

AG SERVICE CENTER NATIVE LANDSCAPE DESIGN

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“Planting the Seed”

What is motivating you to create the garden?

The seed....

- Profession/A Client hired you › › Need to know the BUDGET and client’s needs!
- You came into free or “extra” plants › › The plant stock drives the design
- Educational/Demonstration garden › › still likely driven by budget, but not always (more design options)
- Others...



The Vision for St. Mary's County Ag Services Native Landscape Gardens

Utilize county “carry over” funds to:

- Enrich a highly-visible public space with an educational/demonstration garden that stimulates the public eye and intellect (increase awareness about what plants are native to the eastern U.S.)
- Replace non-native plants with native plants (which is one component to “conservation landscaping”, which is a style of landscaping with specific goals to reducing pollution and increasing wildlife habitat).
- Create a welcoming environment to the various agricultural services and one that resonates with the types of services they provide (ie: Master Gardener Program, Soil Conservation, etc.)
- Increase pollinator habitat

What an Improvement!

(Thank You Master Gardeners!)

Before-
Non-native bedding plants



After-
Mixed border of all native plants



Getting Started on the Design Process

Assessing the Surroundings

- ❖ Consider the scale and style of the surrounding landscape and structures
 - These factors dictate the plant variety, functionality, balance, scale and proportion/language of the design
 - “The rule of thirds”
- ❖ Is it safe to dig? Check for underground and overhead utilities



“Right Plant, Right Place”

- ❖ Perform a soil test to know your soil type- it's harder to amend than to play plant match-maker (matching the existing soil type with the corresponding plants with that soil culture preference)
- ❖ Know the light exposure throughout the day (especially with foundation plantings that are up against tall buildings). For example, the Ag Services building is only one story, but there are 10 foot tall eastern red cedars planted between each suite entrance which cast shadows onto the garden.
- ❖ Know your climate/hardiness zone (St. Mary's County is zone 7b)
- ❖ Plant so that the mature plant will be at least 12” away from the building to prevent intrusion on access for building maintenance, allow air flow, and reduce insect traveling routes

Basics of Creating the Composition

- ❖ Line-a moving dot; controls where the observes' eyes go
- ❖ Form/shape-creates dimension
- ❖ Texture-visual weight, emphasis
- ❖ Color-various uses: theme, mood, movement



Plant Selection

The previous basic design principles will help you narrow down your plant palette.

For instance, the Ag Services building landscaping project is dictated by:

- ❖ **Rectangular** gardens with architectural limitations such as **floor-to-ceiling windows** at some suites and **picture windows** at others, and **walkways** framing the garden space. Therefore, plants that will remain short at maturity (or can be pruned to maintain size) are needed.
- ❖ The **soil is heavy clay fill**. Therefore, plants that can tolerate slow drainage are needed
- ❖ The **exposure is south to southeast**, so plants that can tolerate full sun (and some that can tolerate part sun once the red cedars cast a shadow onto the bed)
- ❖ Native Plant theme-a **variety of natives** that fit the above guidelines; known by doing research and purchasing **what was available** at the nursery at the time

