

# CREATING A ROCK GARDEN

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**Rock gardens may be  
traced back to  
ancient China and the  
hanging gardens of  
Babylon**

**A steep bank planted in  
phlox, aubrieta and alyssum  
may be called a rock garden –  
but dedicated rock gardeners  
would call it a rockery**

**A steep bank becomes a true rock garden when its soil is modified to host a range of plants that would otherwise not grow there.**

**Rocks may be few and  
provide a strong contrast  
to plants – and a cool  
run for their roots**

**They may be the dominant  
element of the landscape,  
set in a naturalistic strata  
with a few small flowers and  
dwarf conifers**







**Rock gardens can be expansive  
or as small as a few square feet.**

**They use space in complex  
ways with rock placement and  
steep slopes.**





**Rocks and slopes, paired  
With different soil mixture,  
create an infinite number  
of micro-climates**

**A phenomenal number of plants  
can live in a compact rock  
garden.**

**True rock gardens are approach-  
ed with a great deal of patience.**

**The garden mellows with the  
years, plants and rocks become  
more harmonious.**

**Most individuals think of  
a raised bed studded with  
stones, compact shrubs  
and perennials as a rock  
garden.**











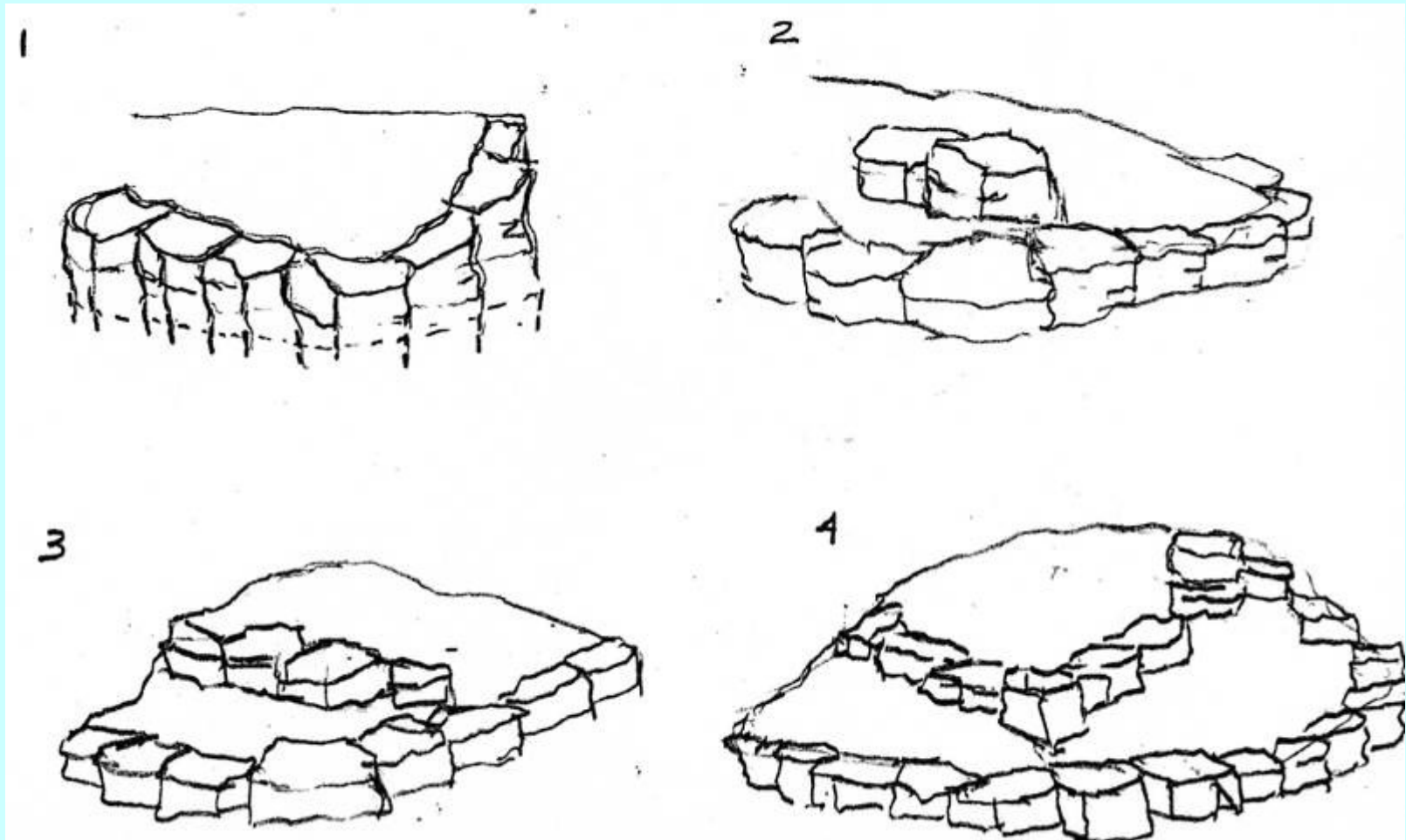
**People who identify  
themselves as rock  
gardeners define the  
term 'rock garden'  
more elaborately**

