

MU Guide

Developing the Landscape Plan

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To develop an attractive and useful home landscape, use a step-by-step approach. Put ideas and notes on paper along with rough sketches from which a more final and exact plan can be derived.

Steps to successful landscaping

1. Develop a list of existing and desired outdoor features.
2. Draw a base plan.
3. Outline major landscape areas.
4. Locate desired features in proper landscape areas.
5. Develop the final landscape plan.

Outdoor features

A list of outdoor features may include some of the following: patio, children's play area, cut flower garden, sports area, vegetable garden, tool shed, storage shed, etc. Try to list as many features as your family desires and space permits, even though all may not be included immediately. As time goes by, interests may change and new features may be added or old ones removed. Develop your list for the present and near future. Note on the list which features are adequate and how any existing features might be improved.

Principles of home landscaping

1. Drives and walks should be straight unless there is a good reason for having curves. When possible, situate the drive and walk together to avoid breaking up the front lawn area.
2. Use trees to frame the house and provide background. Don't block the front view of the house with them.
3. Locate play and utility areas where they don't detract from the home.
4. Don't overplant. Know the ultimate sizes of plants and allow for growth.
5. Use most plants in borders. The uninterrupted lawn gives a look of spaciousness and is easier to mow.
6. Balance the landscape. Do not have one area more heavily planted or more colorful than another.



An attractive, inviting landscape is the result of careful planning and application of landscape design principles.

7. Observe scale in planting. Large shrubs and trees may dwarf a small house.
8. Not everything in the landscape should have equal interest. Create a center of interest with specimen plants, pools or statuary.
9. Don't create a botanical collection, but bring a variety of texture into the landscape. Coarse textures are dominant and should be used sparingly.
10. Border plants may define property lines or provide privacy. They may be combined with fences, screens or other structures.
11. Use small shrubs near the door, tapering to larger shrubs at the corners.
12. Hiding the entire front base with shrubs is not necessary in many homes. Groundcovers may tie plantings together.
13. Plants with brightly colored leaves should be used very sparingly.
14. Select plants for year-round interest as well as suitability for the environment in which they will be planted.

Base plan

After listing existing and desired features, prepare a simple but complete base plan (Figures 1 and 2). Before completing the plan, you may want to draw the plan to scale, but it is not a necessity at this point.

A base plan shows your property lines, house location, utilities (both above and below ground), all exist-

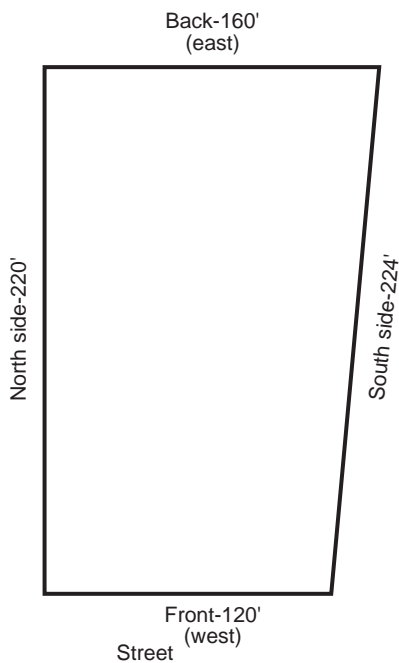


Figure 1. Measure property lines or boundary of area to be landscaped. Sketch roughly.

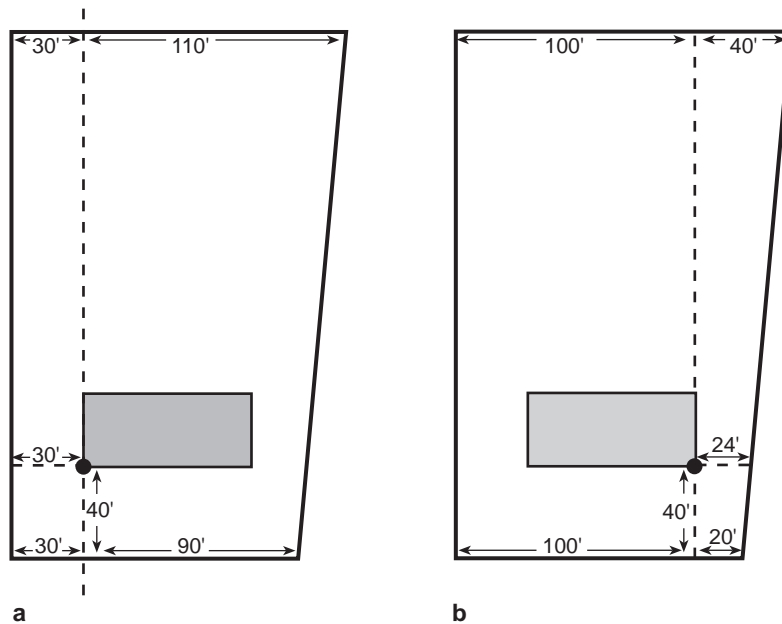


Figure 2. Sight along one side of house to locate points for positioning house on plan. Any corner may be used where objects do not interfere with sighting. For example, locate corner of house relative to (a) a square corner of the lot, or (b) an angled corner.

ing plant materials, walks, drives and topographic features such as rocks, streams, slopes or other characters of the grounds to be landscaped. Although exact scale is not necessary, try to obtain realistic proportions. Show dimensions for property lines, house outline and other permanent landmarks or structures (Figure 3). This will be the base of future drawings that will be done on tracing paper placed over this plan.

