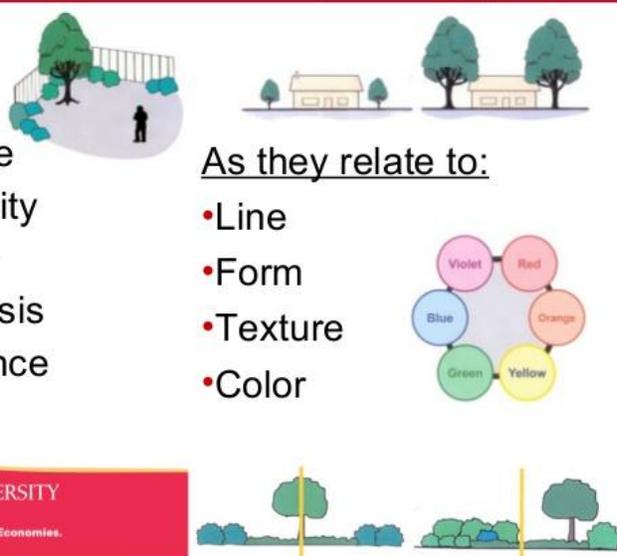
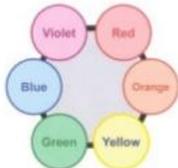


Principles of Landscape Design

- Unity
- Scale
- Balance
- Simplicity
- Variety
- Emphasis
- Sequence

As they relate to:

- Line
- Form
- Texture
- Color



Landscaping without Lawns
By Phyllis Lee
UCCE Master Gardener of El Dorado County

There are so many beautiful ways to landscape a yard and if you're one of the thousands in California looking to reduce their water and pesticide use, hate fussing to create that evergreen expanse, and you like to entice butterflies, bees, and hummingbirds to your yard - replacing your lawn could be the answer. Whether you envision a prairie garden, xeric garden, an edible landscape, or a garden in a shady area, there are some steps to take to ensure success.

There are three main ways that we recommend to remove sod: mechanical removal, solarization, and sheet mulching - each with its pros and cons. Solarization and sheet mulching may not be allowed in some housing areas which leaves mechanical removal - where a sod cutter penetrates the turf cutting strips at the root zone or a rototiller that discs the area. Rototilling is less desirable if there are weeds or Bermuda grass. Solarization uses the sun by trapping sunlight under a layer of clear plastic sheeting which sterilizes the upper 3-4 inches of soil. It will take 6-8 weeks with daytime temperatures over 80 degrees and full sun exposure. Sheet mulching uses layers of paper or cardboard topped with a thick layer of organic matter that smother the lawn.

Landscape designers take elements of design (space, scale, and form) and their client's style (traditional, modern, cottage, etc) into consideration. Is there space to partition off areas to create 'rooms' with a different feel that are connected via walkways? You may not want to rely only on plant matter, and may want to incorporate "hardscape" materials such as decomposed granite, bricks, flagstone - as well as walls, pots, or fountains. Don't forget that hardscape should be done/placed prior to planting. It's so much harder to do afterwards.

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Color harmony is important and provides a sense of balance so as to not overwhelm the eye. There are multiple color schemes from analogous (3-5 colors from the same area of the color wheel) to achromatic white, blacks and grays paired with one color that makes that color pop. Red energizes and brightens shadowy areas, while blue calms and cools hot areas. White is a color as well, and can be dramatic on a moonlit night.

Form is something that is frequently forgotten when landscaping. Different shapes include round, oval, conical, weeping, horizontal, and vertical. Vertical form has always been important and is seen today using grasses and succulents like aloes. However, remember to think of plants' watering needs. Don't have plants with higher watering needs next to plants with lower watering needs. Besides plants, statues or antiques can provide height. An old bicycle amongst plants could even be wrapped in lights for nighttime views, or a frame that holds used wine bottles horizontally that's hung on a fence. There are many ways to add whimsy and interest to a garden to make it yours.

Along with the hardscape considerations, irrigation will need to be changed before planting. Frequently this means that a pressure reducer will need to be installed with a filter to capture particulate matter in the water. Any good gardening store or irrigation supplier can assist you to get the equipment that will be needed to convert sprinklers to drip. The two most common types of irrigation for plants are multiple drip type emitters or inline drip. Drip emitters use from less than a gallon per hour to several gallons per hour. This is helpful when plants on the same line use varying amounts of water in a given period of run time. There are also adjustable drippers that fountain or bubble. Inline drip have the advantage of not being invaded by pests and more accurately accounting for the amount of water used (each drip giving 1 gal/per hour). They come spaced in six, twelve or eighteen inch distances and always need a pressure reducer and filter. NEVER mix watering type systems like emitters with bubblers or emitters with inline.

UCCE Master Gardeners of El Dorado County are available to answer home gardening questions Tuesday through Friday, 9:00 a.m. to noon, by calling [\(530\) 621-5512](tel:5306215512). Walk-ins are welcome at our office, located at 311 Fair Lane in Placerville. For more information about our public education classes and activities, go to our UCCE Master Gardeners of El Dorado County website at <http://mgeldorado.ucanr.edu>. Sign up to receive our online notices and e-newsletter at http://ucanr.edu/master_gardener_e-news. You can also find us on Facebook.