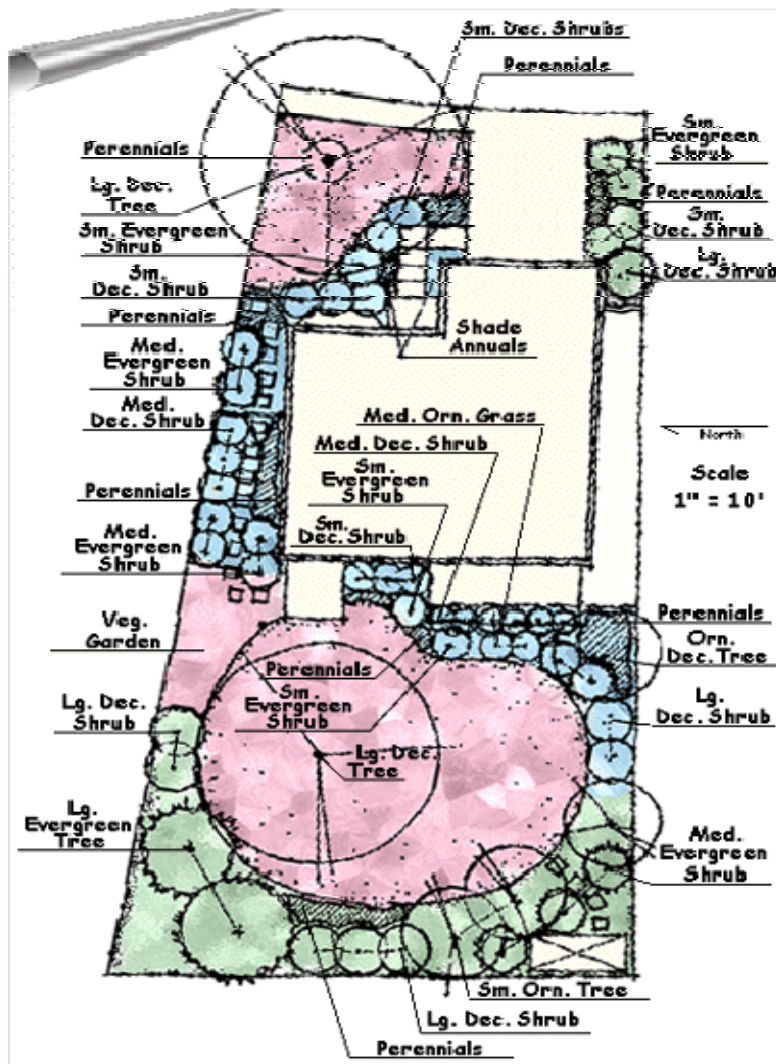


Step 6: Planting Plan

Having completed the site and use analyses (Steps 2 and 3), the schematic plan process (Step 4), and having done general hydrozoning and master planning (Step 5), the next step in the design process is drawing a planting plan and creating a list of plants which may fit that plan. Grab some more tracing paper and try out some planting plan sketches after reading the "rules of thumb" below the sample.



Simple rules of thumb to consider while selecting plants.

Think of plants structurally

That is, think of them in the same way you think about a building structure: in a landscape, plants become floors, walls and ceilings. Openings are windows and doors. Use plants to create outdoor rooms.

Use your concept

Use your design theme (colonial, southwestern, etc.) in choosing plants.

Consider wildlife

Will the plants you are choosing attract wildlife, whether wanted or not?

Think of year round needs

Plants are generally either deciduous or evergreen. Do you need year-round floors, walls and ceilings? For example, do you want an evergreen wall or would it be better if the sun could come through in the winter?

Keep in mind the plants' mature sizes

For example, a spruce tree can grow to 30 feet wide and 60 feet tall. Plants that are misplaced become maintenance nightmares. When plants are spaced too far apart the landscape looks sparse.



Plants that are too close together may eventually encounter more problems with pests and disease.



Look for height and spread information on plant lists as you design to get spacing just right!



Use groups of plants

Grouping plants together helps avoid the cluttered or haphazard look in your landscape. Further, use groups of plants to create spaces.

Group by water requirements

Plants don't all need the same amount of water nor the same amount all of the time. Use your hydrozone sketch from Step 5.

Select plants that thrive where you live

If you live in the mountains, your climate may be strikingly different than

if you live on the prairie. Plan for your USDA zone.

Select disease and pest resistant plants

Selecting plants that will thrive under the conditions in your landscape will help here. There is a difference between surviving and thriving. For example, aspen trees will grow and survive in Colorado Springs, however, they have a very high incidence of disease and pest problems. They thrive in the mountains.

Consider the form, color, texture and growth habits of plants you select

Use all sorts of resources, including our online plant database, to find the information you need.

Making a Plant List

After reading through the list above and making your planting plan sketch, start a plant list. Consider setting this up as a simple table with spaces for plant names, water requirements, exposure needs, bloom times (if appropriate) and so forth. Look back at your list of favorite plants, if you did one, and add the ones that will work in your redesigned landscape. Jot down plants you found in the online plant database that seem appropriate. Visit the Xeriscape Demonstration Garden again to see which plants are growing in which hydrozones and micro-climates.

Once you have a good sized list, look over the plants you've chosen and assign them to areas on your planting plan sketch you developed. If needed, revisit your master plan sketch and consult the hydrozones you drew as well. Chances are you won't find places for all of the plants on your list, but never discard your list. It will be a handy reference in the future if you decide to redo plantings or to replace plants that didn't do as well as expected.

