




Garden Design

A well planned garden can do a lot for you—without requiring a lot in return. Carefully selected plants can provide year-round garden interest, food, privacy, shade, and more—with little care, fertilizer, pesticides, or water. That means more time for you to enjoy the garden, and more clean water in streams and Puget Sound for fish and people.

These simple steps will help you select plants that will thrive in *your* garden.

-  **Step 1: Take a close look at your garden conditions.**
-  **Step 2: Put your garden to work!**
-  **Step 3: Make a plan that fits your style.**

1. Take a Close Look at Your Garden

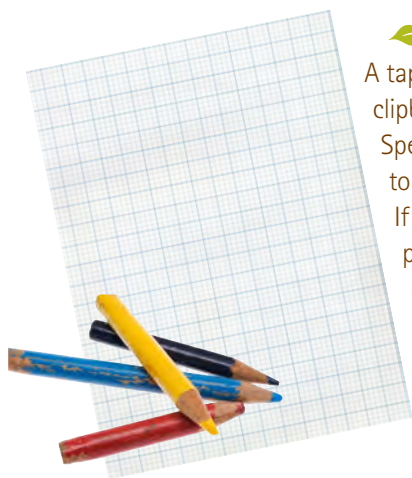
Paying attention to sun and shade patterns, soil quality, and other conditions in your garden will help you choose plants that will thrive with little care. A simple sketch of garden conditions will let you try garden layouts on paper before you plant. You can even take the map to nurseries for help selecting plants.


What You'll Need:

A tape measure, shovel, graph paper, clipboard, and several colored pencils. Speed things up by enlisting a friend to help make measurements.

If you have a plan showing the property lines and house location, use it to get started.

Or look up your address on Google Earth, zoom in and print an image. Use the "Ruler" function to measure areas.



 **What To Do:** Make a scaled map (1 inch = 8 or 10 feet is easy) showing buildings and paved areas, rockeries, large plants, and fences. Once you've drawn the major features, use colored pencils to show the conditions listed on the following page.



What to Look For:

- Sunny and shady areas
- "Hot spots" on south and west sides of slopes, walls, or fences
- Shallow, rocky, or compacted soil
- Poorly-drained and seasonally wet spots
- Slopes and areas outside fences that are hard to mow or access
- Dry spots under roof eaves or evergreen trees
- Views to screen or preserve
- Paths needed for home and garden maintenance
- Plants you want to keep, and problem plants or lawn to remove



Where to Dig: Dig several one foot deep holes around the yard to check soil quality and depth and any problem spots. See the *Soil* guide for help identifying soil conditions and problems.

