

## LANDSCAPING THE PUBLIC AREA

A 4-H PLAN AND PLANT FOR BEAUTY PROJECT - LANDSCAPING SERIES

## LANDSCAPING THE PUBLIC AREA

If you want to turn your property into a garden of beauty, you can make your wish become a living reality.

You will be concerned with three basic factors: (1) neatness, (2) function, and (3) beauty.

### NEATNESS

A neat property with nothing more than a fine lawn and some properly placed trees is more attractive than an untidy property overplanted with shrubs and trees.

### FUNCTION

A "functional" landscape plan or design will serve your family's needs and be adaptable to change as the family needs change. By holding a family conference before the plan is drawn, all the likes and dislikes of your family can be jotted down for consideration.

To make it clear what is meant by a "functional" design, let us use the comparison method. If our homes were designed strictly for functional purposes only, we would have a very uninteresting building to say the least.

For example, areas such as walls, floors, roof, and steps would be plain. There would be very little color and no curtains, carpeting, or other decorative items.

The various areas should be useful and meet the family requirements.

### BEAUTY

The functional design would allow us to live a very simple life in our home. But, with added "frills," such as soft comfortable furniture, attractive wallpaper or painted walls, radios, and TV sets, the home becomes beautiful as well as functional.

A functional design will show the bare essentials. These items are arranged to fulfill the family's basic needs in the garden. Then, by wise use of shrubs, evergreens, trees, flowers, ground covers, walks, benches, and other items, the garden becomes beautiful as well as functional.

There is practically no limit to what you can do with plants and garden features to attain beauty in your garden. The beauty you are after is a restful landscape. If it does not give you the urge to relax and rest, then it is nothing more than a gaudy display of individual plants.

The beauty of a garden is much like a gorgeous sunset--it is ever-changing. This is why working with living plants is a constant source of pleasure. Fortunately, our gardens last longer than the sunsets.

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Adapted from material originally published by Rutgers University.

### WHAT IS EXPECTED

1. Make a simple landscape plan of the area to be landscaped. This plan will be drawn to scale.
2. Complete some phase of this in accordance with your family's wishes.
3. Give a demonstration or prepare an exhibit for a 4-H event.
4. Keep an accurate record of your progress.
5. Take before and after pictures.

### THE LANDSCAPE PLAN IS THE THING

If you approach your home grounds landscape job with a calm and well-organized mind, the actual drawing of the plan will be relatively simple and easy.

Just about anything you use during an average day was first drawn to scale on someone's drawing board. The very house you live in, the car you ride in, the school you attend, the church in which you worship, even your pens and pencils were all drawn on paper before they were produced. In fact, the rockets, the jet planes, and the manmade satellites that circle the globe all had to be drawn to scale before they could be built. Just about any worthwhile manmade object was drawn on paper first. A good home landscape is no exception. It, too, starts on the drawing board. It originates with someone who has ideas. He first puts his thoughts on paper. These thoughts are turned into reality as his beautiful garden begins to take shape. You can do the same thing. To do the job properly, you must make a landscape plan.

### DRAW THE PLOT PLAN FOR THE AREA TO BE LANDSCAPED

Materials You Need: tape measure (or a 6- or 10-foot rule), "pin" (any sharp pointed instrument, such as a screwdriver, ice pick, or nail), tracing paper, (cross section paper of 4 or 8 squares to the inch), drawing pencil (2H or 3H), eraser, drawing compass, and ruler. (See figure 1.) Masking or drafting tape, drawing board,

