ask the professionals

Advice from members of the BC Landscape & Nursery Association

(BCLNA), as well as other gardening experts around our province





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## **PLANTING AROUND A TREE**

Can I install a raised flowerbed around an existing tree without damaging it? Installing a new raised flowerbed can add significant curb appeal to any home by allowing the plants to be easily viewed from the street. In many landscapes, an existing tree has been planted at an elevation much lower than what is required for a raised flowerbed. At first glance, the homeowner has only two choices: design the flowerbed at the level of the tree or



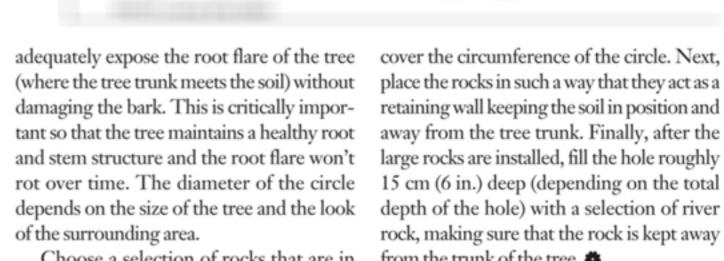
PHOTO courtesy Scott McLeod

dig up the tree and replant it at a higher elevation. Both options are usually less than ideal. The good news is there is a third option that is often overlooked. Here is what I recommend:

Shape the flowerbed around the tree using a halfmoon blade and remove all turf and related roots in a way that won't disturb the roots of the tree.

Add Sea Soil or a well-composted organic garden-blend soil to the newly formed flowerbed area. At this stage, don't be afraid to place the soil right up against the tree trunk until you have reached the proper elevation.

Carefully begin to dig out a circle around the tree trunk and remove all the soil to



Choose a selection of rocks that are in proportion to the size of the tree and surrounding area and that match the colour scheme of your yard. In this case, the rocks are approximately 30 cm (1 ft.) wide by 90 cm (3 ft.) tall or more, depending on the depth of the soil from the top of the new bed down to the root flare. You will need enough rocks to

retaining wall keeping the soil in position and away from the tree trunk. Finally, after the large rocks are installed, fill the hole roughly 15 cm (6 in.) deep (depending on the total depth of the hole) with a selection of river rock, making sure that the rock is kept away from the trunk of the tree.

> Send your questions on any gardening topic to cpope@canadawide.com or fax 604-299-9188 or mail to Ask the Professionals, GardenWise, 4th floor, 4180 Lougheed Highway, Burnaby, B.C.



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