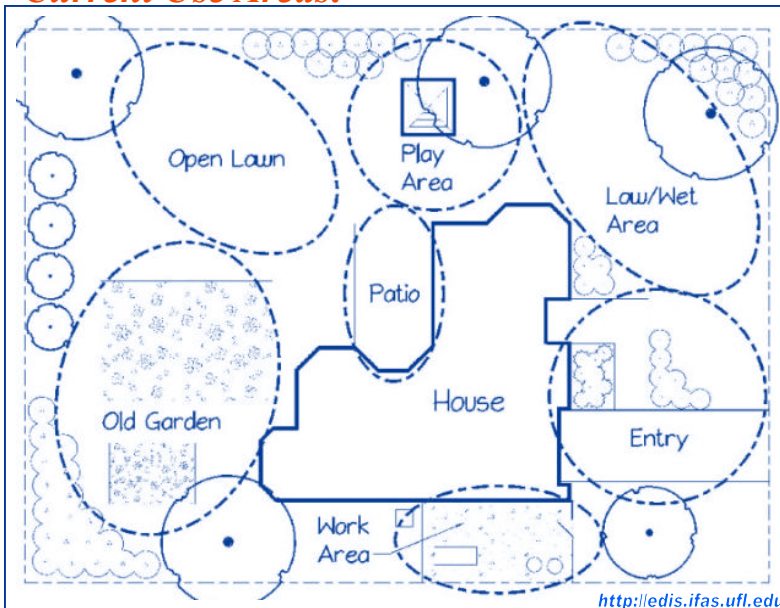


THINGS TO CONSIDER WHEN YOU DESIGN YOUR LANDSCAPE - PART 1 of 3

Most landscapes start out as a plan on paper. As you conceptualize your design, there's a number of important steps to consider that help make up a good landscape plan. While not everyone may have an eye for landscape design, addressing these steps can help your yard end up sustainable and usefully ornamental. In the following weeks, I will present a series of articles on

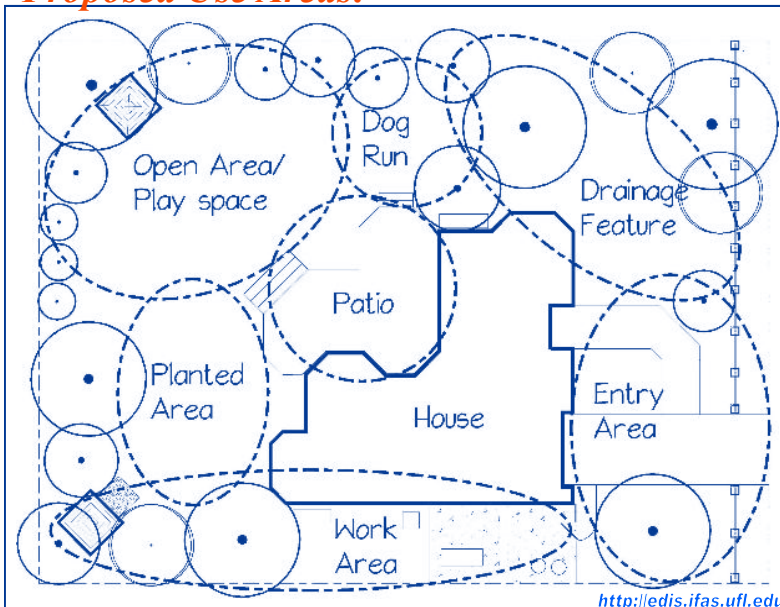
landscape design that should point you in the right direction.

Current Use Areas:



The first item that you need to attend to is an analysis of your site so that you can assemble plants that will grow well and are suited for the location. Take a look at the soil in consideration of nutrients, moisture, and drainage. Look at what is already growing well there for some clues. When choosing plants, make sure that they are hardy for our area. While it is important to select plants suited to our hardiness zones, there may also be microclimates that can be used to protect marginal plants. Make note of sun conditions from deep shade to full sun that may occur on your site. It is also essential that you note such things as power lines, septic tanks and underground utilities, patios, driveways, and sidewalks as you plot out your design.

Proposed Use Areas:



Once you have a good site analysis down on paper, next turn your attention to how you intend to use your yard. How will your family, your visitors, or your pets use the various areas in your landscape? Your landscape design should be functional, look good, and be able to be maintained at a level that is sustainable. Your design should also be developed within a budget that you can afford. Keep your

(Continued on page 2)

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consideration open to play areas, work or service areas, garden spots, and areas of open lawn.

When selecting a theme for your landscape, find one in a gardening magazine or book that you favor – you might see one that you would like to duplicate. Consider what your neighborhood looks like. Do you want an open yard or a closed yard? How will your landscape look based on your architecture – formal or informal? Some common form themes may include circular, square, rectangular, irregular, or a combination of these geometric shapes.

Themes may also include tropical, desert, meadow, woodland, or coastal plantings. Some landscapes include meandering lines for their planting beds giving a more natural look.

As you can see, there are a lot of decisions to make and consider. You may also consider hiring the assistance of a professional landscape architect as you navigate towards your dream landscape. This series of articles will help introduce a new EDIS publication called “Landscape Design: Ten Important Things to Consider” by Gail Hansen from the Center of Landscape Conservation and Ecology. This new publication can be viewed at <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/EP375>. Next week, we will look at creating and linking spaces, plant functions and structuring plantings.

Resources:

- Hansen, G. (2009) *Landscape Design: Ten Important Things to Consider*. The Center of Landscape Conservation and Ecology, UF/IFAS Extension Service.

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For more information about our Florida Yards and Neighborhoods Program, please contact our FYN Horticulture Program Assistant, Allison Turner, at 764.4351 or email Allison.Turner@CharlotteFL.com. Allison can help educate you about the FYN Program so you can create a beautiful, Florida-Friendly landscape that saves you time and money while conserving precious water resources and reducing pollution.

**contact a
MASTER GARDENER**
on the Plant Lifeline from 1:00pm-4:00pm Monday, Wednesday, and Friday at 764.4340 or by email Master.Gardener@charlottefl.com.

You can also visit them at one of our many **Plant Clinics** around the county:
<http://charlotte.ifas.ufl.edu/PlantClinics.pdf>



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