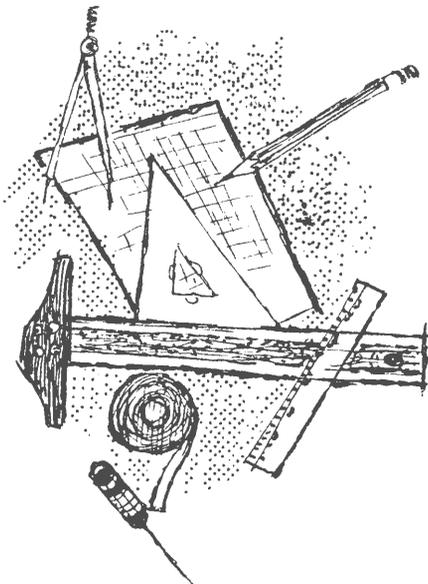


Figure 1

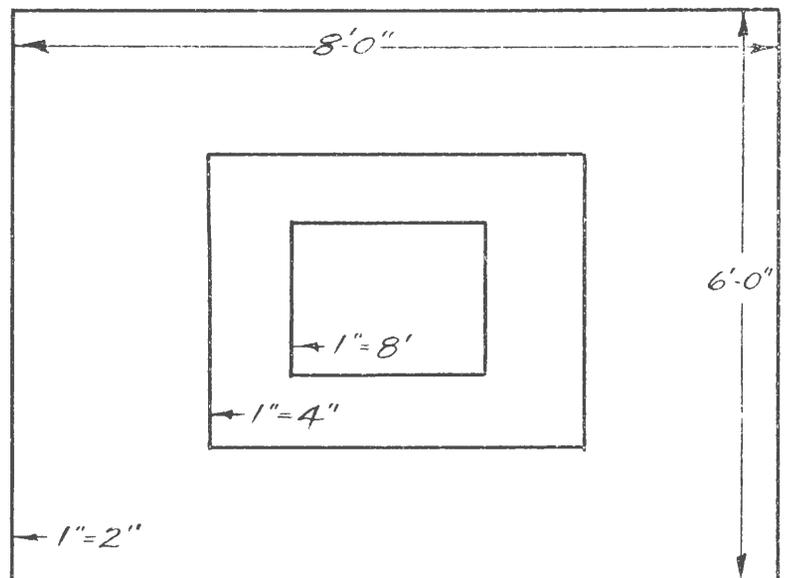


Figure 2. Same area drawn at three different angles.

T-square, two triangles ( $45^\circ$  and  $60^\circ$ ). Drawing board can be a piece of plywood, or heavy cardboard 2 x  $2\frac{1}{2}$  feet, or masonite.

The scale generally used by landscape architects is  $1/8$  inch to each foot. This means that  $1/8$  inch on the plan equals one foot in your yard.

### PLANS COST VERY LITTLE

Fortunately, the cost of making your own landscape plan is practically nothing. You could do it on a piece of scratch paper and say it didn't cost you a cent. It would be better, however, to spend a few cents and draw the plan on 4 x 4 or 8 x 8 cross section paper. It would be wise to buy some extra sheets for the rough copy of your plans. Not even professionals put their final work on the first sheet of paper. You can later ink the final copy so it won't smear when being used. File your final plan in a safe place.

### THE TECHNIQUE IS SIMPLE

An accurate set of field notes is necessary if you want a truly workable landscape plan. The best method of doing this part of the project is known as the coordinate system. This simply means that in order to plot any given point, such as a house corner or a tree, it is necessary to measure its distance from two known lines, such as: property lines, fences, established sidewalks, roads, power lines. The measurements are taken at right angles to one another. (See figure 3)

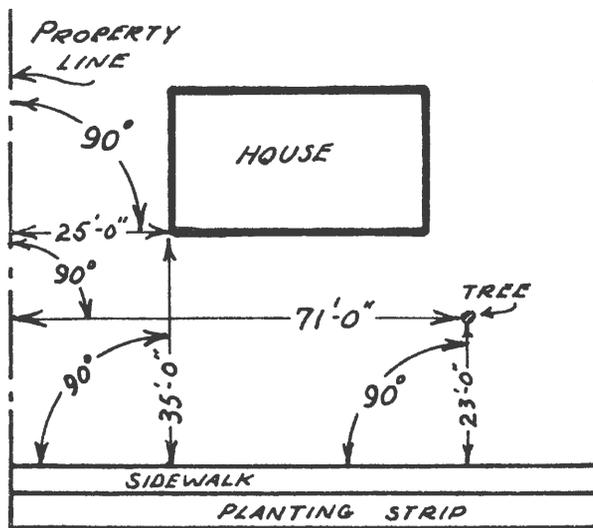


Figure 3

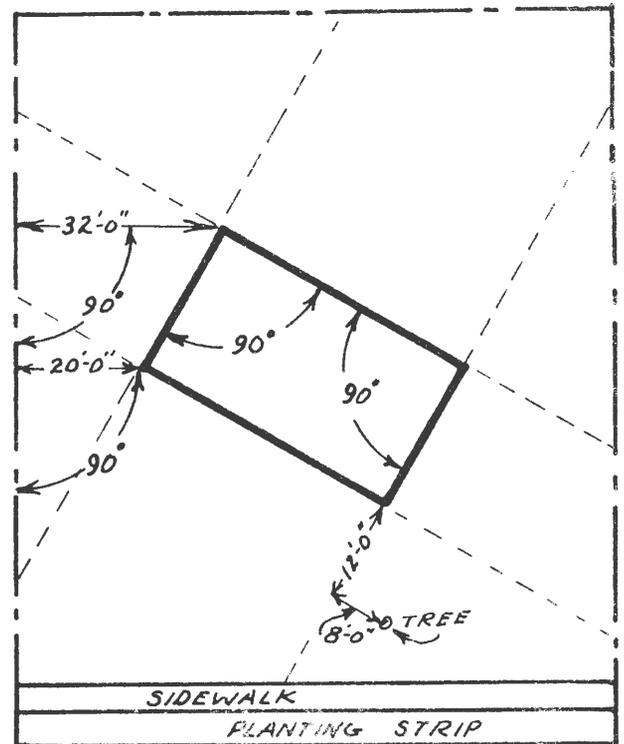


Figure 4

To locate the exact corner of your house when it is parallel to the property lines, measure the distance from a side property line to the corner and the distance to the same corner from the front sidewalk or property line. Each line must be at a right angle (90°) to the property line.

#### HOUSE NOT PARALLEL TO PROPERTY

If your house is at an odd angle to property lines, then you locate points in a slightly different manner. (See figure 4.)

