

# Giving slopes a greener reason to cheer



Possessors of a sloping yard are often faced with a perplexing question – how to present the barren soil of their front porches with the gift of life. We bring an answer in this section!

**S**LOPE gardens are of special importance to the people who reside in the shadowed shelter of hills. Houses here, are constructed in alignment with the slopes and the sidewalks and main entrances are often kept sloping. These sections of the home arena are mostly kept plain and simple with a concrete base cover, but they can be given a more blissful face, if growing a small patch of green were a humble consideration. And for rural dwellers, making a wild hillock take the form of tame cultivated area could not be anything but a dream come true.

Another reason to grow an eye-ful slope garden would be to be a bit ecofriendly and make an attempt to prevent soil erosion. There is a bounty in land premises when such rural areas are taken into account. The challenge of course, is the development of these empty patches into sections of blooming paradise. There are a number of adversities involved in tilling a sloping land to perfection and making it shelter a flower bed. But there are ways in which recent shifters can perfect themselves in this ancient art.

### Preparing the slope for plantation

Soil is a sensitive factor for the growth of any kind of plant, be it a weak creeper or a strong tree. Soil samples vary from being extremely loose to extremely clayey and from being acidic to alkaline. There are different varieties of plants that are meant for all these variants of soil. The inclination of the slope is something that can be instrumental in making or marring the grace of a slope garden. A steep slope is seldom the choice of a wise gardener. This is mainly because of the inconvenience faced while mowing the land or in manually weeding it and making

other ground manipulations. Secondly, it demands a lot to walk around across the garden just in case the cultivator wishes to have a quick review of the outcome of his efforts. Only an advocate of frequent physical exertion would prefer going for steep gardens.

*It is smart to grow the desired varieties in mix-n-match combination. This does well in hiding rotting foliage and enhances growth. Planting the entire area with just one variety needs a lot more maintenance.*

But in case there is no option left but to have a garden grown in a steep hill base, it is better to create terraces and level them. This wipes out the problems of mowing and watering and smoothes other related processes like weeding, trimming and leveling. Terrace farms look more beautiful and more neatly maintained. If however costs involved in the creation of a terrace garden are to be avoided, then it would be a good idea to recontour the land. That would mean scooping up a bit of soil from here and there and fencing the peripheries by using boulders, stones or chipped rocks. Fencing not only stops unwanted intruders, it also contributes towards taking care of the soil erosion problem. The skill now is, choosing from among the vast panorama of floral varieties for growing on the slopes. There is a vast array of floral options that can be considered while planning a slope garden.

### Choosing the right varieties

Selecting the right varieties from an assorted cluster is the best idea to start with. It is always good to have an in-depth knowledge about the pH and porosity of the soil in which the plants are supposed to be cultivated. Plant varieties like Scotch Heather and Creeping Lilyturf are good examples for those who have an acidic stretch of land. While the former one can grow on poorly maintained loose and dry soil, the later one prefers moisture and shade. Porous soils also receive a brush of remedy from runners and spreaders. These rooting varieties help bind soil molecules and increase the water holding capacity of the land. Ornamental grasses of various types are incredibly great choices for such soils. Another thing that has to be kept in mind is that the entire slope cannot be planted with varieties having the same water requirements. The peak of the hillock gets more of sunshine and sunlight and when irrigated, water slowly starts rolling

down towards the base of the mound. Naturally, it tends to be drier. An exact opposite condition is found at the base of the hill. It is swampier and lacks the receipt of direct sun rays. So it is a better decision to make choice of plants accordingly, aquaphobic ones around the peak and aquaphilic ones along the base.

### Directions matter

It is important to decide on the varieties of plants based on the directional alignment of the garden. There are lots of differences as far as the face of the garden goes. A south facing slope

#### Tip time

- 1 A slope less than 4%, go for a 4-inch deep rain garden.
- 2 Ranges between 5 and 7%, a 6 inch deep garden is the perfect one.
- 3 Varies from 8 to 12%, it is wisest to create an 8 inches deep garden.
- 4 Go beyond 12%, it is better to look out for another piece of land.

garden would feel special in terms of the filtrating rays of sunlight. That would mean that the garden would be bathed in sunlight throughout the day and would be scorched until and unless the variety chosen in heat loving. It is a good idea to try planting succulents in such areas. A north facing one would be entirely opposite in its temperature and illuminative conditions. It would be more of moisture



saturated, swampy and cold king of environment to grow vegetation in. Mosses, ferns, decorative algae, foliage and leafy vegetation would do particularly well in such conditions. It is better to strategize out the choice of plants in such an environment because infections are a common occurrence in these areas, thanks to the lack of direct rays of sunshine. An east facing slope has the privilege to sunlight for the first few hours in the morning and a west face one gets warm in the last few sunny hours of the day.



This feature makes a west and an east facing slope appropriate places to grow wonderful vegetation. These tips were for those who just have a patch of a land in their fortunes. The possessors of a handsome field should rejoice because they would be open to all these options in different parts of the field itself. Generally, a gently sloping land always stands way better in competition with a steeply inclining one. The direction factor also starts having a less implication when the land is gently sloping.

#### Knowing your slope:

- 1 Dig 2 sticks, one uphill and another downhill, 12 -15 feet distant from each other.
- 2 Tie a string to the uphill stick and extend it to the downhill stick, keeping the string level between the 2 sticks.
- 3 Measure the width (in inches) between the two stakes.
- 4 Now measure the height (in inches) on the downhill stake between the ground and string.
- 5 Divide the height by the width and multiply the result by 100 to find the lawn's percent slope.