LOOK AT WHAT YOU HAVE

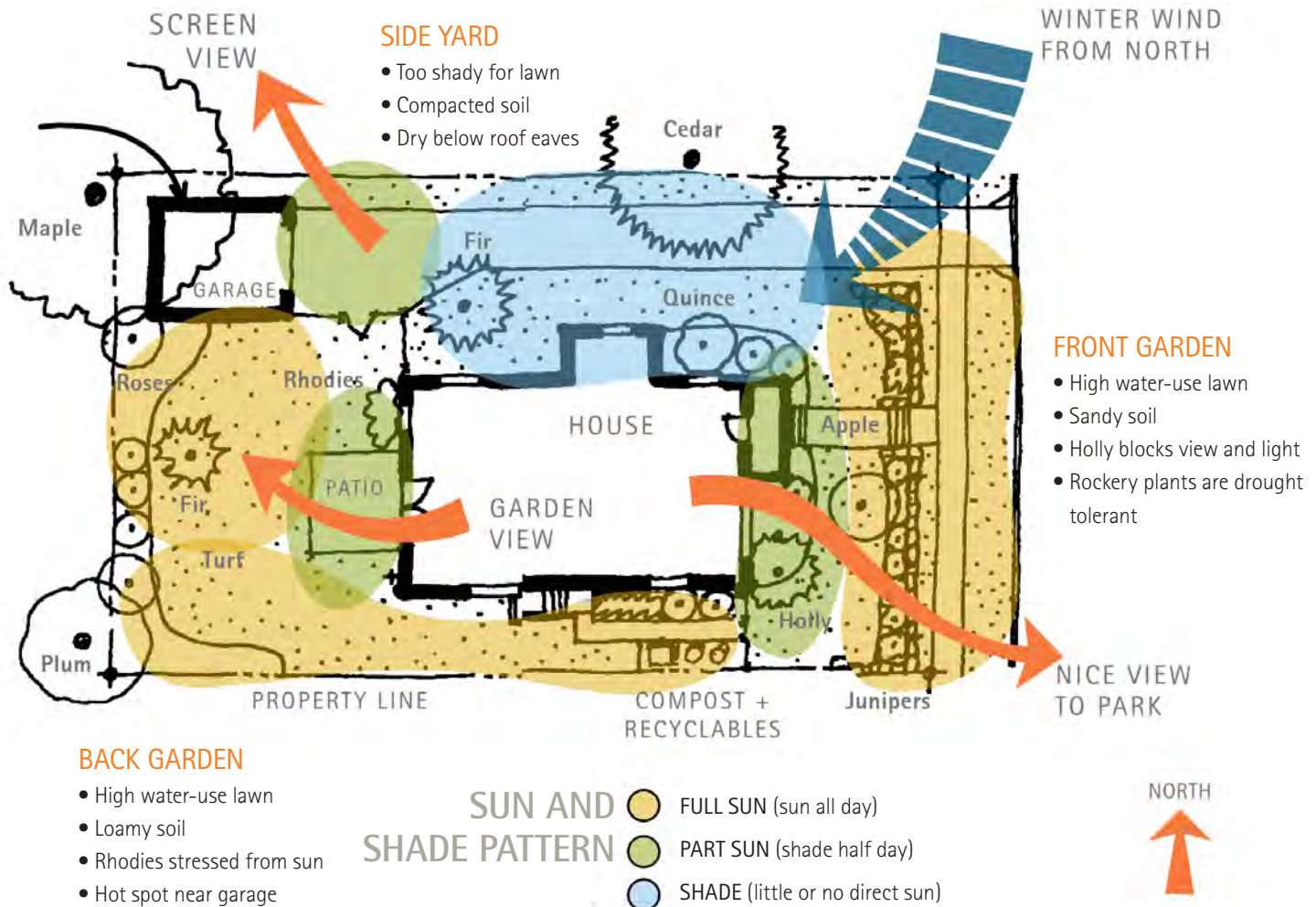


Photo courtesy Stenn Design



2. Put Your Garden to Work!



Plants and garden structures can provide beauty, privacy, shade, food, and many other benefits. Think about what you want from your garden before you choose plants or lay out paths, arbors, and other features. Look at other gardens and the *Resources* listings for inspiration.

Some functions to consider include:

- Decks or patios for outdoor living
- Colorful flowers, bark, and foliage in all seasons
- Habitat for birds and other wildlife
- Privacy screens
- Enclosure for pets
- Children's play areas
- Spaces for composting, potting, and other work



- Parking and storage areas
- Herbs, fruits, vegetables, and cut flowers
- Arbors or trees for shade and cooling

3. Make a Plan That Fits Your Style

Once you have decided how to use each garden area, select plants and materials to create the spaces you want. Make copies of your plan to draw on, or lay sheets of tracing paper over your garden map to experiment with varied layouts. Pick plants that will provide the functions you want in each area. See the Resources section for places to identify appropriate plants.



Try the Layered Look. Include trees, shrubs, and ground covers in all areas for a lush feel.

Trees are Tree-mendous! Trees provide shade that can reduce lawn and garden water needs by half! Many trees grow only 10-20 feet tall and are perfect for small gardens.

Think (Ever)Green. Use evergreen shrubs to divide the garden into "rooms" and provide garden structure in winter. Evergreen shrubs and groundcovers also smother weeds.

A Plan for All Seasons. Include plants that flower in different seasons, have varied leaf colors and textures, and colorful bark or berries in winter.

Celebrate Diversity! Gardens with many types of plants resist pests and diseases better than gardens with little variety—and are more interesting!

LAYOUT YOUR GARDEN



Plan for Easy Maintenance:

At every stage of planning consider how to minimize watering and upkeep.

Choose the right plants. Use the *Plant Right* guide and *Resources for Inspiration and Ideas* section to find plants that will thrive in each area.

