

Edible Landscape Design and Food Plants

Jude Hobbs/Agro-Ecology Northwest Cottage Grove, Oregon agroecologynw@gmail.com@gmail.

History of edible landscaping

Edible landscaping is as old as gardening itself and has undergone a recent revival. Ancient Persian gardens combined both edible and ornamental plants. Medieval monastic gardens included fruits, vegetables, flowers, and medicinal herbs. Plans for 19th century English suburban yards, which modeled themselves after country estates, often included edible fruits and berries. The edible components of residential landscapes were largely lost in this country to the now familiar shade trees, lawns, and foundation plantings. In the past two decades, however, there has been a revival of interest in edible landscaping, thanks to the work of early pioneers such as Rosalind Creasy.

How to landscape with edibles

Like all plants used in the landscape, edible plants grow best in certain conditions. Many (but not all!) fruits and vegetables do best where they receive at least 6 hours of full sunlight a day. Most also like well-drained soil. Parts of your yard that satisfy these conditions are good places to start an edible landscape. To perform a complete makeover on these areas, consult the books recommended below for a full design process. To start simply, consider a one-for-one substitution. Where you might have planted a shade tree, plant a fruit tree. Where you need a deciduous shrub, plant a currant or goumi. Where you have always had chrysanthemums, plant bachelor's buttons—you can eat them. Edible plants come in nearly all shapes and sizes and can perform the same landscape functions as ornamental plants.

Designing With Edible Plants

Combine Edible and Non-Edible Ornamentals for multi-functional use.

- Consider the landscape as a picture you are painting, think about the total effect
- No rigid rules--personal style and taste--

Basic Design Principles --

- Site Analysis - Climate, available water, soil and plant nutrition, amount of space, location of utilities, activities on site. What is existing that you want to keep?
- Needs Assessment/Priority lists- what components or elements are important to you and what concerns must be addressed first, second, third, etc:
- Line -pattern- proportion - scale - balance- focal point(s), repetition
- Special challenges:
 - Shade: Native plants, evergreen huckleberry, lingonberry, salal, thimbleberry
 - Erosion: Ground cover-kinnikinnick, ceonothus 'Pt. Reyes'
- Flow patterns: ease of access from one area to another
- Utility areas: Composting, clothes drying, firewood, storage shed- locate for efficiency
- Adaptability - practicality – safety-- Accessibility: Altered abled
- Expanding usable space: espalier, containers
- Maintenance, budget: How much time a money do you have for this project?

Draw a Plot Plan: Saves time and money, help communicate your ideas, good for property resale. Include phase planning, what to do for the next 2 to 3 years and beyond.

The Plants

- Mix of edible and non-edible ornamentals: create polycultures
- A landscape to fill the senses.
 - Fragrance- from herbs, flowers, seeds, eaves
 - Flowers- bloom through the season, attracting birds, butterflies and insects-IPM
 - Foliage- texture and color

Fruits that bloom and bear fruit

- Taste Test- Be sure you like the flavor of an edible plant before planting. See what is available at the farmers market, from friends, and home orchard society
Oregon's Home Orchard Society PO Box 230192 Tigard, Or. 97281-0192
- Right Plant Right Place: Group plants with similar cultural needs
- Ideas for combining plants for beauty and as companions: Think Function—Form—Texture
Varieties-selection-compact (patio containers or small garden) dwarf, semi-dwarf, standard
At the nursery, bring plants together to get an idea of the effect.
- Disease and Insect Resistance
- Root stock- for growing your own trees w/ selective varieties - look for cold hardiness, disease resistant, dwarfing ability, and soil adaptability.
- Pollination: self fertile or need another variety as pollinator
Needs pollinator: Apples, Pears, cherries, accept Stella and Lapins, persimmon, blueberries, grapes
Self-fertile: Peach, plums, figs, mulberries, medlar, paw paw, currents, jostaberry, English walnut
- Food Goals:
Legumes, roots, nuts=protein
Leafy greens and fruits= vitamins and minerals
- Irrigation: Group plants with similar cultural needs
- Example: blueberries, lingonberries and strawberries are shallow rooted, acid loving, and need water frequently and deeply

