

Steps to Good Landscape Design

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Over the past year, the concepts of good landscape design have been presented, including site selection and preparation, plant materials, hardscape and decoration. Hopefully these have provided some ideas for every home gardener to use! This article recaps the steps in a successful garden plan.

1 – Consider the site. Match the intended uses and the style of surrounding structures to the design plan for the garden. Add in any permanent features that will not be moved. Start sketching that plan!

2 – Add climate and terrain. Does the site drain in a particular direction, have limited light, or sit in harsh sun? Soil conditions should also be noted.

3 – Ponder seasons of use. A perennial bed viewed year-round from the house will deserve different consideration than an annual bed right next to a seasonal patio.

4 – Pick some colors. Is there a dominant color or a combination of colors? How will color be used to paint a picture? Make some choices to guide plant selection and placement.

5 – Outline the plan. Take all of the considerations above and note where major plants or themes will be used. Consider the scale of materials to be used as part of the plan.

6 – Add color to the plan! Crayons anyone? Using a rough drawing to determine how color will appear in different seasons is helpful in fine-tuning plant material selection.

7 – Plot the vertical space. Plants grow up, so planning by only looking down on the garden can lead to mistakes. Imagine the primary view looking straight ahead.

8 – Make a plant list. Visit local nurseries. Browse online and catalog sources. Remember to keep plants with similar growing condition needs, like watering, together, and avoid mixing plants that are from very different habitats.

9 – Consider the seasons. Are there gaps to be filled while permanent plants grow? Are there areas that will look good but not for another season? Add annuals, bulbs or ornaments to help fill in the blank areas of the canvas.

10 – Review the overall structure. Take a step back and think about the harmony in that garden area. Does the garden work with the house? Are the plants friendly to one another? Add non-growing decorative accents too.

Now, start planting!!! Sometimes it is possible to do it all right away, but for most people, the garden is a plan that is always in progress. New plants, realities of less than optimum selections and new visions all contribute to a dynamic garden landscape plan.

Finally, make sure to allow plenty of time to relax and simply relish in the results! A lot has gone into this plan, and the reward is continuing enjoyment for many years to come!

Saturday, October 29, Master Gardeners will present a free, three-hour class on “Holiday House Plants.” They will discuss which plants help make the holidays more festive. The class starts at 9:00 a.m. and is held in the Veterans Memorial Building, 130 Placerville Drive in Placerville.

Master Gardeners are available to answer home gardening questions Tuesday through Friday, 9 a.m. to noon, by calling (530) 621-5512. Walk-ins are welcome. The office is located at 311 Fair Lane in Placerville. For more information about our public education classes and activities, go to our Master Gardener website at http://ucanr.org/sites/EDC_Master_Gardeners/. Sign up to receive our online notices and e-newsletter at <http://ucanr.org/mgenews/>. You can also find us on Facebook.