

## **The benefits of Garden Coaching - Jenny Mandt, Owner, Garden Coaching Solutions**

Jane Goodall, renowned anthropologist has said “It's been proven that plants are good for our psychological development. If you green an area, the rate of crime goes down. So we need them, in some deep psychological sense...” I am inspired by that statement. Taking time out from our busy lives and connect with nature is good for our souls. Getting dirty- getting back to the land and making our gardens grow builds wealth on two levels. The first is financial as the garden adds to the curb appeal of our homes. The second level is what Jane Goodall refers to is that gardening can be a healthy stress reliever especially when we are so busy with our daily lives.

Sometimes we have a yearning to transform our yards, deck, or patio in to an attractive space where we want to spend time with family and friends (or a personal sanctuary). Not everyone has the time, knowledge or vision to make this happen so Garden Coaching can help. Walking around the garden or patio with a person with experience can help get a different perspective, generate ideas of what's involved, and how to make your dreams a reality.

Here are two clients' short stories: “Alice” is someone who entertains a lot and loves to cook. Her house has a wonderful deck looking out towards the Olympic Mountains but only has a few tables and chairs and no plants on it. She wanted to make her deck appealing for parties. She wanted to make sure that whatever was done was easy to maintain, look colorful and at a reasonable cost. She had forgotten to plant tulip and daffodil bulb in the fall and it was late winter when she received Garden Coaching. It was recommended she buy some larger, colorful pots, potting soil, chicken wire (to keep the squirrels from digging up the bulbs), and bulb fertilizer. Once she got everything together, she was shown how to plant the pots. It is not normally the time of year to plant bulbs but believe it or not, come spring, she was ecstatic with the incredible array of cheerful flowers she had that lasted well into summer (see her photo below). Once the bulbs died, the plan was to plant herbs, a few summer flowering perennials and tomatoes to get her through fall. She plans on repeating the process this coming year.

Another client, “Denis” and his wife had just purchased a new home and he wanted to do the work himself but didn't know where to begin. With Garden Coaching, after walking around the different parts of the yard, he wanted less grass, a stone patio in the front yard, adding trees to create some shade on Western side of the house and giving the house more curb appeal. He wanted to do this project in stages to keep it affordable so a priority list and notes were generated so he had a starting point. Part of the plan was to provide him referrals on where to get the stone and to rent tools to get rid of some sod and to regrade his back yard. He got different tree and flowering shrubs suggestions for the front yard that could shade the patio from the hot, summer afternoon sun. When he got through with the first phase, a new plan was drawn up that figured out which plants and shrubs to keep, what to get rid of and which plants would replace them. He was advised on how to improve the soil, prune overgrown shrubs and trees and how to maintain everything, especially the watering needs during the summer months. When he was ready to plant, Garden Coaching took him plant and tree shopping, gave him suggestions as to what to buy, and where to place it once everything got delivered to his home. Denis was pleased with his experience and that he could do most of the work himself over time as his budget and time allowed.

Getting your garden or yard the way you want it takes time and some vision on how to get there. Garden Coaching offers support, knowledge and encouragement for the novice to the passionate gardeners; the DIYers to those who would rather contract someone else do it. Gardening allows you to unplug from your busy life for a little while, grow your wealth and relieve some stress all at the same time. Sometimes we need others who can help steer us where we want to go – the result can be good for the soul.

Jenny Mandt has over 10 years of experience in plant retail work and garden coaching. Spring will be upon us before you know it so start the planning process now. Pruning trees, roses and shrubs and deadhead perennials will be coming up in March, so make sure those cutting tools are sharp and well oiled. If Garden Coaching sounds like

it might help you with your next project you can contact Jenny at [gardencoachingsolutions@gmail.com](mailto:gardencoachingsolutions@gmail.com), or (206) 915-0585 or check out some of her clients before and after garden photos on Facebook at gardencoach jenny.