Group plants that need a lot of care or water into small, easy-to-access clusters. Fill most of your garden with plants that thrive with little care and water.

Look for pest- and disease-resistant varieties. Many nurseries and catalogs promote trouble-free plant

varieties. WSU Cooperative Extension and Great Plant Picks also have lists of easy-to-grow varieties.

Plan practical lawns. Keeping lawns green and weed free takes lots of water and work. Plant only as much lawn as you need for recreation and other needs. Don't plant lawn on steep slopes or soggy soil, in narrow strips, or irregular shapes that are hard to water.

Create low maintenance zones. Plant slopes and other hard-to-reach spots with tough, quick-growing evergreens that crowd out weeds. Gravel or wood chips placed on weed barriers make low maintenance paths, work, or storage areas.



Need ideas? Visit the Waterwise Garden at the Bellevue Botanical Garden. Textures, flowers, foliage, and fruits provide year-round beauty. Interpretive signs and garden guides provide tips for success.

Do You Have What Your Garden Needs?



Water / Maintenance



Sun



Soil

Lawns (kept green in summer)	High.	Full sun to partial shade.	6-12" fertile and well drained.
Vegetables and Fruit	High.	Full sun to partial shade.	8-12" fertile and well drained.
Annual flowers	Most high.	Varied. Mostly full sun to partial shade.	6-12" fertile and well drained.
Perennial flowers	Most moderate.	Varied.	6-12" fertile and well drained.
Deciduous shrubs and groundcovers	Low to moderate.	Varied.	Varied.
Evergreen shrubs and groundcovers	Low to moderate.	Varied.	Varied.
Decks, pavers, wood chips and gravel	Low maintenance, no water.	None.	None.

RESOURCES FOR INSPIRATION AND IDEAS

These excellent references can help provide ideas, guide garden planning, and identify plants that will thrive in each garden condition:

Books

- *Sunset Western Garden Book*
- *Ann Lovejoy's Organic Garden Design School*
- *The Pacific Northwest Gardener's Book of Lists*, by Ray and Jan McNeilan
- *Gardening with Native Plants of the Pacific Northwest*, by Art Kruckeberg
- *The Shade Garden*, by Ken Druse
- *Kitchen Gardens*, by Joy Larkom
- *The New Low-Maintenance Garden*, by Valerie Easton

Web Sites

- **Bellevue Botanical Garden Collection Search**
<http://bbgcollection.bellevuewa.gov>
- **Bellevue's Natural Lawn & Garden**
www.bellevuewa.gov/naturallyardcare.htm
- **The Garden Hotline**
www.gardenhotline.org or 206-633-0224
- **EnviroStars**
Environmentally responsible businesses.
www.envirostars.org
- **Google Earth download**
www.google.com/earth/download/ge
- **Great Plant Picks**
www.greatplantpicks.org
- **King County Native Plant Guide**
<http://green2.kingcounty.gov/gonative/index.aspx>
- **WSU King County Extension Resources**
<http://extension.wsu.edu/king/gardening>
- **Natural Yard Care Neighborhoods**
www.naturallyardcare.info
- **Washington Native Plant Society**
www.wnps.org
- **WSU Extension Rain Gardens**
<http://ext100.wsu.edu/raingarden>



Public Gardens

- **Bellevue Botanical Garden**
www.bellevuebotanical.org
- **Master Gardener Lake Hills Greenbelt Demonstration Garden**
15500 SE 16th Street, Bellevue, WA
- **Center for Urban Horticulture Demonstration Gardens**
<http://depts.washington.edu/uwbg/visit/cuh.php>
- **Washington Park Arboretum**
<http://depts.washington.edu/uwbg/gardens/wpa.shtml>

Bellevue's Natural Gardening Guides

Composting Food Scraps • Composting Yard Trimmings • Drip and Soak • Fertilizer • Garden Design • Lawn Alternatives • Lawns • Mulch • Pests, Weeds, and Diseases • Plant Right • Seasonal Calendar • Soil • Watering

For copies, visit Bellevue's Natural Lawn and Garden website at www.bellevuewa.gov/natural_lawn_intro.htm or call Bellevue Utilities at 425-452-6932.

Call Before You Dig

Free service to mark underground utility lines.
1-800-424-5555 or www.callbeforeyoudig.org

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