



Planning the Home Landscape

William C. Welch
Extension Landscape Horticulturist

A well-designed landscape is a pleasure to the family, enhances a community and adds to the property's resale value. Landscape design involves much more than placing trees, shrubs and other plants on the property. It is an art which deals with conscious arrangement or organization of outdoor space for human satisfaction and enjoyment. Some of its major goals include:

- Organizing and developing the site for maximum use and pleasure.
- Creating a visual relationship between the house and the site.
- Reducing landscape maintenance to a practical level.

Americans spend tremendous amounts of money "landscaping" their businesses, homes, streets, parks, schools, etc. Much of this money is wasted, however, because of little or no planning. People cannot understand *how* to landscape until they know *why* they landscape. There are several reasons why people "landscape": some think it improves the appearance of their place; others like to grow plants; still others just want their place to look pretty. Too often these landscapes dominate rather than serve. Masses of plants or other materials in the landscape may take up a large portion of the space and leave little room for people.

Then how does the designer arrange space so that people will find it useful, beautiful, meaningful and functional? His methods include:

- Observing and analyzing the habits of the people who will be using the space, including their needs, desires and how much space each of their activities requires.
- Studying past methods.
- Surveying available materials to solve design requirements.
- Analyzing the environment of the site including the view in and around the site. The ecology of the site should be carefully analyzed since it is an important design determinant.

Not all landscaping improves the appearance of a building. The work of an insensitive designer can subdue a building, conceal important features or contradict the architect's

intent. Good landscape design can significantly improve the building's appearance by adding warmth, liveability and personality. It can also relate a building to its site and environment and give it the desired degree of dominance.

Growth and change separate landscape designs from other arts. Most works of art such as architecture, sculpture and painting look their best when new. Landscape designs, however, are at their worst when new and improve with age. A well-designed landscape will seldom look the same any two months of the year.

The temptation to begin planting immediately is almost overwhelming. Whether you are landscaping a newly-built home or redesigning an existing landscape, the results will be much more satisfying if you plan first. Ideally, you should consult a professional landscape architect on planning, but you can produce good results if you follow these steps.

- [Base Plan](#)
- [Needs](#)
- [Site](#)
- [Diagram](#)
- [Materials](#)
- [Plants](#)
- [Landscape Construction](#)
- [Accessories](#)

| [Aggie Horticulture](#) | [Base Plan](#) | [Needs](#) | [Site](#) | [Diagram](#) | [Materials](#) | [Plants](#) | [Landscape Construction](#) | [Accessories](#) |

Hypertext markup and graphics colorization by Tammy Kohlleppel and Dan Lineberger.

Illustrations by Amanda Arnold and Elizabeth L. Roesler.

<http://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/extension/homelandscape/home.html>