If you have no straight public sidewalk or street curb to work from, then you must stretch a string along at least one property line and use it as a starting point. Start your measurements from this line to two corners of the house. Be sure your tapeline forms a right angle with the property line. By connecting the two points on your paper, you will establish that side of the house in its proper relationship to the property line. From there on measure the remaining sides of the house and plot them. All corners (with rare exceptions) are 90° angles.

By following this same system of "coordinates," you can locate any object you may want placed on the plan. In figure 3 a tree has been located as an example.

If you are using cross section paper, this is a very easy task. If your house is located with its sides parallel to the property lines (and most houses are), then all important points are located in the same manner. Show the exact location of windows, doors, steps, and other important features of your house on the plan.

You also might indicate on the plan how high above the ground level it is to the bottom of each window. Also indicate the correct number of steps. This lets you know how tall you may want certain plants to grow in these particular areas.

To locate all other objects it is easier to work by the coordinate system from lines that run parallel to the sides of the house. (See dotted lines.)

#### LOCATING POINTS (MOSTLY TREES) BY THE "TRIANGULATION" METHOD

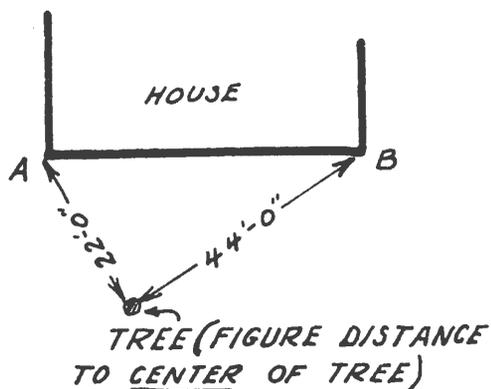


Figure 5

Sometimes certain points on your property are more easily plotted in this manner. (See figure 5.) Measure the distances of lines A and B from two corners of the house or any other known straight line. Then, when locating this point on the scale drawing, simply locate the exact spot on the paper where these two distances cross each other. If the distance on the plan can be measured with the compass, then set the compass at each of the two measured distances and swing the arcs. Where they cross will be the location of your point. (See figure 6.)

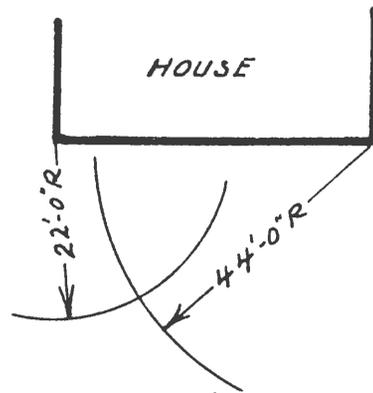


Figure 6

When plotting existing trees it will be wise to locate the "drip line" of the tree. This is the spread of the branching system of the tree. You'll be surprised to find this is not always a perfect circle.

#### PLOT ROOF OVERHANGS

If the overhang of your roof is more than 24 inches, it should be shown on your plan as a dotted line. This is to remind you to place any landscape plants at least 9 inches beyond this line. If you don't, the plants may suffer from lack of rain.

The easiest way to keep your field notes is to place them directly on 8 x 8 cross section tracing paper. On this paper you draw the house foundation along with all important permanent objects, such as steps, walks, drives, walls, and large trees. Each square on your paper will equal 1 square foot of your property. If this scale is too large, make each square equal 2 or 3 square feet. On your plan indicate how many square feet each small square equals.

Your leader will help you with practical field exercises, which will teach you how to make plot plans.

Include on your plan a North directional arrow. (See cover picture.) You may approximate its direction, but the only accurate means to locate this is with a magnetic compass. The North arrow is needed to tell you at a glance where areas of shade will be. (Some plants do better in shade than others.)

When your plot plan is completed, you will be ready to start a most pleasant and satisfying job--that of designing your own landscape plan. Use an overlay of tracing paper until the rough plan is completed.

#### NOW DRAW THE LANDSCAPE PLAN

NOTE: Please remember this one very important thing. Draw the entire yard to scale, even though only the Public Area will be landscaped this year. (See Unit III for service and private areas available in 1966.)

Once the rough plan is complete to the relative satisfaction of everyone involved, trace the entire plan on a clean sheet of paper. This will give you a plan that is free of erasures and smudge marks. It can then be filed away to be used when time or money or both are available to do at least a portion of it. In this manner every minute and every penny will be wisely spent toward the completed garden. (When we speak of the "garden," we mean your entire landscaped property.) There will be no waste. And in the meantime, you will find yourself enjoying the personal pleasure of dreaming of the completed garden according to your own plans!

LET'S ADD SOME "ROOMS"

A completely landscaped home property is nothing more than an extension of the house to the outdoors. What you really try to do is to add three distinct outside "rooms" to your house. These three rooms are commonly referred to as the public or front lawn area, the service area, and the private area. The service and private areas will be handled in Unit III of this project. In this unit we will interest ourselves only with the Public Area.

