

Part Two

Sustainable Landscapes

Developing a Plan

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Since the next few articles will be on sustainable landscapes, the first step will be to plan your landscape. Start with measurements and drawings on paper of the outline of buildings and the features around them. If there is a street, label it. If there is a pond, label it. Be sure to include the positions of trees, water outlets, and driveways. Note the directions on the drawing so you will know the sun exposure. This does not need to be a perfect drawing. It is just to help you determine where all the plants need to be located. Just use estimates of measurements if you are not too picky. A drawing like this will help you to plan the areas around your home so that the plants will be in the best spots to view, block views, compliment your house, outline and separate parts of the landscape for different uses and it will help you save money in the long run. Most families like an area for utility use which provides storage for tools and trash cans and is camouflaged by plants. Others like to have an area for children to play that is not in the main part of the yard. Most people like to have a seating area where they can entertain friends. The curb appeal is also important and the manner in which you approach the home is equally important. If you start to add large circles on your plan to designate these areas, you will start to see where you need to put plants. Be sure to note the drainage pattern in each area. This will help to know which plants will do well where. Water needs of plants vary and the most drought tolerant ones are best in sustainable landscapes. If you have an area that remains wet or is boggy, there are plants for that also. When you start to think of plants, you will need to know how large they will be at maturity. Don't plan to cram in plants and prune them to fit. That is not sustainable. It is a great way to pass time in the winter when you are wishing you could be out gardening, so start your plan and remember it is really never finished....