

## Stolen Success By Julie Silva

Garden ideas are available to be stolen. No citations, no jail time. Copied successes in the gardening world are common. The easiest way to steal ideas is simple. Drive around your neighborhood, look at magazines or the television and check out old photos from Grandma's house.

One of the best ways is by driving around your neighborhood. You are in your garden zone with the same soil and water. The beginning elements are there and they are working. A particular variety of plants that your neighbor is having success with should travel well down the block to your address, providing the same successes.

Some of the garden ideas you might want to steal are huge endeavors. Any changes that require a bobcat and a crew might be left for a project down the road. Often smaller projects have an equally strong showing and impact. One way to make your front yard eye catching is to add color. Most planting material is in the green color zones. With a frame of green, color becomes very important.

Color may be installed in a variety of manners. Most common is planting along walkways and flower beds. Here is another idea. Pick a spot in your lawn, like an island in the grass. The spot needs to be large enough to be dramatic with color. Shape is your choice. The variables will be created with your plant choice, not the dimensions of the island. Size should be at least three feet wide but maybe larger depending on your ambition.

The construction of your island is fairly easy. Determine the best location with sun or lots of light. Choose a shape for your island then mark it with spray paint to show the borders. Two ways to remove the grass, the slow way with cardboard and the sun for weeks is one. The other is to pretend you are at the gym, using your core and your knees to aid in that shoveling. Be mindful of your sprinkler lines and heads. Remove the grass and build a border. There are many choices for the border; rocks, bricks, or bender board. Add compost or soil amendments to your island and work it into the soil.

Deciding on your colors for your island requires some thought. Annuals will provide masses of color and new varieties twice a year with each planting at spring and fall. Seed catalogs and nurseries have so many choices with flowers you may have never seen or known. Perennials with different blooming schedules will create a striking picture. If you are using your grandma's choices, the neighbor will be in awe with the colors and the fragrances of old-time flowers.

Consider height and elevation of the picture, putting taller plants either in the middle or closer to the house. Zinnias will supply height and colors that pop. Surrounded by Dianthus 'Albus,' a white Sweet William, all the colors will dazzle everyone. Bee Balm 'Jacob Cline' in brilliant reds combine easily with Phlox 'Peacock White,' making a fragrance that calls to the

neighborhood hummingbirds. The unique features of Amaranth in various colors surrounded by nasturtium 'Baby Rose' will get the neighborhood hikers to stop and stare.

The choices to fill your island are by the hundreds. Whether you buy plants or seeds, the combinations will be enticing for people and pollinators both. With a small island, changing plants from spring and fall will be easy and fun. A great way to get those young gardeners interested and experiencing dirty hands is by letting them help choose plants or seeds, then actually planting them.

Stolen gardening ideas are the best. Good gardeners will share; great gardeners will put their ideas on display for the world to use.

*Julie Silva is a University of California Cooperative Extension Master Gardener of Tuolumne County.*

*UCCE Master Gardeners of Tuolumne and Calaveras Counties can answer home gardening questions. Call 209-533-5912 or go to: <http://ucanr.edu/survey/survey.cfm?surveynumber=7269> to fill out our easy-to-use problem questionnaire. Check out our website at: [http://cecentralsierra.ucanr.edu/Master\\_Gardeners/](http://cecentralsierra.ucanr.edu/Master_Gardeners/) You can also find us on Facebook.*