**A rock garden is a specialized habitat created to enable the gardener to grow a wide range of plants that demand particular soil and drainage conditions**

# **ROCK GARDEN STYLE, DESIGN AND AESTHETICS**

**Mother nature is the best  
teacher and provides rock  
gardeners with a world of  
pleasing examples**

**In creating your own garden –  
decide on a selection of  
various materials –  
rocks, boulders,  
gravel should suit  
your site**



**Construction of a rock garden  
with quarried stratified rocks**





















**Rock gardens imply some  
artistic arrangement, but  
rock gardens grow and  
evolve as gardeners acquire  
a larger plant collection**

# **PATHS AND HARDSCAPING**

**A rock garden is the  
least transitory type of  
garden. It may be there  
long after your house has  
been abandoned or  
replaced**

**An important consideration  
is access to the garden -  
the path visitors will walk  
to see the garden**

**Paths should be planned  
into the design of the  
garden – they are not an  
afterthought**





**Paths in a naturalistic  
setting should be lower  
in grade – excavated below  
surrounding terrain**





**Paths should be linear –  
leading the eye onward**



**Water features are also a natural addition to the hardscape to be constructed during the initial phase of garden design and construction.**

**They add considerably more cost to the project.**

























**SOILS**



**Soils can be as simple or  
complex as you like.**

**Rock fragments are usually  
the main constituent of a  
rock garden.**

# **For greater rewards – tailor your soil choices to your planting preferences and climate**

- **Rock particles (2 parts –  $\frac{1}{4}$ " or smaller)**
  - **Organic material (1 part compost)**
  - **Loam (1 part sandy river loam)**

**Lean soils – or scree –  
consist predominantly  
of rock particles**



# **CHOICE OF SITE**

# **Type of garden you construct will largely be a factor of the site location:**

- **Scale should fit with the home/property**
  - **Exposure to sunlight**
  - **Proper drainage**
  - **Provision for water features**
- **Ease of access for bulky heavy material  
and equipment**

# **Have a plan before construction**

- **Save time**
- **Save money**

# **TYPES OF ROCK GARDENS**



# **FLAT GARDENS**

**A flat garden is usually  
built around or within a  
patio or sitting area**













# **BERMS**

## **Raising rock gardens above flat ground**

- **Improves privacy**
  - **Adds interest**
- **Emphasize the height of screening trees or shrubs**
  - **Create paths**

# **BERMS (continued)**

- **Gives more planting space than flat surface**
- **Many choice plants grow better on alpine slopes**
  - **Provides better drainage**
- **Offers more than one kind of exposure to the sun**



