Examples of Balance in the Landscape

Asymmetrical-Suite A

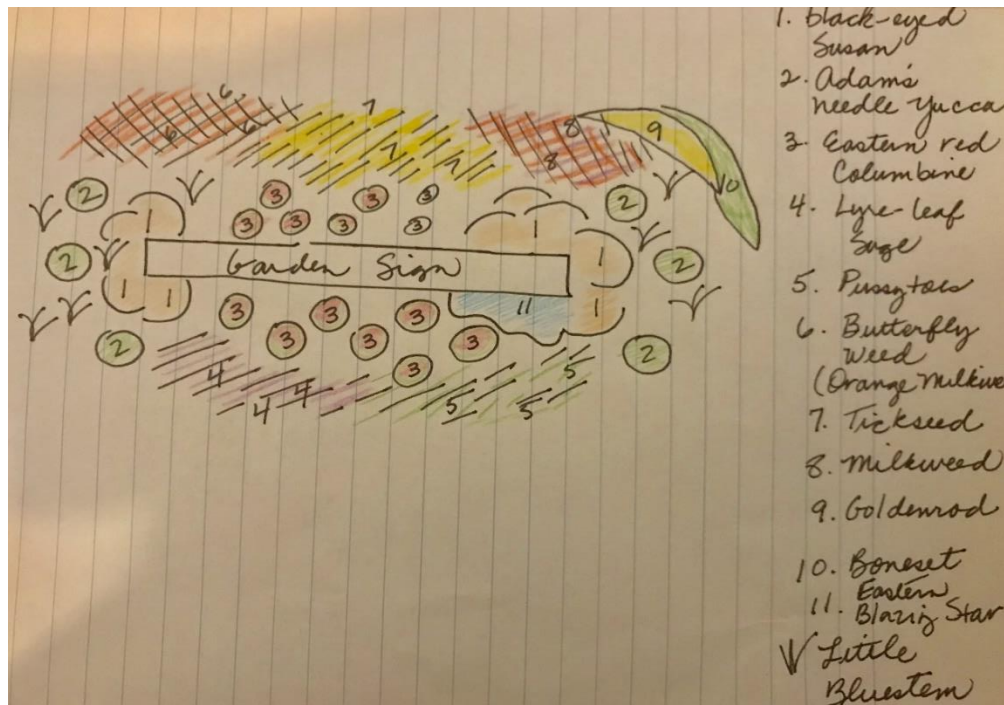


Symmetrical-Suite E-2

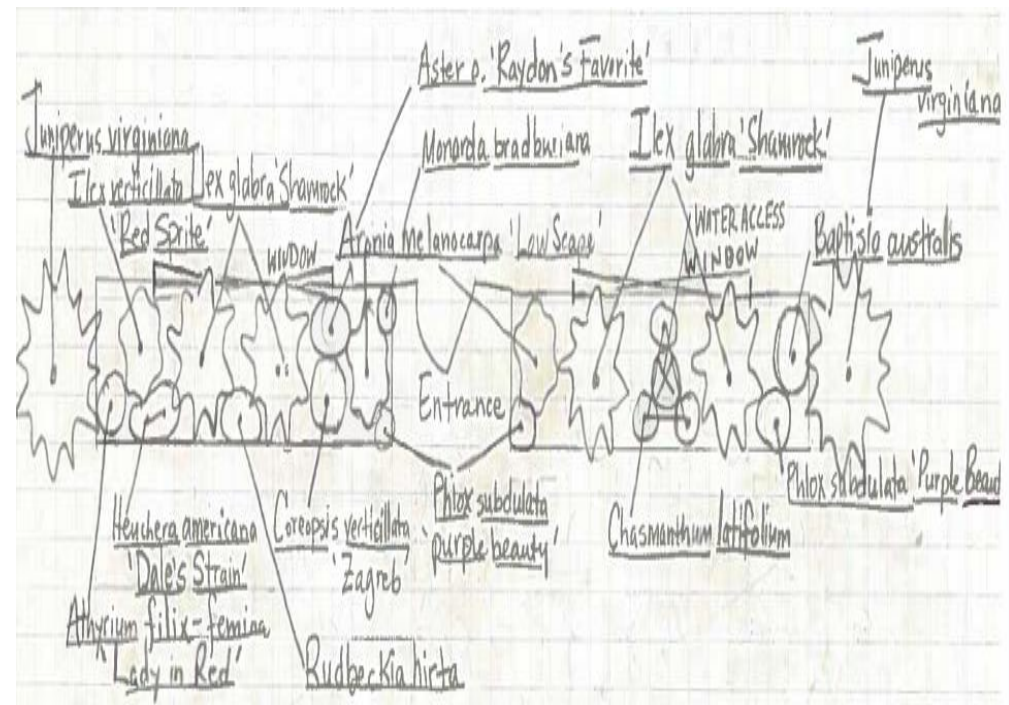


Drafting Your Design Plan

Free Hand



Using an Architectural Template



What's Planted in the Ag Services Landscapes?

❖ Deciduous Shrubs:

- Aronia melanocarpa, Chokeberry, 'Low Scape'
- Clethra alnifolia, Summersweet, 'Vanilla Spice'
- Ilex verticillata, Winter berry, 'Red Sprite' and 'Jim Dandy'
- Itea virginicus, VA Sweet Spire, 'Henry's Garnet'

❖ Evergreen Shrubs:

- Ilex glabra, Inkberry Holly, 'Shamrock'

Source:

U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service's *Native Plant for Wildlife Habitat and Conservation Landscaping: Chesapeake Bay*

❖ Herbaceous Perennials:

- Asclepias tuberosa, Butterfly weed
- Aster novae-angliae, NY Aster, 'Purple Dome'
- Athyrium filix femina, Fern, 'Lady in Red'
- Baptisia australis, False indigo
- Chasmanthum latifolium, Northern Sea Oat
- Coreopsis verticillata, Tickseed, 'Zagreb'
- Echinacea purpurea, Coneflower, 'Magnus'
- Eragrostis spectabilis, Purple Love Grass
- Heuchera americana, Coral Bells, 'Dale's Strain'
- Monarda bradburiana, wild bergamont
- Panicum virgatum, Switchgrass, 'Shenandoah'
- Sedum ternatum, Wild stonecrop
- Symphyotrichum oblongifolium 'Raydon's Favorite'

❖ Evergreen Perennial:

- Phlox subdulata, Moss-pink, 'Purple Beauty'

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References:

- *Native Plants for Wildlife Habitat and Conservation Landscaping: Chesapeake Bay Watershed*, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, copyright 2012
- *The Perennial Gardener's Design Primer: The Essential Guide to Creating Simply Sensational Gardens*, Cohen and Ondra, copyright 2005
- *Professional Planting Design*, Scarfone, copyright 2007
- Plan of "Nicolet Garden" provided by Jill Spencer, Master Gardener