

You're Gardening in the Mountains Now

Mountain Characteristics

Mountains create shade. Are you on the north side of a mountain, in a valley between two mountains?

Elevation

Wind

Soil, moist, dry, rocky, sandy clay, hard clay, flat or sloped

Proximity to water

Isothermal belt

The sun comes up later and sets earlier in the mountains so there are less sunlight hours

1st Year

Wait - Do not Plant

New home - blank slate

Old home - wait to see what comes up. Do you like the plants, can you identify?

Keep a notebook

Start thinking about what you want your garden to look like. Start to save pictures, make a booklet of styles and plants that appeal to you.

Visit arboretums, garden centers and neighbors' gardens - make it a fun family outing.

Talk to pros at garden centers about best performing plants.

Take this time to do hardscapes, large rocks or bring in soil if you need it.

Trim up or remove trees to create more light if you are in the woods.

Do you have voles or moles? Get rid of them, if you can, before you plant.

What is the deer pattern in your neighborhood/property? Start discouraging them crossing your property.

If you can't wait to plant, then plant annuals. Save the perennials and shrubs for next year.

In Your Notebook

Place house in property and note north, south, east and west. Place buildings, gardens. Study the sun from sun up to sun set for all seasons, note how many hours in each area From which direction does the wind come in each season and at what times of the day. Will you need to add a windbreak if you get strong winds? (wind can be more damaging to plants than cold)

Water flow across property during heavy rain - do you need to fix drainage problems or add irrigation

How does the elevation affect your temps?

Are there any microclimates in your yard?

What have you learned about the Isothermal belt and how it affects your gardening?

2nd Year

You now know where your best light is or have made areas for planting or corrected problems.

You should have improved soil or know what kind of elements you are dealing with and can now choose the appropriate plants. Plant shrubs, trees and perennials.