FRONT LAWN AREA

The public or front lawn area, generally speaking, is that area that many persons call the "front yard." (See figure 7.) The front lawn area is often called the public area because it is visible to the public. The first phase of the landscape plan is to divide the property into three areas--front lawn (public), service, and private. The service area is designated for children's play area, vegetable garden, clothes line, garbage can, etc. The private area is associated with patio or outdoor living area. It is relatively simple to locate the public area.

By drawing a dotted line through the house from one side of the property to the other, we immediately designate the public area. This line is only a guide line. You may move it toward the rear of the house or bring it more to the front as you may see fit in the later planning stages.

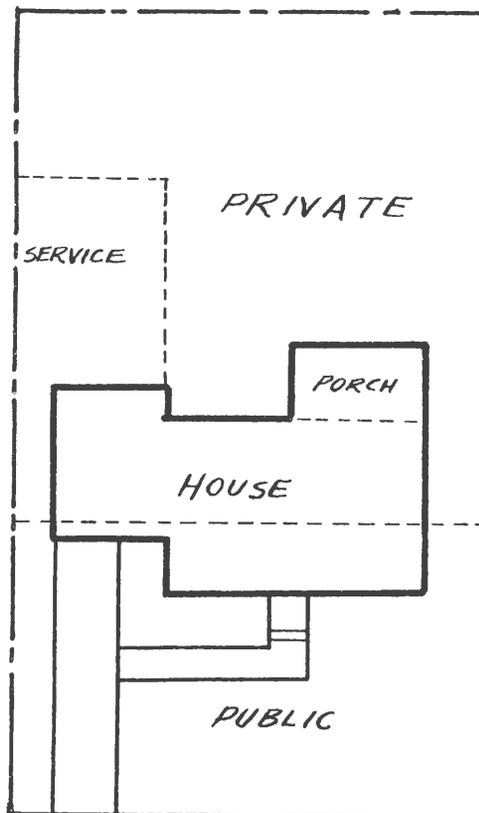


Figure 7

Try to keep in mind as you draw the three areas on your landscape plan that they are much like the rooms in your house. Each room in your house serves a specific purpose. The three areas in your complete landscape plan will also serve separate and distinct purposes, and are adjusted to fit the yard or desires of the family.

EMPLOY THESE THREE  
LANDSCAPE PRINCIPLES

Within the public area there are three basic landscape principles: (1) frame the house with trees; (2) soften the lines of the house with plants properly selected and placed, and (3) maintain an open lawn area.

LET THE OVAL HELP YOU

Figure 8 shows an oval superimposed on the public area. You will note that the oval does not touch the property line, nor does it touch the house. This oval dictates pretty much where the major expanse of grass will be in the public area. Any plantings at the base of the home or down each side of the property or in some unusual circumstances across the front of the property will usually be outside of this oval. If you constantly work with this oval in mind, any additional plantings or the use of fences, walls, and hedges will be properly located.

It is not advisable to run a planting of any sort, and this also goes for fences, down both sides of the property all the way to the sidewalk or the street. This is especially true if you live in a residential section where one property joins the next. Psychologically this appears to be an unfriendly act. From a functional standpoint, it cuts down the movement of air in our hot summer months when any breeze is welcomed. From the pure beauty angle, it would tend to block the view of the home. We like to think of the side plantings being just long enough to help the observer's attention to be moved from either side of the property back toward the house and then eventually to the front door. If the plantings are kept along this oval, this subconscious leading of the observer's mind to the house will be sure to take place.

First decide from which point on your property you would like your house to look its best or from which it is generally viewed. In figure 9 we have selected a point just opposite the front door. It may be on the sidewalk or even in the street if there are no sidewalks in front of your house. Now sketch in on your plan (very lightly) two lines, each starting from point A and going to the outside front corners of your house. These lines are your guides to the general location of any trees that will be placed on your plan to perform the "framing" job. Any trees used will be placed somewhere near or right on these lines. They will almost never go on the inside of the angle formed by these lines. (This will keep the view open to your house.)

