

GARDENS OF THE FUTURE START TODAY

By Carol Bergeron



Each spring many people, including myself, get the gardener's bug. As a townhouse condo owner I have limited options but options nonetheless. The cycle starts with deciding what flowering annuals will adorn my front patio. Some years hanging baskets of Fuchsia or Petunias make the cut. This year I'll go with potted Geraniums and New Guinea Impatiens since they look great, are low maintenance and last nearly the entire season from May Day to Columbus Day.

The back side of my home is drenched in sunlight from noon on. While last year I had plans for an above ground herb garden, implementation fell short. I did the next best thing and grew herbs in pots on my deck. There is nothing better on a hot summer day than a refreshing cup of iced tea or lemonade with mint, a garden salad with tarragon or zesty salsa with fresh cilantro.

This year I'm dusting off the herb garden idea. Long term I'd really like a ready to go plot for growing a wide range of herbs because fresh always tastes better. There are other benefits too like: the great fragrances, easy on the eyes (if I do it right), experimenting with new herbs (though space is tight), efficiency of harvesting your own herbs rather than running back and forth to the store, drying herbs at the end of the season for year round enjoyment and anticipating the possible regeneration of the hardier herbs next spring. While I'm at it I'll toss a few tomato plants into the mix (a favorite summer fruit).

My approach, grounded in the long term goal for an herb garden fruitful over many years, starts with picking the plot (actually I only have one choice) and assessing its current state. Then I'll select a mix of favorite herbs with similar growing requirements. Third, I'll identify gaps between current and desired herb garden growing conditions and anticipate situations that could create havoc with the garden (bugs, disease, the elements, Bambi & Peter Rabbit and their buds). Then I'll finalize the plan so that it results in plenty of healthy harvests. Of course once installed I'll monitor and adapt to actual conditions. At the end of the season then I'll assess what worked best and least for future refinements.

Why am I, a human capital consultant, sharing my herb garden story with you? Because the same approach is what highly successful companies use for ensuring they have the right people, with the right skills at the right time and place. Whether you are doing strategic workforce planning (3 to 5+ years out, which is on the upswing by companies of all sizes given so much marketplace uncertainty) or operational workforce planning (such as staffing, employee development and succession planning to prevent unwanted turnover when the economy does turnaround) success factors include: getting a realistic view of your current talent mix, recognizing future talents needs given where the business is heading, anticipating uncertainties and how you'll recognize and deal with them when they occur and creating and executing action plans to close gaps.

Routing List

Like an herb garden, a workforce that's ready, willing and able to execute the business strategy, does not miraculously appear or result through osmosis. A prepared workforce takes thoughtful planning and deliberate action to achieve. It takes ongoing nurturing and attention to be sustained especially in uncertain times. So, this summer rather than backburner talent initiatives due to vacation schedules, get moving on a few of them. You'll get that much closer to achieving your business goals.

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Bergeron AssociatesTM

101 Middlesex Tpke, Ste 6, PMB 326

Burlington, MA 01803-4914

781-376-4071

<http://www.bergeronassociates.com>

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