Rockbridge Extension Master Gardeners

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Landscape Design

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Welcome to ‘Landscape Design’

In this module you will learn the planning process for landscape design along with the essential elements of design

- Read Chapter 16 in the Master Gardener Handbook
- Browse the Suggested Readings at the end of these slides. They contain online sources that will be helpful for your learning
- The Test Your Knowledge section is for fun and review

What Will I Learn in This Module (Objectives)

1. Requirements for a plot plan

2. How to do a site analysis for a landscape design

3. Use areas in a landscape design

4. Elements of landscape design

Landscape Design

"the art of organizing and enriching outdoor space though the placement of plants and structures in an agreeable and useful relationship to enhance the natural environment.

- Creating a plan to make the best use of the space available in the most attractive way;
- Shaping the land to make the most of the site's natural features and advantages;
- Building such necessary structures as fences, walls, and patios and;
- Selecting and growing the plants that best fit the design."

- Source: Master Gardener Handbook

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Elements of Design

There are no hard and fast rules in designing your landscapes and the beds within that landscape. However, following certain principles may make the results more pleasurable to you. There are many Principles of Design described in the literature. Some include:

Scale

Balance

Unity

Rhythm

Simplicity

Accent

Repetition

Harmony

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Scale: The proportion between two sets of dimensions

Photo credit

Scale

- **Absolute scale** relates the comparative value of landscape elements to a fixed structure.



- **Relative scale** relates to comparative relative sizes or "values" of objects in the landscape.
- **Low scale** is relaxing and calming
- **High scale** promotes action.



Balance. Aesthetically pleasing integration of elements (equal visual weight or mass)

Balance

- **Formal balance** repeats the same left and right, giving stability, stateliness, and dignity.
- **Informal balance** differs from left to right giving curiosity, movement, and feels alive.





Photo credit

Symmetrical: formal balance (one side mirrors another)
Asymmetrical: informal balance; use of different objects to achieve equilibrium

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Unity: The quality of oneness

Different parts of the design appear as a single unit.

Unity can be achieved by consistently using elements with similar characteristics in the design such as plants with similar height, size, texture, and color.



Photo credit: ncsu.edu

Rhythm: A repetition of elements which directs the eye through the design

- The illusion of motion is created
- Repeating a color scheme, shape, texture, line or form evokes rhythm in landscape design. Proper expression of rhythm eliminates confusion and monotony from landscape design

[Principles of Design: Rhythm in the Landscape]



Photo credit: ncsu.edu

Simplicity: Degrees of repetition rather than constant change

Less is more; create spaces, don’t fill them up; a simple design will be easier to maintain and increase functionality.

Architectural simplicity



Photo credit

Accent: An element that differs from everything around it

May be obtained through use of contrasting texture, color, or form, or by highlighting portions of a plant composition

Photo credit:





Photo credit:

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Repetition: The repeated use of objects or elements with identical shape, form, texture, or color



Photo credit:Lost Horizons Nursery, Acton Ontario



Photo credit: ncsu.edu

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Harmony: A pleasing arrangement of parts

- All parts of the image relate to and complement each other
- Pulls the pieces of a visual image together
- Achieved through repetition and rhythm

Photo credit: ncsu.edu



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Transitions: The gradual change achieved by the manipulation of the basic design elements of color, scale, line, form and texture

- The connecting link between the space dividers and accents or between the house and the land
- Must be composed of characteristics that are found in both the space dividers and accents
- The best way transition can be achieved is by the gradual, ascending or descending, arrangement of different elements with varying textures, forms, colors, or sizes

Photo credit:



Dominance and Contrast

- Dominance suggests that one element in the composition has authority over other subordinate parts. Dominance may be created by size alone, such as a shade tree, or by form, texture, color, or location of the elements within a design. The dominant element may also become the focal point.

