DIY Planting Design
You Can't Always Plant What you Want! Right Plant Right Place

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How to

- Get started
- Create a scale plan of your property
- Get to know your site
- Dream a garden
- Approach plant selection

Let’s get started!
HOW TO DRAW A SCALE PLAN DESIGN OF YOUR HOME’S LANDSCAPE

Materials

Measuring Out:
- Pencil w/eraser
- Paper
- Clipboard
- Measuring tape (retractable 50 ft. works well)
- A friend

Other helpful tools:
- Photos of your yard from typical perspectives
- Trace paper
- Compass (or look up your property on Google Earth)
- Drafting your plan:
- Pencil w/eraser
- Graph paper
MEASURE UP

Draft out the outline of your house, other structures, pathways, driveway, patio, fence, etc. Measure and make notes on your drawing.
DRAW TO SCALE

With all your measurements and notes collected, use graph paper and draw out “to scale”.
Site analysis

- Climate and micro-climate
- Soil
- Wind
- Topography
- Water
- Sun
SITE ANALYSIS

A visual collection of constraints, observations, and goals from your wish list. With your base plan and site analysis, you now have your existing conditions and all your considerations mapped out.
MAKE A WISH LIST

- Replace my lawn
- Use less water
- Provide shade for the driveway
- Look good year round
- Have flowers for hummingbirds and butterflies
- Screen the recycle bin
What do you like?
Start gathering ideas

Look for ideas:
- Online
- Magazines
- Take photos
- Style is a matter of personal taste

Meanwhile...
CONCEPTUAL PLANTING PLAN

Time to pull out another copy of your base plan (use trace paper and masking tape to work in layers)
Choose the Right Plants for Each Spot
Southern Europe in Davis
Australia at the Arboretum
California Oak Woodland
California grasslands
Morphology

- Pungent, hairy, waxy, tiny or bitter leaves.
- Adaptations to drought and provide pest resistance.
- Discourages everything from deer to white flies.
Genetic destiny

- We have it,
Genetic destiny

- and so do plants.
Genetic destiny

- Locate a plant in a spot to show off its best features, and help it to thrive.
- Give the plant enough room to grow to its mature size and shape.
- Less pruning means less stress and fewer pest problems.
Why?
Choose plants

- Whose natural size and shape fits the planting space
- Are drought tolerant
- CA Native or Mediterranean
- Not invasive
Hydrozoning

- Group plants with similar water needs and seasonal moisture needs.
- Reduces plant stress and disease and pest pressure.
- Easier to irrigation efficiently.
HYDROZONING

- Sun and Shade
- North and South
- Sloped and Level

EACH NEEDS TO BE ON A DIFFERENT VALVE
THE FRAMEWORK

These plants are the permanent foundation of your planting plan. Use your base plan and your photographs to help you figure out the locations of these basic elements.
“The Walls”

These elements flesh out the framework of your structural plantings. They are also permanent features and will help to fill out your plan.
THE TRIM

These are the bedding plants and splashes of color that are temporary changeable parts of your landscape providing brief, colorful seasonal interest.
COLOR

Flowers and fruit are typically the most colorful part of a plant aside from shades of green. Check bloom times so that you have something happening the year round.
MASS
3D “volume” formed by leaves and branches of a plant or groups of plants. Combining plants of similar mass can create a simple enjoyable scene.

TEXTURE
The pattern formed by light and shadow of plants and surface quality of plants (ex. lawn is fine textured vs. ivy which is coarse textured). Too much uniformity in texture looks stiff. Too much contrast can create discord. Look to strike a balance.
Within the planting design and groupings of plants, it is a good idea for at least one of the features of the plants needs to be similar or the same to maintain unity and at least one of the features probably needs to be different to create contrast. A few species in a well thought out layout can be better than many kinds of different plants jumbled together.

SIMILARITY AND CONTRAST
RHYTHM

Repetition of similar plant forms can create simplicity and a pattern that is used again and again and ties changes in the design together. Use accents sparingly to break up monotony and provide punctuation in your landscape.
THE END

Happy Plant Designing!