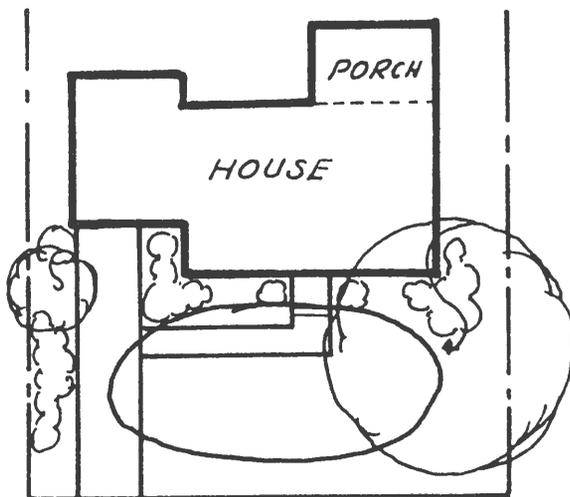


Figure 8

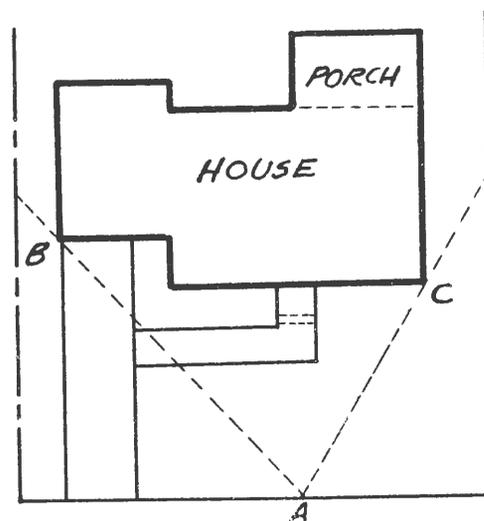


Figure 9

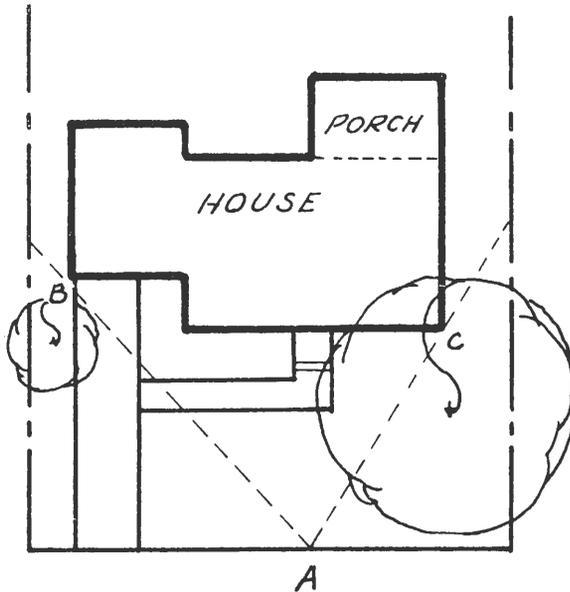


Figure 10

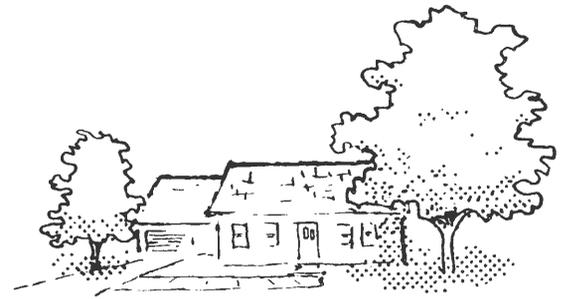


Figure 11

Study figure 10; then look at figure 11, which shows how the public area will look when the trees shown in figure 10 grow to maturity.

Many times more than two trees are needed to frame a home. This is true where the property is large and the house is set far away from the street or lane.

This condition is most often found in rural areas. (See figure 12.)

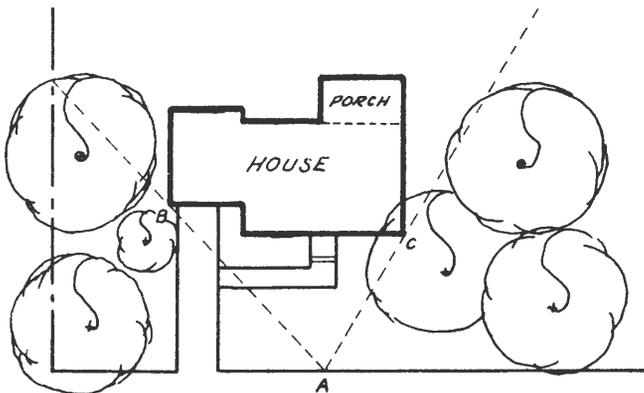


Figure 12

The smaller the house, the smaller the trees you may use. You might also use one large-growing tree on one side and a cluster of small-growing trees on the opposite side. This gives a very naturalistic but balanced effect. (See figures 13 and 14.) This is known as asymmetrical or occult balance. To better understand this, just recall the days when you played on the see-saw. One heavy child could balance two or more smaller children if their weight equalled his.

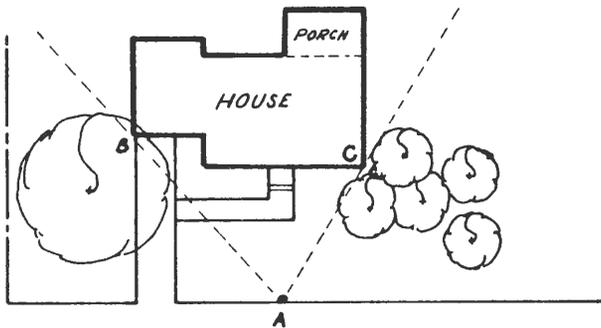


Figure 13

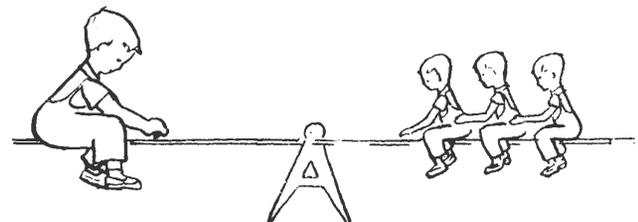


Figure 14

USE YOUR DRAWING COMPASS

With your drawing compass you can draw circles showing the approximate diameters of the plants at maturity. Using the same unit of measure you did for the plot plan, set the compass to make circles for each tree.