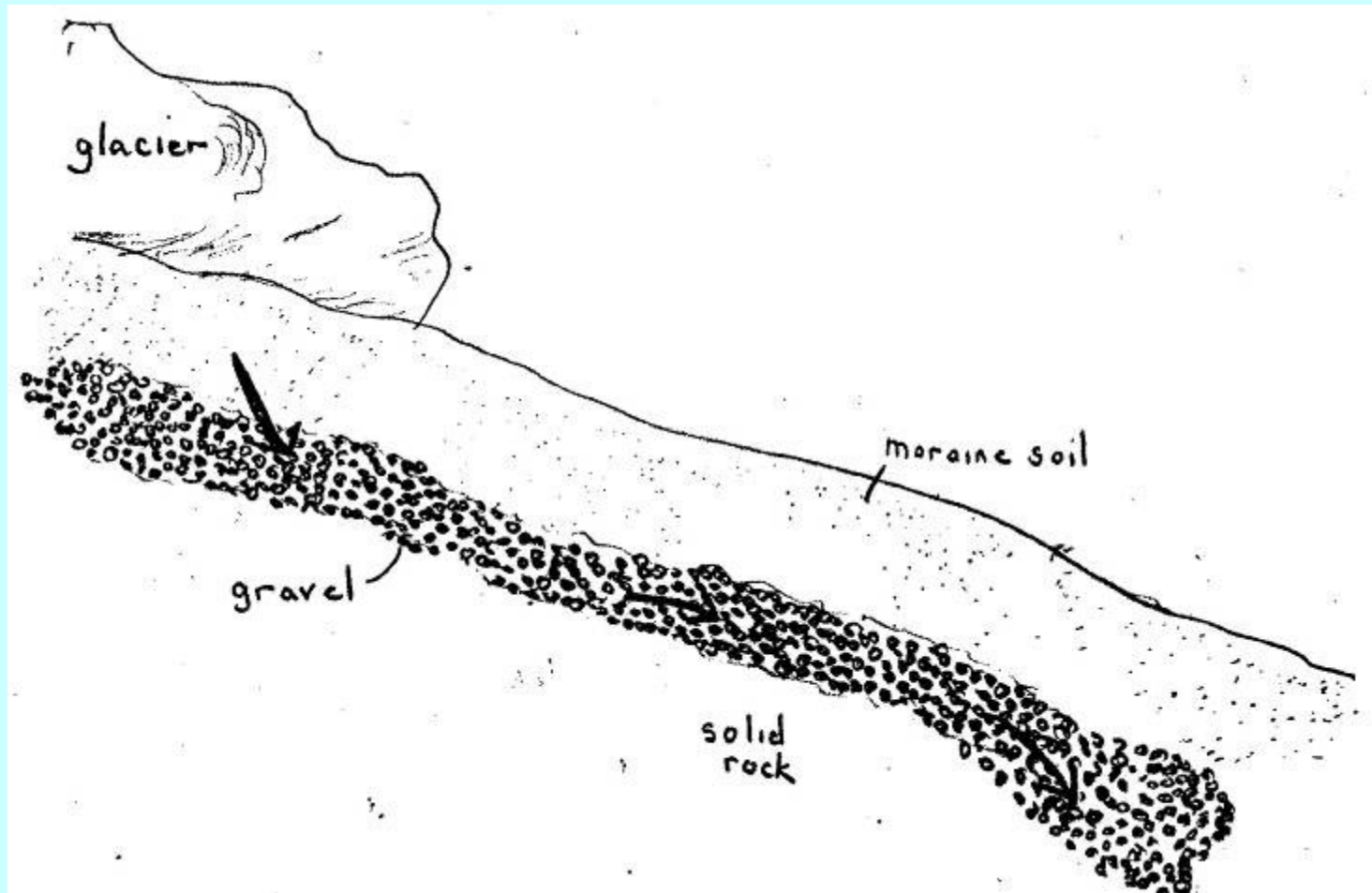
# **MORaine AND SCREE GARDENS**

**Scree is the lean gravely soil  
that many alpine plants  
prefer**

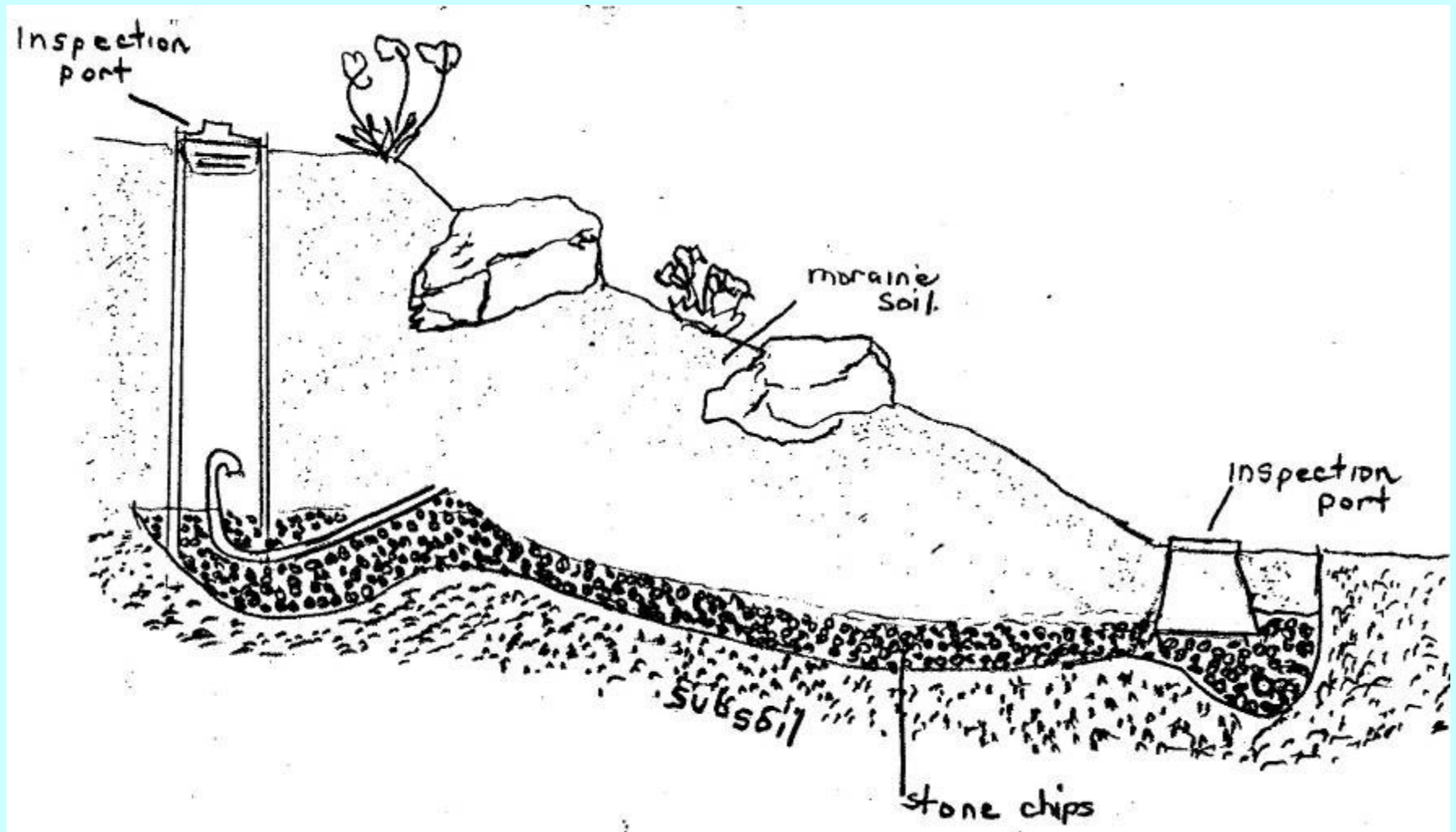


**Moraine garden is a scree garden with a steady supply of underground moisture. It simulates the underground flow from melting snow in mountain glaciers.**