- Major contrast is a similar design principle where one element is so different that other parts of the composition are subordinated to that element, such as a bed of red salvia flowers against a background of green yews

Plot Plan

A scale map of the grounds to include:

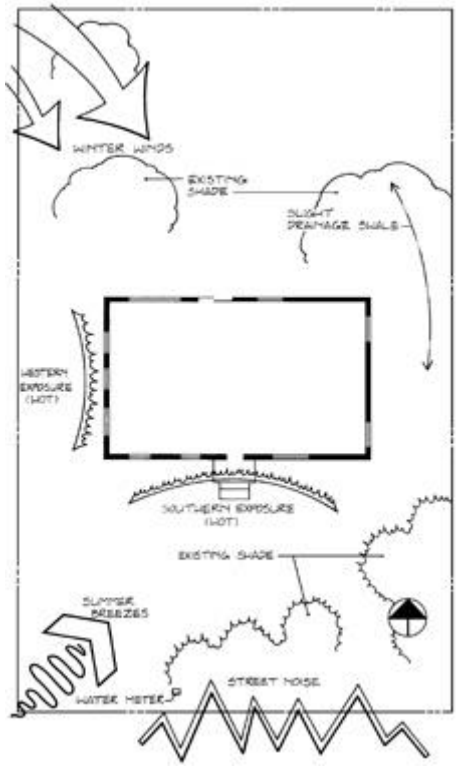
- Property lines
- North point
- House, garage, other buildings
- Scale used
- Existing trees, rock outcroppings
- Location of septic tank or sewer lines
- Walks and driveways
- Doors, windows, porches and location of rooms
- Contour of the land
- Undesirable features of grounds or adjoining property
- View

Planning and Designing Your Home Landscape

Analysis of the Site: Determining Characteristics

- Characteristics of the lot. Preserve the best natural resources
- Neighboring sights and sounds. Keep good views open; screen out the undesirable
- Soil factors: Drainage; texture; pH and fertility; topography; compaction
- Climate and microclimate: hardiness zone; sunlight; precipitation; wind; temperature

Photo credit: uga.edu



The link below is an excellent article on site analysis

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[Drawing a Landscape Plan – Site Analysis]

Family Needs

The landscape design should be based on:

- The people who will use it, their cultural needs, individual desires, and economic abilities;
- Access to the house
- Family activities
- Maintenance

Use areas in the landscape

- Public: What the passerby sees; front of the house.
- Private: Reserved for the family; outdoor entertaining, family relaxation, recreation, outdoor eating, aesthetic enjoyment
- Service: Storage or work area; place for garbage. Oil tank, air conditioning unit, garden tools, etc.

Theme Gardens

- A garden based on a recurring or identifying idea
- Examples include:
    - Rose garden
    - Herb garden
    - Cut flower garden
    - Wildlife garden
    - Winter interest garden
    - Water garden
    - English cottage garden
    - Rock garden
    - Topiary garden

The links below provide more information on different kinds of theme gardens.

Theme gardens

End of Slide Set

- This is the end of the slides on Landscape Design.
- You can continue to next slide: ‘Suggested Readings’

OR

- Click on the house below to return to the Navigation Page

Suggested Readings

- Selecting Plants for Virginia Landscapes (20 pages)
- The effect of landscape plants on perceived home value (3 pages)

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Test Your Knowledge

Knowledge Quiz

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Knowledge Quiz Answers on next slide

1. The three main areas of available space in landscape design are _____, _____ and _____
2. An axis with everything on one side duplicated or mirrored on the other side is called: a) rhythm; b) symmetrical balance; c) asymmetrical balance; d) unity
3. In the landscape, accent refers to: a) repeated use of certain elements; b) filling up spaces; c) a focal point or dominant theme; d) a pleasing arrangement of parts
4. _____ form the connecting link between space dividers and accents
5. Rose gardens, herb gardens, and rock gardens are all types of _____ gardens

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Knowledge Quiz

1. The three main areas of available space in landscape design are _____, _____ and _____
   Answer: public, private, service
2. An axis with everything on one side duplicated or mirrored on the other side is called: a) rhythm; b) symmetrical balance; c) asymmetrical balance; d) unity Answer: b) symmetrical balance
3. In the landscape, accent refers to: a) repeated use of certain elements; b) filling up spaces; c) a focal point or dominant theme; d) a pleasing arrangement of parts Answer: c) a focal point or dominant theme
4. _____ form the connecting link between space dividers and accents Answer: transitions
5. Rose gardens, herb gardens, and rock gardens are all types of _____ gardens Answer: Theme

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