





A Step-by-Step for Stony Soil

With pickaxe and shovel, dig planting holes. Remove large rocks and soil, and set aside. To discourage weeds, cover surface between planting holes with thick layer of damp newspapers (Dawn and Bill also use recycled carpeting, laid face down), then top with sturdy, recycled plastic, cutting slits in covering to fold down into holes.

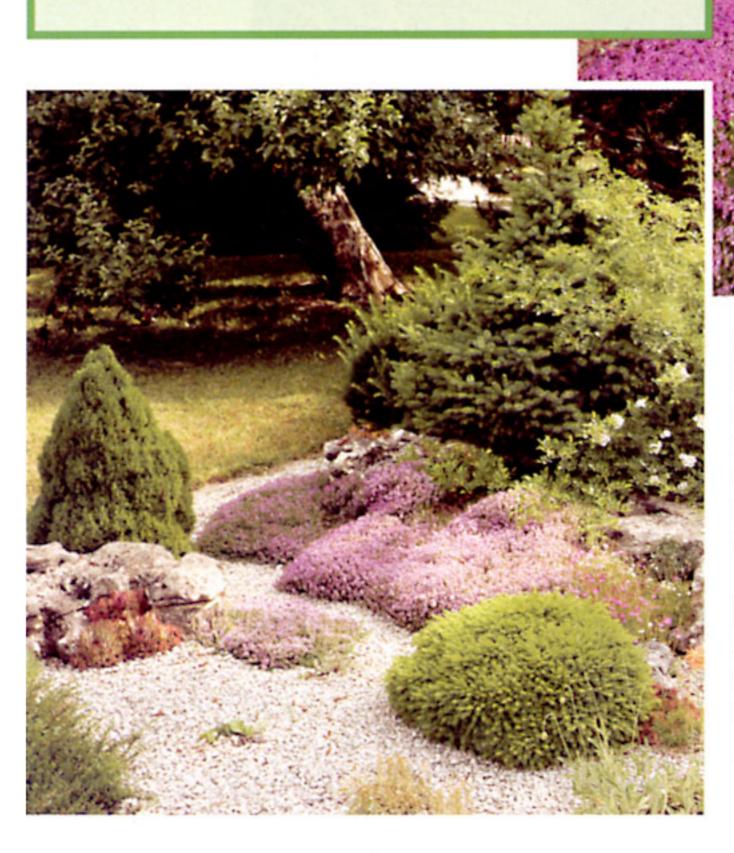
Separate soil from smaller stones and gravel by sifting through 1/2-inch hardware cloth into wheelbarrow. Mix in compost, fibrous material (such as coir) and composted manure (Bill and Dawn add composted straw bedding and manure from their chickens, ducks, geese and sheep, and also recommend alfalfa pellets).

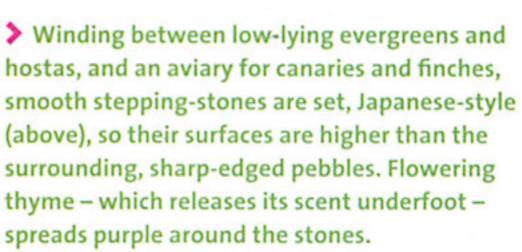
Set plant in each hole, then backfill with amended soil and water thoroughly.

Between plants, spread thick layer of mulch such as pea gravel, pebbles, crushed rock or brick.

Position boulders, large rocks and/or driftwood where desired. Pack crevices with soil, then plant with alpines, dwarf conifers or creeping plants (such as sedum, sempervivum and thyme).

Outline bed with large flat stones, set level with surface, to anchor covering and provide mowing guide.

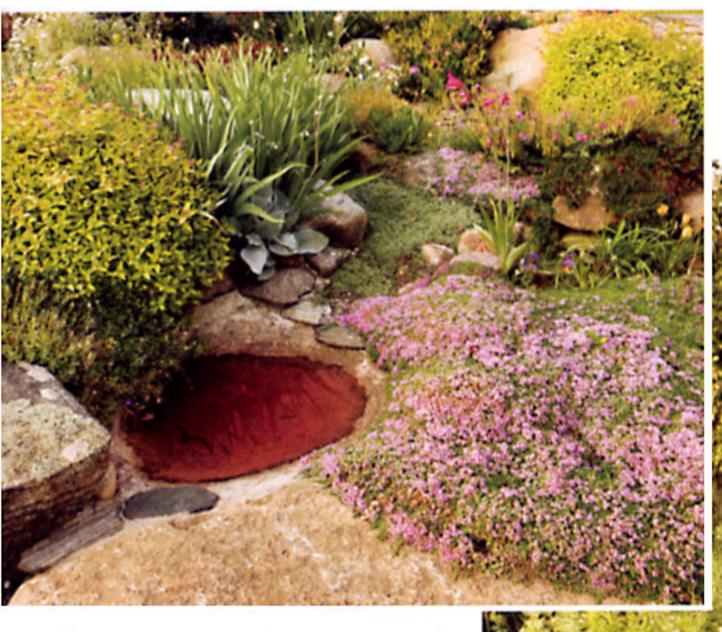




> A scree garden covers this island bed set in the lawn on the north side. Large limestone rocks anchor softly mounded earth planted with matforming thymes and dwarf evergreens.



- ➤ Nearby, a pathway of weathered flags set into the soil (above) curves around a gleaming clump of grass dotted with the bright magenta blooms of a neighbouring rose campion.
- ➤ Heavy boulders accentuate the delicacy of the flowers and stems of deceptively fragile-looking drought-tolerant plants.



- Doulders and broad slabs of stone step down the rock garden on a north-facing slope (above). Plants that range from creeping to spiky, woolly to smooth, and sharp to subtle in hue, combine with lichencovered rocks and reflecting pools of rainwater to create a changing mosaic.
- Two drystone walls, built with slabs found on the spot, enclose a circular plot filled with fragrant lavenders and thymes. The original settlers' barn once stood here.

GARDENERS' TRAVEL TIP

As Dawn and Bill's gardens grew, neighbours began helping out. An organic farm and garden, Keppel Croft also welcomes volunteers from WWOOF (World Wide Opportunities on Organic Farms). More than 600 hosts in this international program offer an opportunity for cheap travel, education and hands-on experience in return for a little elbow grease. Learn more at www.wwoof.ca and www.keppelcroft.com.

ON THE NET

Find instructions to make a soil and compost sieve at www.canadianliving.com/july.

