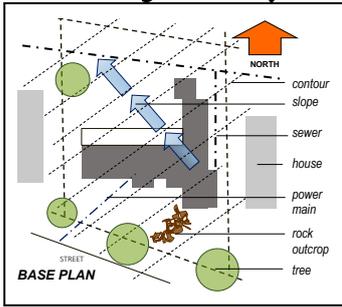




## Garden Design Study Group



## Steps to plan, design and select plants for your home garden

### FIRST . . . Record the physical characteristics of your garden

Whether it be a new project or existing under rehabilitation

- Most important first step – **locate north!**
- Prepare a layout plan showing the size and shape of your property
- Indicate the landform, slopes and levels; consider modifications
- Indicate on-site & nearby structures & trees which influence the garden
- Record location of underground and overhead services; and solar
- Determine existing patterns of soils and rocks – sand, clay, loam
- Identify existing vegetation for preservation, transplant or removal

### SECOND. . . Analyse - get to know your site and its surrounds, personally

Illustrate on the layout plan the physical and microclimate impacts . . .

- Assess the seasonal patterns of sunshine and shade over the site
- Identify the influences of breezes, storms, winds
- Identify the effects of rainfall and water runoff; consider harvesting
- Plan earthworks, avoid burying topsoil under excavated subsoil
- Assess soil & sub-soil pH: below 5.5 acid - neutral - above 7.0 alkaline
- Visual aspects positive and negative: long or short views, glimpses, privacy

### THIRD. . . Plan - identify your principal family needs & functions

Define on plan how YOU want to use the garden . . . it's your artistic creation

- Plan for interesting arrival & first impressions – focal points
- Don't forget that first impressions are the most lasting!
- Plan functional & interesting access by pathways and lawns
- Identify vehicle circulation requirements – access, parking, construction
- Define suitable areas for outdoor living activities - "Come inside the outside!"
- Identify areas for work activities in the garden – fernery, potting, kitchen garden
- Plan for innovative children's play areas and facilities

### FOURTH. . . Design - choose a style & theme for your garden

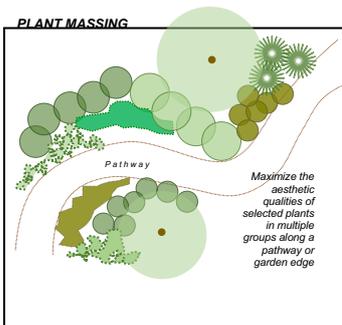
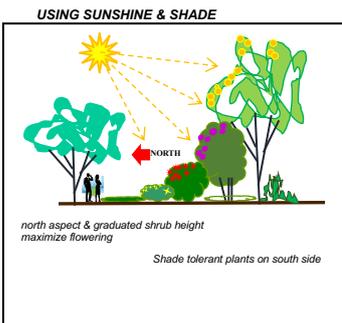
Your design and plant selections will be strongly influenced by your preferred garden style and character . . .

- First assess your budget, personal priorities, available time and health issues
- Should the garden reflect the architectural style of the house?
- Will the garden be an exciting fusion of plants and materials?
- Style - formal, informal, traditional, contemporary, seasonal horticulture display?
- Theme - 'Walkabout' garden, bushland, rainforest, coastal, cottage or?
- Perhaps a garden for plant collectors, scientific trials, experiments?
- Ideally the garden should be new, fresh and uniquely Australian!
- Overall fundamentally simple, livable, affordable and sustainable.

### FIFTH . . . Plants & Planting - get ready to select plants for your garden

Each plant has differing attributes, consider each of them wisely . . .

- What is it? – tree, shrub, cover, vine, fern, palm or ?
- Where is it from? Local, regional, natural, exotic
- What conditions does it prefer? Microclimate? Soils? Mulch type?
- How big does it grow in natural locations?
- Have you seen it thriving nearby?
- Does it adapt to garden horticulture techniques?
- What is its most prominent feature – form, foliage, flowers, fruits, bark or?
- Where are the most flowers and colourful foliage displayed & when?





## PLANTING DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS - Factors to consider when selecting plants



### LISTEN TO THE PLANTS! . . . to help select the right species

They can tell you a lot about themselves . . .

- Large leaves = shade tolerance
- Small leaves = sun preference
- Thick & waxy leaves = store water for later (water wise)
- Swollen trunk = store water (drought tolerant)
- Lignotubers (swelling at base of trunk) = fire resistance
- Aromatic foliage = insect resistance
- Massive seed production = weed potential
- Grey & silver leaves = sun tolerant & salt resistant
- Delicate leaves = moisture stress indicator
- Thorns & spines = wildlife protection & habitat



### TREES

Trees have a variety of invaluable characteristics and functions

- Evergreen or deciduous: seasonal effect and sun control
- Consider carefully root type and impact: deep, shallow, invasive
- Diverse forms: globular, upright, umbrella, irregular, weeping, conical, etc
- Specimen tree aesthetic features: form, foliage, bark, flower, fruit or fragrance
- Shade tree function: locate carefully to control seasonal sunshine and shadow
- Multi planted specimens: as a grove, forest or windbreak

### SHRUBS

Shrubs offer variety to fulfill many important design functions . . .

- Size: tall, medium, low - specimens to suit all design situations
- Screens & hedges for: privacy, windbreak, breeze filter, aesthetics
- Features: diversity in form, foliage, flower, fruit, fragrance
- Shrubbery foliage: continuity, contrast or diversity, in colour, texture, form
- Group species with similar soil, moisture and nutrient requirements in same bed.

### GROUNDCOVERS

Low growing covers are diverse in colour, texture and form and functionally and structurally useful . . .

- Variety - dwarf shrubs, matting, tufts, grasses, scramblers, ferns,
- Erosion control – natural fibrous roots hold soil together
- Living mulch – massed dense foliage reduces soil water evaporation
- Feature – carpets of plants in mass display, seasonal colour

### VINES & SCRAMBLERS

Vines are functionally and structurally useful . . .

- Locate to highlight flower display - over canopy, under canopy, along stems
- Shade & shelter - pergola and arbors, screens and walls
- Softening hard landscape elements - fences, walls, embankments
- Maintenance issues - regular pruning necessary, woody, fire, damage to trees

### PALMS & CYCADS

Palm trunks and fronds add a special & unique tropical character to a garden . . .

- Size: tall, medium, low – specimens to suit all design situations
- Self-cleaning or persistent fronds – maintenance issue
- Feather frond or palmate frond – a question of aesthetics
- Individual specimens – can be subject to wind impact
- Formal avenues – occasional dead specimens can destroy formality
- Informal groves – always found this way in nature

### FERNS, ORCHIDS, EPIPHYTES, AROIDS

All variously provide interesting forms, textures and colours to add diversity and focus

