wall or pathway I want? Get it down on paper. It doesn't have to be blueprint-worthy, but a general idea of what you are after will help determine what material is best and in what amounts.

**How to use stone**

According to Foster, people look for rocks for many creative and practical reasons:

- Flat rocks can be organized and stacked to build low walls.

- Cobbles are used many times for border edging.

- Large stones provide screening and drama, all by themselves. Boulders, for example, can be set about in a yard and admired just for their forms. Some people have their names or addresses engraved on them, or have a pet's name memorialized on them.

- Flagstones are used for walkways, patios, ponds and borders. Sometimes, they are used to cover the front of a mound or berm.

- Rocks can be arranged in a dry bed to help drainage.

- Pebble gardens simply use different colored small stones. Pea sizes or river rocks can be used for an interesting look.

- Various rocks and stones are used in Japanese gardens, which are admired

for their traditional Japanese garden design. They produce natural in an intentional rock placement and texture.

- If you're using concrete drainage, it with stone.

- Wall stone for borders and screening areas.

- Aggregate used as ground cover weed prevention and decoration.

- Granite are used as ground cover.

- Stone on houses and of typical buildings.

Some people of rocks that gardens with have collected. Some prefer rocks. Ask at your which would

## Mixing

FROM PAGE 1

matte finish. "Engineered" quartz stone is one of hottest trends and hardly synthetic. It's more than 90 percent pure quartz mixed with polymers.

Quartz is the fourth-hardest mineral and pretty much indestructible. It's nonporous and very hygienic. Quartz surfaces don't require sealants and clean up with a damp cloth.

Zodiaq's new quartz colors for 2005 borrow the aesthetic appeal of concrete in four neutral tones — alabaster, papyrus, clay brown and sand beige.

Color trends of bright and rich tones come to life in engineered quartz, because the crushed stone can be mixed with pigment.

Avanza offers deep-red Milan and vivid-blue Veneto, which conjure Italian palazzos.

Lava stone, a newer countertop material, is another option for those craving

color. It's available from manufacturers like Pyrolave.

"I saw lava stone at the Kitchen and Bath Industry Show in very bright colors like cobalt blue and canary yellow; it's very smooth, highly polished and reflective," Reilly said. "It would go well with a glass mosaic tile."

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## Container

FROM PAGE 1

Growing up gardening, Muratzki tended a large vegetable garden for years that included an asparagus patch.

Now scaled back to a few plants to care for, Muratzki is pleased that her patio gets direct sun from the morning until early afternoon.

"I had tomatoes all summer last year," she said, adding about her herbs: "I just come out when I'm fixing dinner and pinch off a few leaves."

While she has more space than Bonn or Muratzki, Latimer said the backyard of the house she rents was "basically a mud hole"

when she moved in. With many mature shade trees, she had to cut back extensive overgrowth and make room for her containers and semi-permanent landscaping.

Every hour of work was — and still is — worth it as the novice gardener revels in both her efforts and the rewards.

"I probably wouldn't have a soul if I didn't garden, it is just therapeutic," said Latimer. "There is something about gardening that puts you in contact with nature and the universe. It's very nice to be able to do that when you're 75 years old."

**Carol South is a local freelance writer and regular contributor to the Grand Traverse Herald.**

### Tips on container gardening

Container gardens require care and attention, as any garden does, but one key to successfully harvesting vegetables or enjoying healthy flowers is to provide enough water. Pots with direct sun exposure can dry quickly and should be checked daily.

As for selecting the type of pot, Shirley Bowen, a master gardener who staffs a gardening phone line at Michigan State University's Traverse City Extension Office, does not recommend clay pots because they absorb the water.

"Plastic is good and light color because they reflect the heat," she said.

Wooden containers can rot, and although untreated redwood or cedar can avoid this problem, container gardeners should not use treated wood.

All containers must have holes for drainage and some gardeners place them on bricks or cement blocks to help water run out. Newspaper or rocks at the bottom also help drainage, the former also prevents soil loss.

The pot's size and the number of plants are also important factors. Smaller pots of one gallon or two gallon size, for example, can be used for peppers, cucumbers, zucchini or other vegetables. Note that vine vegetables such as cucumbers and zucchini need room to spread out or else a sturdy structure to grow up.

Larger pots of a five gallon capacity are good for tomatoes, broccoli, beans, beets or peas. Some leaf lettuce or herbs could be placed in the same large pot as these other vegetables; other gardeners place two of the same plant in one container. A large pot can also contain a variety of mixed herbs.

Carrots and garlic need deep pots, carrots requiring at least 12 inches and garlic at least eight.

Bowen noted that plants in containers need a light-weight soil and, just as in a regular garden, fertilizer will feed the future food.

"If you're going to grow a lot of food, you might want to put on a lot of fertilizer," she added. "I'd use organic and I would probably blend it right in the soil."

— Carol South

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