

What Plant, Where? Planning Your Home Garden

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Design Characteristics of Plants

Size – shade tree, ornamental scale/flowering tree, significant conifer, shrubs, vines, groundcovers.

See “Sizes to Draw Plants” for guidelines for “design size”.

Shape (form) - creeping/spreading/round/upright/columnar. Seasonal differences: winter vs. summer

Cultural/environmental conditions – sun/shade/wet/dry/clay/sand/deer (!!!)

Foliage color – spring/summer/fall. Exotica: variegated, multi-colored.

Texture – boxwood vs. rhododendron. Size and shape of leaves and spaces between the leaves.

Flowers – Color/fragrance/intensity/duration/textural effects

Bark interest – Color/patterns/textures. Cherries/birch/stewartia

Fruit – winterberry holly/bird interest. Color changes. Mess or litter issues.

Maintenance aspects of plants – growth rate/ seasonal cleanup (which season?) Pest problems

Design considerations: How to go about using plants

Treat plants as functional elements

Think of them as tools to do a job. Groundcover are the carpet. Shrubs, flowering trees and large evergreens can make up the walls. Shade trees are the roof or ceiling of the site.

Perennials and grasses are often treated as the accessories: Cushions on a sofa

Windbreaks / shading: Moderate summer sun S & SW sides of house. Moderate NW winter winds.

Define entries and arrival spaces. Doors, walkways, garage.

Privacy, buffers; A little bit goes a long way towards making for better neighbors.

Circulation – How people and vehicles move through the landscape. Use to direct where to and NOT TO go! Accent plant to indicate a change; Hedges to block access. Thorny plants as barriers.

Outdoor living areas – Shade Patio, terrace, deck, play areas, NOT shading pool, vegetable garden.

Views – Create where none, screen/subordinate objectionable views, enhance/maximize good views. Use larger plants as a backdrop for smaller plants or to highlight a garden feature. Create foreground.

Specimens: (focal point) Plants used sparingly for greater impact. Simple surroundings will magnify impact.

Mass

Triangulate

Inter-twine & Overlap

Create Depth

Repeat