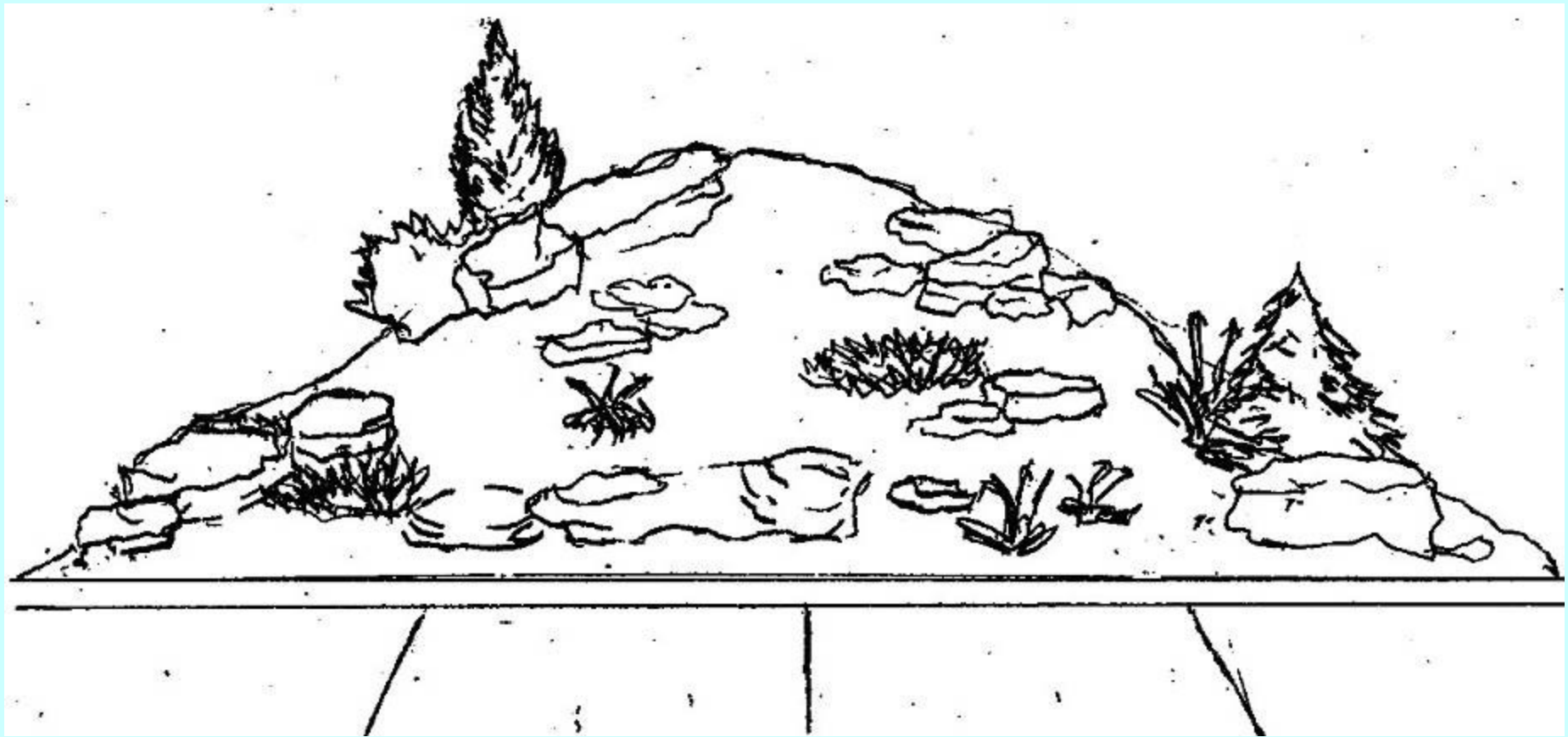




# Flow of water in a natural moraine



**Schematic drawing of  
an artificial moraine**



**Moraine – This garden emulates the debris left after a glacier recedes**





# **CREVICE GARDEN**



**Crevice garden is a type of rock garden where most of the surface is composed of closely set stones**

**Designed more for plants  
favorable to high  
alpine zones**

# **PLANTED WALLS & FORMAL RAISED BEDS**

**In the wild, some plants  
seem to grow right from  
solid rock, trailing down  
boulders, flowering on  
cliff faces**

**Desire to create this kind of  
garden is for those who want  
to grow highly specialized  
plants**



















**Walls can also be used to  
support free standing  
elevated beds**



**FOR THE ROCK  
GARDEN PURIST**



**Rock gardens are like a child's sandbox full of toys. In a limited space one can play with plants from varied habitats and regions.**







**Collectors can amass  
hundreds of species in a  
typical city yard**

- **Delicate European alpine**
  - **Tough native plants**
- **New discoveries from far-away  
mountain ranges**



**Rock gardens plants are slow growing – you may want to plant some more common varieties which are quicker growing to give color and size early on**