Major landscape areas

On tracing paper placed over the base plan, outline the three major landscape areas: public, private and service (Figure 4).

Public area. This is the area visible from the front of the house and street. Landscaping in this area should be relatively simple and combine well with the rest of the neighborhood. It contains the walks, drive and front entrance.

Service area. The service area should be located where it is not seen from the front but still has easy access from the drive. It is usually found to the rear or side of the property. It contains such items as garbage cans, clothes lines, compost heap, tool shed, storage shed and sometimes less attractive garden projects such as a cut flower garden, or coldframes, hotbeds, or plant propagation area or greenhouse. This area is normally screened from the private area.

Private (living) area. The living area is the most important to develop as it provides an area for family activities and extends the living area from the house into the landscape. More landscape dollars and plan-

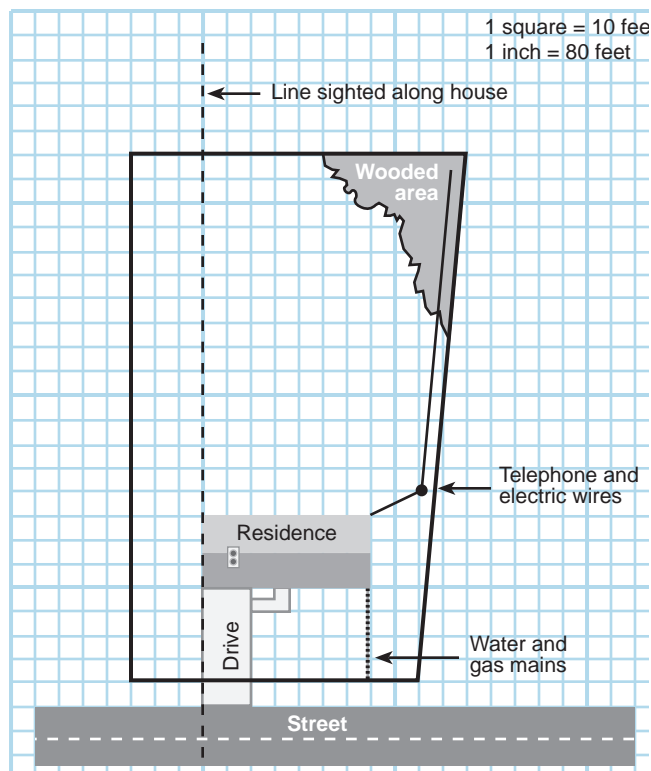


Figure 3. On the base plan, draw the lot, house and existing landscape features that will be retained.

ning are normally needed to develop this area properly. It may contain a patio, deck area, swimming pool, garden pool, fountain, recreation or sports area, children's play area, shrub and flower borders, hedges,

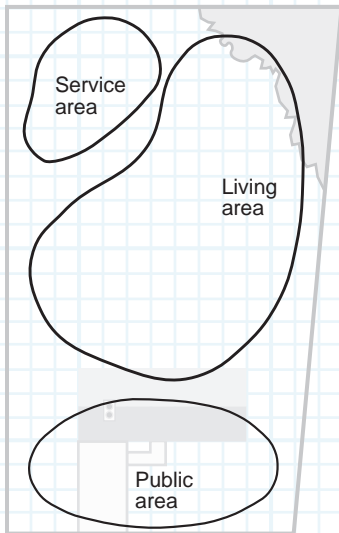


Figure 4. On tracing paper placed over the base plan, sketch approximate location of major landscape areas.

screens, vegetable garden or other attractive features for family interest and recreation.

Locate desired features in proper landscape areas

First, sketch in the applicable features such as patio, gardens and pools in the major landscape areas (Figure 5). This will give you an estimate of the space available in relation to the number of items wanted in the landscape. You may find there is not enough space for all the items listed, and some with low priority will have to be dropped.

Next, determine more accurately how many square feet will be required for each of these items and fit them more precisely. This is when the base plan made to scale will be more beneficial.

Develop the final landscape plan

Public area. (See Figure 6.) The public area is designed to set off the house and make it more attractive and inviting to the visitor. Landscaping should blend the house into the surrounding area so it appears natural. To accomplish this, the strong vertical lines of the house are softened with plants.