Plant Selection To Be Considered

Hardiness/ seasonal temps/ wind direction, elevation, average rainfall, microclimates, sun/shade/water/soil/
Drainage/ root structure/bloom time requirements,

PLANT TYPES

Trees, Shrubs, Ground Covers, Herbs, Vegetables, Berries, Vine,
Flowers: Bulbs, Perennials, Annuals, Biennials

Plant Functions to Consider

Food/ Medicine production	Nitrogen-Fixer
Deciduous	Colors: Bloom time
Fragrant	Building material
Barriers: noise, privacy, animal	Symbiotic relationship
Trap Plants	Dynamic Accumulator
Hedgerow/ funnel wind direction	Beauty
Shade	

Ideas For Combining Plants For Beauty And As Companions:

- At the nursery, bring plants together to get an idea of the effect.

Food Combinations for the Pacific Northwest & Beyond

Herbs

- Parsley as bed borders
- Tulips, leeks, parsley, silver thyme
- Dark opal basil mixed with molten fire amaranth
- Lovage as backdrop
- Dill with creeping thyme or marjoram
- Variegated marjoram with parsley—

Annuals

- Mixing Japanese eggplants with gray leaved, sage, or silver colored foliage (artemesia)
- New Zealand spinach and nasturtiums (containers)
- Purple eggplant with cosmos behind and ageratum in front
- Border of pansies w/ parsley w/ drifts of lettuce
- Zinnia mixed with squash (pl. 2 weeks before sq.)
- Carrot lacy growth as backdrop to small delicate flowers: alyssum

Perennials

- Strawberry w/ phlox
- Rhubarb--great leaf structure--poisonous—great landscape filler
- Daylilies good back drop for vegies
Daylilies blossoms are succulent raw or stir fry- (remove inner fl. parts. tubers are edible but not very tasty)

Berries:

- Blueberries: color through the year--combine w/ bleeding hearts strawberries- Lingonberries
- Other berries to include in the landscape to create hedges:
- Seaberry, gooseberry, honeyberry, jostaberry, currants, raspberries, highbush cranberry, evergreen huckleberry

Nut trees: walnut, chestnut, filberts, monkey puzzle, Heartnut, almond, northern pecan

Fruit Trees:

- Apples, peaches, pears, plums, cherries, quince, mulberry, olives, pawpaw, jujube, medlar, figs, cornelian cherry, citrus, crabapples

Edible flowers

- Calendula, English daisy, nasturtiums, chives, Borage flowers in ice cubes or on salads

Vines

- kiwi, grapes, akebia, passion flower, holboellia, dioscorea or Chinese yam, hops, honeysuckle, schisandra,

Winter color: Choose structure for winter beauty

Bird Attracting Native Plants

- Amelanchier grandifolia: Serviceberry 'Regent'-spring color-pink buds open to white flowers-red fruit in July 15-20' tall--fall color orange-red— - Autumn Olive 'Multiflora'(underground stems) 6'-20', Goumi,
- Chokecherry, Oemleria cerasiformis- Indian Plum white fl. in March blue/black fruit

Acid Loving combo:

- Ever-green huckleberry, Salal Blueberries, lingonberry, Sword fern

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- * *Breed Your Own Vegetable Varieties*. Deppe, Carol. Little, Brown, '93.
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- * "Specialty Flowers" Fact Sheet available free from USDA Office for Small-Scale Agriculture, Aerospace Building, Suite 342, Washington, DC 20250, USA
- * "Guide to Cooking with Edible Flowers" - Jay & Pamela North, Paradise Farms, Box 436, Summerland, CA 93067, USA
- * *Stocking Up*. Carol Hopping Stoner. Rodale Press '77. Food preservation techniques: fruits, vegies, dairy products, meat and fish, nuts seeds and grains. Favorite all-around food prep. Book

TTNOTES WITH MORE IDEAS: