

## Step 5 Master Planning

Begin this exercise with a fresh sheet of tracing paper and know you will probably use several before you're through. Remember, this is still the planning stage. Use a soft pencil and try a variety of ideas.

Place your schematic plan, or bubble diagram, from Step 4 over the base plan and lay fresh tracing paper over them both. Using your scale, begin drawing the differing components of your landscape at the correct scale as though you are building a house, place walls, ceilings, floors and all accents and plant masses that will create the outdoor rooms.

### Using Your Design Concept

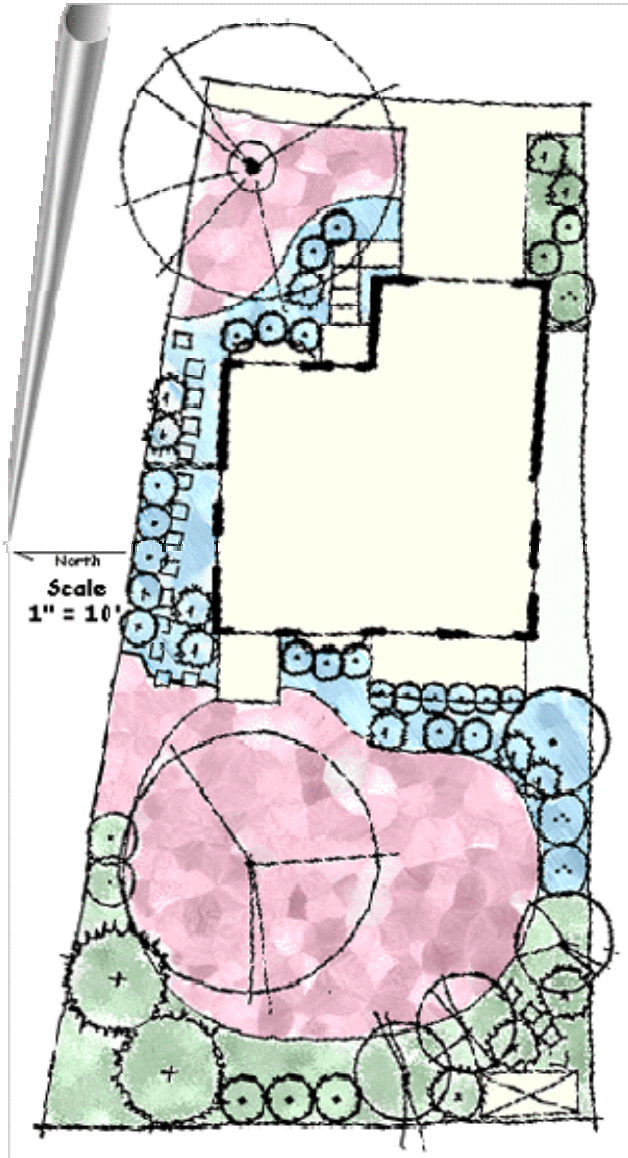
Now is the time you will begin to use your design concept or landscape theme. The general forms your landscape takes will be direct reflections of the style you have chosen. Do you want a formal or informal style? What is the style of your home? For example, if your home is an Italian style, you can use one or several lines which divide the site. Whereas, if you think that an English country garden is more fitting, you will want curvilinear lines with meandering paths and generous planting beds.

You may or may not have begun to think about specific plant species at this point and that's okay. As with building a house, you are creating floors, walls and ceilings. As such, the form of the space and spatial relationships are more important than the actual plant or building material. Also, think about how you will move through your garden and place paths along the natural lines of movement.

### Changing Slopes, Grades and Berms

See the [Slopes, Grades, and Berms](#) fact sheet for more information.

As you worked through your schematic plan in Step 4, you attempted to use current site conditions to their best advantage. Now is the time to consider the methods you will use to add to or amend the current slopes, grades or berms. You know the layout of your activities and their general scale. Do you need to change the slope in some areas in order to accommodate an activity? Do you need retaining walls and stairs? Would a berm provide additional screening from neighbors or the street? Is there a need for swales to drain water? Are there opportunities for water harvesting? Will you use groundcovers or other plants to retain a slope? Sketch the areas of these site amenities.



## Hydrozones

See [hydrozone information and definitions](#) before completing this section.