**As the garden matures you  
can replace the plants with  
rarer species**

# **BASIC ROCK GARDEN PRINCIPLES**

**Rock gardens should be open and uncluttered as possible.**

**Size and placement of rocks should be bold and generous.**











**Rocks should be significant  
rather than numerous.  
Should appear settled –  
harmonious in color and  
texture.**









**Avoid overplanting.  
You can obscure the rock  
framework and sacrifice  
individual character of  
plants.**







**Don't forget accent  
plants – distinctive in  
color, texture and form**





**Start with plants easier to cultivate, those more hardy, 'friendly.' As experience grows move to more challenging plants.**

# Basket of Gold



# Soapwort







**Sage**

# Phlox







**Phlox and Blue Fescue**



**Bleeding Hearts**

**Find out as much as possible  
about kind of plants before  
buying and planting**

- **Height**
- **Spread**
- **Likely life span**



**Sargents Weeping Hemlock**





**Avoid plants that can  
become weedy or  
problems in years  
ahead**

- **Grape hyacinth**
- **Common bellflower**  
***(campanula rapunculoides)***

**Minimize or avoid altogether  
synthetic materials – i.e.  
concrete, brick, anything  
plastic**

**Be selective in plants. Put  
nothing in your garden  
simply because you have it.**

**Avoid studding rock garden  
with distracting labels.**



# **CONCLUSION**

**Many seasoned gardeners have turned to rock gardening because in some ways - it represents the pinnacle of horticultural endeavor, where scientific manipulation of the garden and artistic expression become one**



# **PLANTS FOR THE ROCK GARDEN**

# **Dwarf Conifers**

**Some examples of most  
common slow growing  
conifers suitable for  
rock gardens.**



## **Dwarf Balsam Fir**

***Abies balsamea nana* –**

**2 ½' high – 20' wide in about 30 years**



**Dwarf Weeping Cedar  
of Lebanon**  
***Cedrus libani Sargentii***  
**12-14" before  
branches start to weep**



**Dwarf Hinoki Cypress**  
***Chamaecyparis obtusa***  
***'nana'***

**At 30 years plant is 10-15" high,  
15-20" wide.**





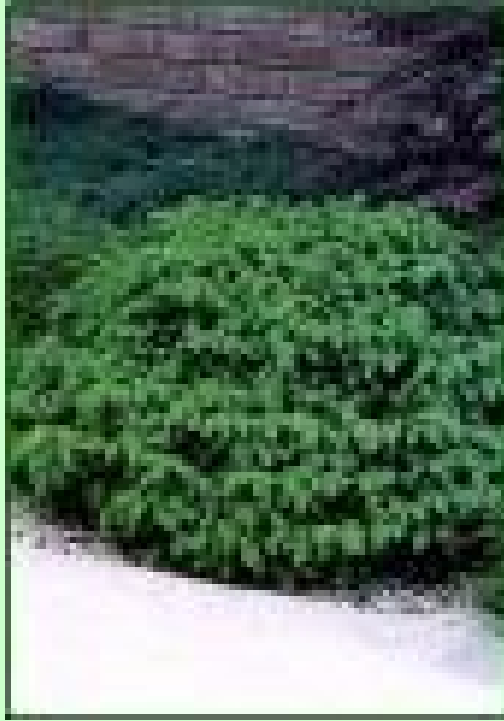
**Dwarf common juniper**  
***Juniperus communis***  
***compressa***  
***Columnar shrub – 3' in 30 years***



