What Do You Need from a Plant?

In an article in the Ohio Gardener magazine, Scott Beuerlein shares your 3 choices when making improvements in your yard:

Beuerlein believes that removing ugly things might be the hardest choice. Gardeners loathe digging up and tossing living plants – even the ugliest ones! Don’t save it because it came from your old garden, or that it came from your favorite Aunt. If it’s ugly, it’s compost!

Installing pretty things usually involves shopping trips to your local nursery. Beuerlein recommends picking two or three of your best nurseries and trying to go to them regularly throughout the season. I really like this tip, don’t you?) This is the best way to find new things that will guarantee a full season of interest. Establish a relationship with the smartest person at each nursery and during each visit ask them what is currently exciting them the most. Work these new acquisitions into the places ugly plants once occupied.

Moving pretty plants around will have to wait until spring. Make a note on your list of what you would like to move and where. I still have some flags in my daylily bed to remind me that a few cultivars need divided.

What do you need from a plant? In my garden, a plant needs to be low maintenance. I don’t like a “needy” plant.

A plant that joins my garden needs to be able to survive on its own. If it needs extra water, food, or protection, it won’t be on my list. Many gardeners buy a plant that comes with “must do” chores with good intentions, but who are we kidding? Do you really have time to attend to its needs?

Next a plant in my garden needs to be able to take weather extremes in stride. Every growing season we complain about the weather knowing that we have no way to control Mother Nature. Too wet, too dry, too hot, too cold – welcome to Ohio!

Lastly, we all need our gardens to make us look good. Come on, admit it. We want our plants to be attractive, but we can’t expect them to flower all the time! Gardeners need to be smart about what plants they choose to achieve a garden that has blooms all season long. Reading the plant labels carefully and doing some extra research will pay off in the end.

Scott Beuerlein, horticulturist and Manager of Botanical Garden Outreach for the Cincinnati Zoo and Botanical Garden also contributes to the Horticulture Magazine. In his latest article he shares, “Each time you come home with a new plant and give it a good home in your ground you perform an act of faith for a better future. Each new season, every emerging bud, any packet of seeds-these are vessels of hope. It should come as no surprise, then, that in stressful times people have historically turned to gardens. Apart from any practical considerations, the therapy is so primal and so rich. To be outside, to touch the earth, breathe fresh air and fell the sun’s warmth on the back of the neck is the sweetest reset. Creating something of beauty and abundance is a profoundly positive act of defiance in the face of all that is wrong.”

If you have searched for seeds at the nursery lately you have discovered that there are lots of gardeners this year that are discovering the joys of planting seeds! The hot and humid days have presented some challenges in the garden and it is time to keep a careful watch for pests and diseases. It’s time to enjoy the fruits of our labor! Pick some beans, dig some potatoes, and munch on some ripe tomatoes!