Trees are used to frame the house, and bedded shrub plantings create a transition from open lawn areas to the house itself. In the public area, the doorway is the focal point. Plantings should lead a visitor's eye to the entrance. To create this effect, use the larger plants at the corners and graduate to smaller plants toward the door.

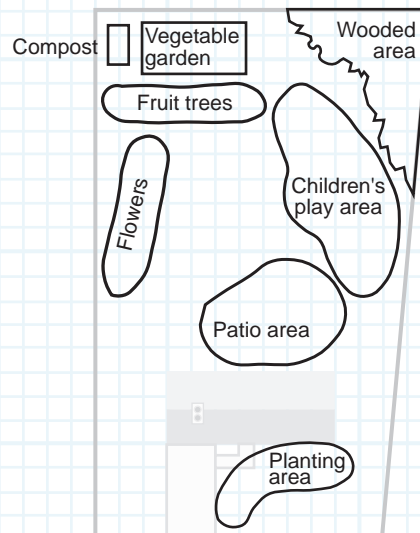


Figure 5. Lay a second sheet of tracing paper over the base plan and on it locate the desired landscape features. Try different arrangements and sizes of areas.

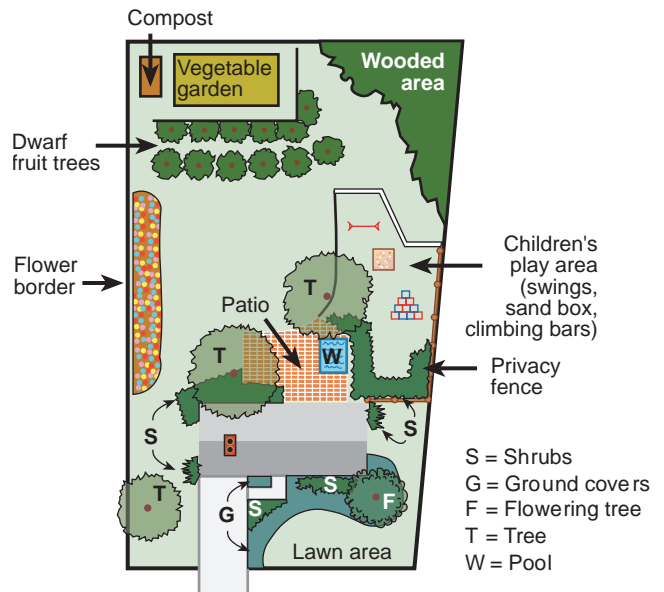


Figure 6. Complete the landscape plan by selecting the most suitable features from the sketches.

Trees are used to break the roof line and give the home a feeling of permanence. More details for designing the public area are given in MU publication G 6905, *Landscaping Your Front Yard*.

Service area. Because the service area generally cannot be kept attractive, screenings are very important. Screens may be of fencing, plant materials to

form hedges, or a combination of both. They may be located to block views from the living (private) area, public area or neighbors.

Living (private) area. The living area, generally located behind the house, needs to be functional, comfortable and attractive to invite use. To accomplish this, it must have a feeling of privacy and enclosure. Shrubbery or fencing of some type is often used for privacy screening. This area is used mainly during warm weather, so there should be some protection from the sun, either by trees or an overhead structure. To ensure maximum use, a portion should be of hard surface such as brick, concrete or stone.

Two features often provided in the living area are light and water. Lights, either electric or gas, are used to accent plant materials at night and provide light for evening use. Water can be used in small garden

pools or fountains. To be most effective, a pump is needed to circulate the water. The sight and sound of moving water is most relaxing and enjoyable.

General considerations. When developing a landscape plan, there is no need to name specific plant materials until the general plan is complete. Simply label plants as trees, shrubs, groundcover or flowers as needed. Some indication of the desired size of plants will be helpful when the time comes to select plant types. Next, sit down with catalogs or at your nursery to select appropriate plants for the locations you have indicated on your plan. Although most people have some favorite plants, these should be avoided unless they fulfill the needs of a location in the plan. Complete the plan before starting to plant.

For further information

- G 6800 *Shade Trees*
- G 6805 *Flowering Trees*
- G 6810 *Unusual Trees for Specimen Plantings*
- G 6815 *Needled Evergreens*
- G 6820 *Broad-Leaved Evergreens*
- G 6825 *Azaleas and Rhododendrons*
- G 6830 *Deciduous Shrubs*
- G 6835 *Selected Groundcovers for Missouri*
- G 6840 *Ornamental Vines*
- G 6900 *Tree Placement on Home Grounds*
- G 6902 *Low-Maintenance Landscaping*
- G 6905 *Landscaping Your Front Yard*
- G 6910 *Landscape Plantings for Energy Savings*
- G 6911 *Gardening in the Shade*
- G 6912 *Water-Efficient Gardening and Landscaping*

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