The following trees are among the best of many trees that can grow in your area. If you use a 50-foot circle for the large trees, you will be close to the average. See supplemental lists of suggested trees, shrubs, and vines for eastern and western Washington.

Large Trees

50 feet or more in height, 30 to 50 feet wide

Ginkgo or Maidenhair Tree (Ginkgo biloba) plant only male tree.  
 Red Oak (Quercus borealis)  
 Scarlet Oak (Quercus coccinea)  
 Norway Maple (Acer platanoides)<sup>2,3</sup>  
 European Linden (Tilia cordata)  
 Honeylocust (Gleditsia triacanthos inermis)<sup>1</sup> Varieties: Moraine; Shademaster; Imperial; Skyline  
 Red Horse-chestnut (Aesculus carnea brioti)  
 Red Maple (Acer rubrum)<sup>2,3</sup>

Small to Medium Trees

20 - 40 feet tall, 15 - 20 feet wide

Flowering crabapple (Malus species) Varieties: Bechtel; Eley; Lemoine; Hope; Scheidecker  
 Flowering plum (Prunus species) Varieties: Blireiana; Pissard  
 Flowering dogwood (Cornus florida)  
 Goldenrain (Koelreuteria paniculata)  
 Goldenchain (Laburnum anagyroides)  
 Pauls Scarlet English Hawthorn (Crataegus oxyacantha pauli)  
 Japanese Maple (Acer palmatum)  
 European Mountain Ash (Sorbus aucuparia)

- <sup>1</sup> Some forms lack thorns; others lack seed pods; others lack both. All forms produce flower clusters.
- <sup>2</sup> Selected forms. Ask your leaders, 4-H agent, or nurseryman about the improved types.
- <sup>3</sup> Most maples have a very shallow, thick fibrous root system, which makes it most difficult to grow grass or other plants under or near them. However, they are included in this list because they will grow under very difficult conditions, such as poor soil, wet soil (Red Maple), or city conditions (impure air and paved areas). If at all possible, use trees other than maples.

NOTE: Ask your county agricultural agent for publications that have more complete lists of desirable trees, shrubs, and evergreens for your area, and suggestions for special projects.

When possible, your trees and shrubs should be purchased from a commercial nursery. They will be better shaped and more apt to grow. However, there is nothing wrong with using some of the plants from your own property or from that of a friend.

Trees and shrubs can be purchased from a nursery, or as a special activity in the Home Beautification Project, propagate your own. If you propagate your own plants, two things must be kept in mind: (1) be sure you keep the plants correctly named and grow them in rows in your garden or containers for 2 years before planting in the landscape, and (2) transplant only plants less than 6 feet tall.

#### SOFTENING THE LINES OF THE HOUSE

The plants that are placed close to your house are spoken of as the "foundation planting." The only reason for such a planting is to blend the man-made object (the house) into its natural surroundings. In most cases, this does not require a great number of plants. Do not be a "copy cat." You may copy a poor example of landscape work. Use your own good judgment after reading this publication and discussing it with your program leader. Each house can be treated differently. Study figures 15 and 16 to see where the plants should be placed and how tall they should be allowed to grow.

In figure 15 the strong vertical lines in the architecture have been darkened. Note the sharp angles formed where they meet the ground--much like inverted "T's". It is at these points, circled for emphasis, where the key plants should be located. See figure 23 for groupings.

Now look at figure 16. Imagine two lines each starting from the center of the front door sill and continuing through points at each side of your house. These points are about half way between the ground and the eaves. These guide lines (dotted) will tell you how tall your plants should be allowed to grow for your house to look its best. This does not mean that the plants must be exactly so tall. It does mean, however, that the plants at the house corners should always be taller than the ones used at the entrance. Maintenance work will be less if plants are selected that will not grow taller than the desired and proper height.

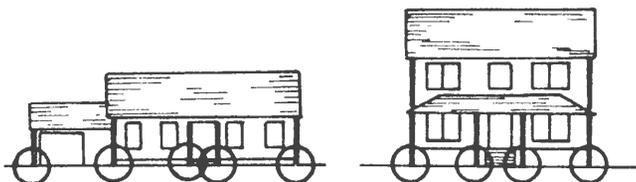


Figure 15

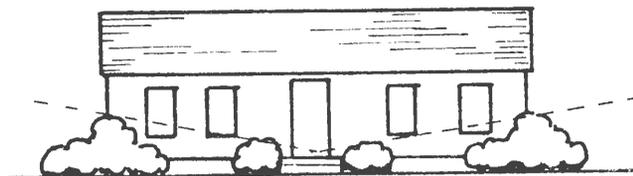


Figure 16

The two arrows on figure 17 point to areas at the base of the house where no plants are used. Leaving these spaces blank creates an illusion that makes us think the house is larger than it really is. The only time plants are really needed in these areas is when the foundation is over 3 feet high.