**Dwarf weeping Norway spruce**

***Picea abies 'inversa'***

**Rounded mound about 3' tall**



## **Bird's-nest spruce**

***Picea abies 'nidiformis'***

**At 20 years about 20" high-twice as wide**



**Dwarf Alberta spruce**

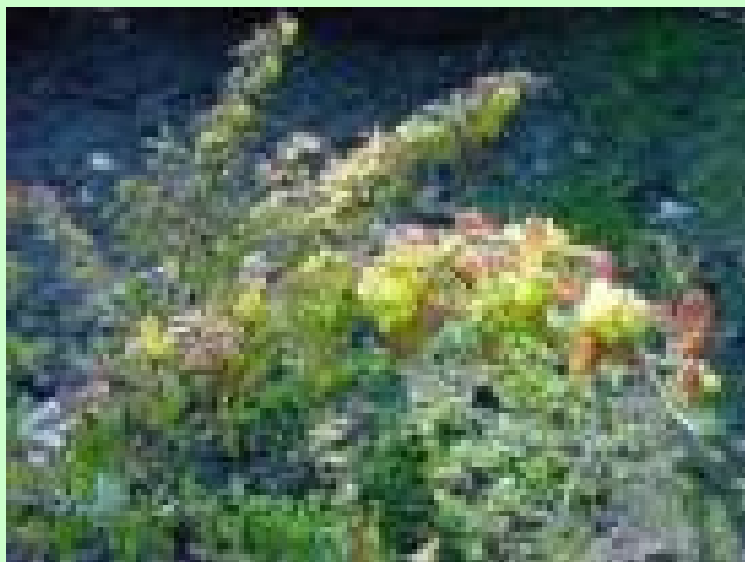
***Picea glauca 'conica'***

**At 20 years 4' high – 2' wide**

# **Shrubs Suitable for Rock Gardens**

**All of the following thrive in well  
drained soil in full sun or partial  
shade**





**Creeping Barberry**

***Berberis wilsoniae***

**Brilliant scarlet in autumn**



**Heather**  
***Calluna vulgaris***  
**Likes acidic soil**



**Creeping cotoneaster**  
***Cotoneaster adpressus***

**In the fall displays bright red fruit  
and scarlet leaves**



**Prostrate broom**

***Cytisus decumbens***

**Green twigs that suggest a small  
broom-bright yellow flowers in late spring**



# **Shrubby cinquefoil**

## ***Potentilla fruticosa***

**Flowering in late spring. Flowers  
range from yellow-orange  
to white and even  
red.**

# **PLANTS FOR ROCK GARDENS**

**Some uncommon plants are rare  
and more unusual. Not found in  
most nurseries but are  
available  
in the Salt Lake valley.**





**New Zealand Burr**

***Acaena saccaticupula* 'Blue Haze'**

**Full shade-evergreen groundcover**



# **Star of Persia**

## ***Allium christophii***

**Enormous 10" flower globes –  
terrific  
accent plant**



## **Plume Flower**

***Astible chinensis 'Pumila'***

**Lavender pink plumes**



**Carpathian Bellflower**  
***Campanula carpatica***  
***‘Blue Chips’***

**Covered with upward facing sky-blue  
flowers June - October**



## **Pinks**

***Dianthus 'Bouquet Purple'***

**Blooms all season – lavender pink flower**



**Scotts Spleenwort**

***Asplenium ebenoides***

**Dwarf fern – adaptable to alkaline soils**





**Edelweiss**  
***Leontopodium alpinum***

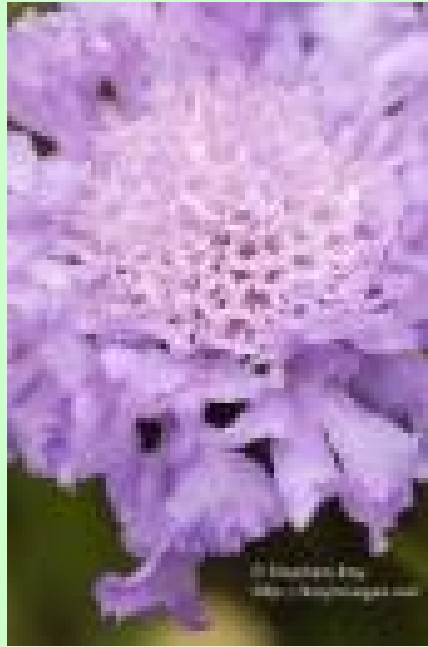
**Alpine plant from Swiss Alps**



# **Bitterroot**

***Lewisia ‘Constant Comment’***

**Fuscia pink blossoms in spring**



**Pincushion Flower**  
***Scabiosa caucasica***  
***‘Fama’***

**Intense lavender-blue flowers all summer**



# Campion

## *Silene caryophylloides*

From Turkish mountains in limestone scree.  
Large pink-magenta flowers