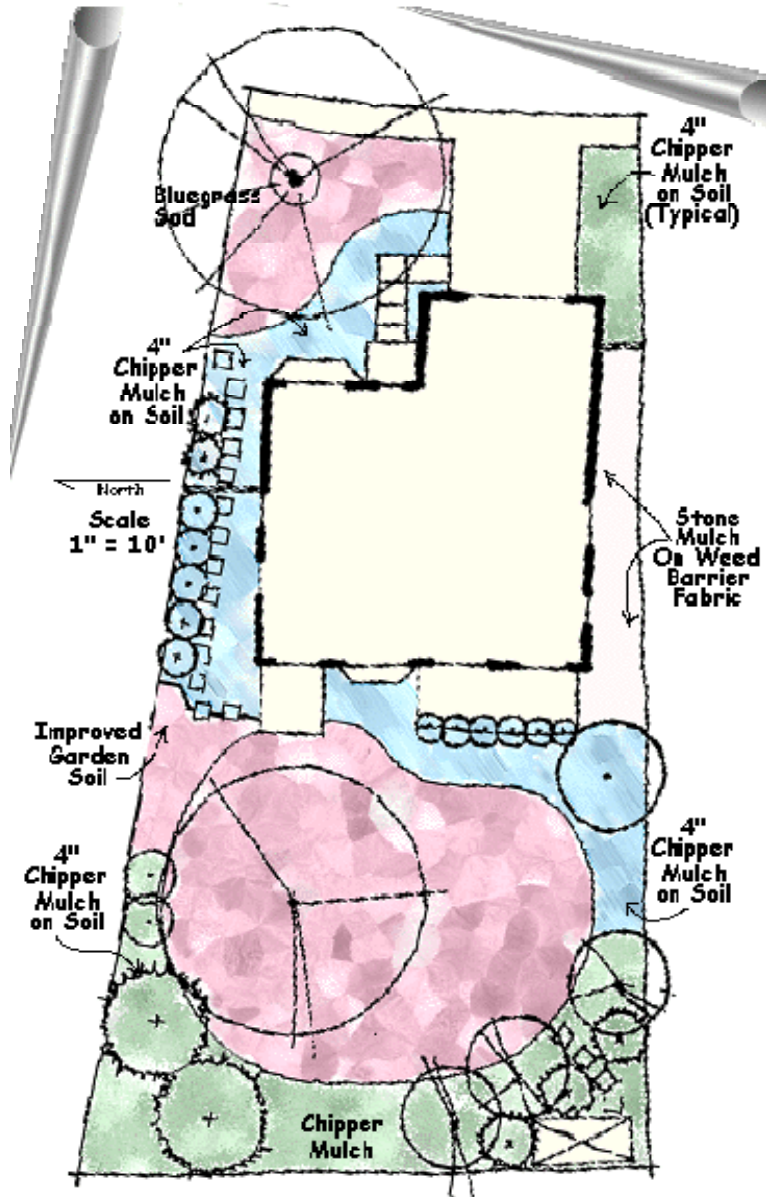
Lay another fresh piece of tracing paper over your plan. Diagram how you will hydrozone the areas. Where will any special use areas, such as lawn, patios or gardens, be situated? You have identified areas where slope will be amended and you are aware of places where you may be able to collect rainwater for plant use. All of these areas will have a pre-determined hydrozone. Looking back at your site analysis will further aid in determining what type of irrigation you will use in the rest your landscape. Furthermore, identifying these zones is an important next

step to take before you begin identifying specific plant species.

### Mulches and Ground Covers

See the [Mulches for the Home Landscape](#) fact sheet for more information.

As a part of this process, identify the probable ground covering you will use. For example, if you have hot, dry areas where you want to grow plants, it is a good idea to use an organic mulch. Other areas may be covered in such things as low growing groundcovers, native grasses, turf, flagstone or an inorganic mulch. Remember the hydrozone and ground covering should match the use of the space.



### Final Master Plan

Once you have developed a plan you believe meets your needs, go out into the yard and try to visualize how it will look. Using stakes and string, or even laying a water hose along lines can help to visualize the final layout. Make notes on the plan about any variations you see.

Trace your final design onto a clean sheet of paper. Show your base plan elements, property lines, house walls, windows and doors, and existing structures and plants which are to remain. Add in new areas and label materials and structures that will be added. This is the new plan you will use to create your working drawings in following steps, such as grading and drainage, and the planting information.