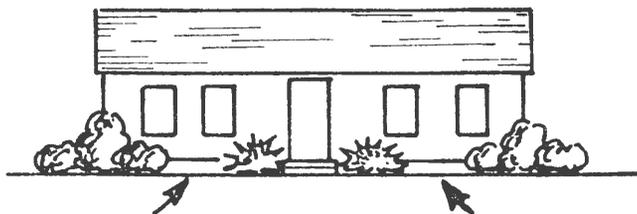


Figure 17

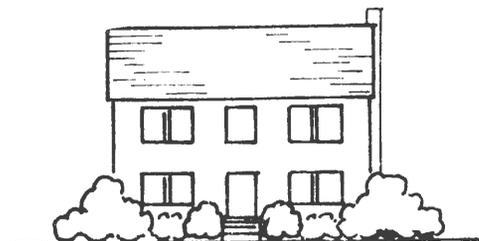


Figure 18

Figure 18 shows a house with a high foundation. Note that the plants used to conceal the base of the house are lower than those at either side of the door. We still follow the same principle of keeping the plants lower at the entrance than those at the corners.



Figure 19

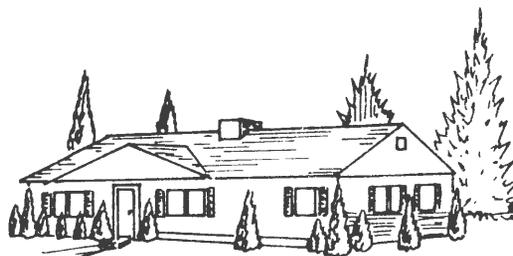


Figure 20

Avoid overabundant use of sharp-pointed plants unless they fit the topography of the land or the architecture of the house. Figure 19 shows the type of architecture that really calls for some sharp-pointed plants.

Check figure 20 above to see how out of place they look with the modern-type home.

Figure 21 shows the same home done with more or less rounded forms of plants. See how harmonious the entire picture looks. A good landscape is restful to the mind. Sharp-pointed plants make the observer sense a feeling of activity. We call it a "busy" planting. It is undesirable with homes of contemporary architecture.



Figure 21

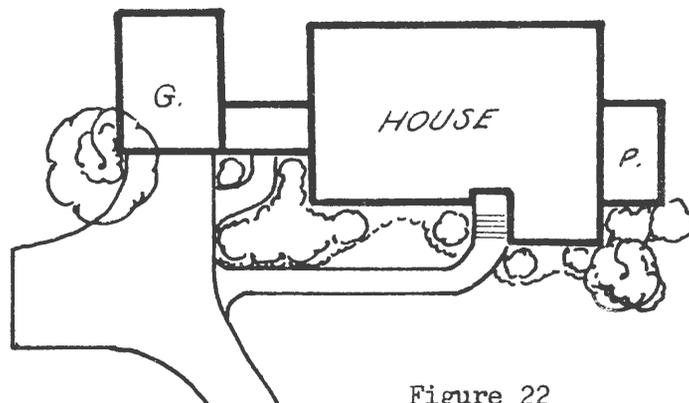


Figure 22

Figure 22 is a top view showing the location of plants in a proper foundation planting. Note how the corner groups extend beyond the sides of the house.

Now study figure 23 carefully. It shows some typical groupings for individual corner plantings. Of course, the amount of space available and the size of the house determine the size of the corner group. Where space is available, try to use the long, sweeping, curved corner planting for the best effect. This would be somewhere near the sweep of the oval mentioned in figure 8. The shaded areas indicate the key plant in the group.

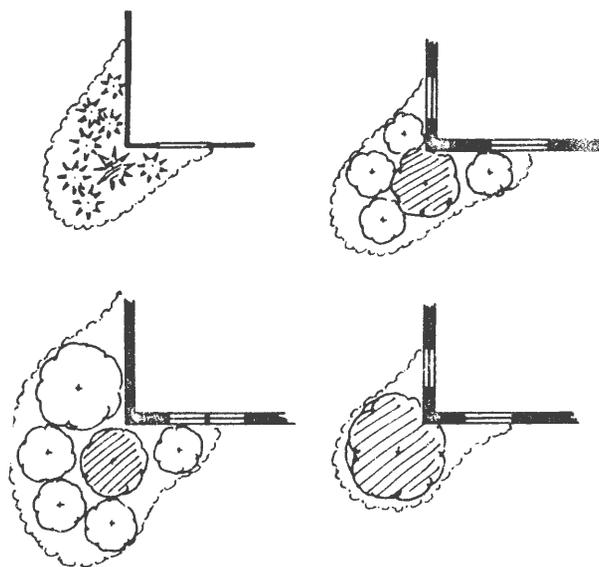


Figure 23

The plant list on page 13 will help you select the proper plants. Anytime you are in doubt as to whether or not some of these plants are hardy in your area, check with your county agricultural agent or 4-H leader, or go to your local nurseryman and discuss it with him.

SOME OF THE BEST PLANTS  
FOR YOUR HOME



Figure 24

Check figure 24. The letters point to the particular places in the foundation planting where key plants or groups of plants are used. The lettered plant lists that follow are guides that will help you select plants for these particular locations. For example, the letter E points to the entrance plantings. Use List E to help you select the plants for the entrance to your home.

## List E

ENTRANCE PLANTINGS

Evergreen (w) = Western Washington

- Truedwarf Common Box or Edging Box (Buxus sempervirens suffruticosa)  
 (w) Convexleaf Japanese Holly (Ilex crenata convexa)  
 (w) Japanese Pieris (Pieris japonica)  
 Common Box (Buxus sempervirens)  
 (w) Rhododendron and Azalea varieties  
 Pfitzers Juniper (Juniperus chinensis var. Pfitzers)

Deciduous

- Slender Deutzia (Deutzia gracilis)  
 Anthony Waterer Spirea (Spiraea bumalda var. Anthony Waterer)  
 Japanese Barberry (Berberis thunbergi)  
 Redleaf Japanese Barberry (Berberis thunbergi atropurpurea)  
 Mugo Pine (Pinus mugo mughus)

## List C

CORNER PLANTINGS

(Also Border Plantings  
 Along Property Lines)

Plants followed by (T) need support of smaller plants; those followed by (A) can be used alone; those followed by (S) can be used as supporting plants only.

Evergreens

- Japanese Pieris (Pieris japonica) (A) for small houses  
 Japanese Yew (Taxus cuspidata) (A) use varieties such as densiformis and compactus  
 Upright Japanese Yew (Taxus cuspidata capitata) (T)  
 Hicks Yew (Taxus media Hicksi) or improved varieties of similar habit such as var. Moon's Columnaris or Hatfieldi (T)  
 Littleleaf Japanese Holly (Ilex crenata microphylla) (A)  
 Convexleaf Japanese Holly (Ilex crenata convexa) (S)  
 Truetree Boxwood (Buxus sempervirens arborescens) (A) slow-growing

Deciduous

- Forsythia, species (A)  
 Lilac (Syringa) --hybrids (A)  
 Japanese Barberry (Berberis thunbergi) (S) (A)  
 Winged Euonymus (Euonymus alatus) (T)

Weigela, varieties (A)  
Chinese Witchhazel (Hamamelis mollis) (A)  
Vernal Witchhazel (Hamamelis vernalis) (A)  
Linden Viburnum (Viburnum dilatatum) (A)  
Doublefile Viburnum (Viburnum tomentosum) (A)  
Wright Viburnum (Viburnum wrighti) (T)  
American Cranberrybush (Viburnum trilobum) (T)  
Blackhaw (Viburnum prunifolium) (A)  
Tea Viburnum (Viburnum setigerum) (A)

#### MAINTAIN AN "OPEN" LAWN AREA

By an "open" lawn area we mean a large clear expanse of grass. The only things that should cut into this expanse of grass, in addition to trees, are the necessary utilities, such as driveways, walks, and paths. This expanse of green will act as a foreground. The observer's attention will flow unobstructed across this clearing to the house itself, which will be the center of interest in your landscape picture.

If any unnecessary objects were to be placed in this open lawn area, they would be distracting. See figures 25 and 26 for this comparison.

Fortunately front lawn areas do not ordinarily include all of these typical attention getters. However, many of our lawns have one or two such items. Perhaps the greatest violators are the gazing ball, the automobile tire painted white with some cannas or castor bean plants planted in them, the bird bath out in the boiling sun, the circular flower bed, the fan-shaped trellis, and even the wooden cat on the roof!

Many of these items really have a place in the good landscape design. The circular flower bed, for example, could be in the center of a formal garden. The bird bath could be a terminal feature at the end of a garden axis. The gazing ball is properly used as a central feature in a formal garden known as the radial type. In Unit 3 you will see how these things fit properly into the good landscape plan.



Figure 25



Figure 26

Take a good look at figure 26. Here's the same public area minus all these distracting features. Note how easily your attention goes to the house. This is what we want the observer to do. You want him to, without his knowing it, look at your home. Each property should make a separate picture all its own. The trees will frame the picture; the lawn will be the foreground in the picture; and the house itself, with its stiff architectural lines softened with the foundation planting, will be the center of interest.

Now you have covered the three basic principles of good landscape design for the public or front lawn area of your property. You will notice that there are no annual or perennial flowers suggested for this area. You can get plenty of color from the flowers on the deciduous shrubs and the broadleaved evergreens. Your smaller trees and some of the shade trees (such as Chinese Scholartree) will also give you color.

In spite of all this color, many persons still want flowers in their public areas. If you or your parents feel this way, then perhaps you might want to place just a very few spring flowering bulbs in the plant beds.

Bulbs, such as daffodils, crocus, snowdrops, and grape hyacinths, are the ones best suited for this purpose. Tulips and hyacinths are much too formal to be used in such plantings.

