

Edible Landscaping

What is edible landscaping? The simplest definition is using food plants in an ornamental garden, either integrated with non-food plants, or as the sole type of plant in the garden. Our emphasis is on woody plants (trees and shrubs), but annuals and herbaceous perennials can also be a part of an edible landscape.

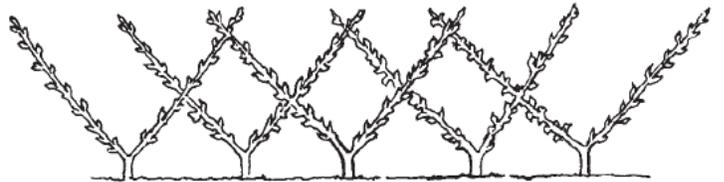
Why use food plants in the landscape? Producing some of your own food allows you to control inputs and quality, and saves fossil fuel. A productive food garden can be a beautiful landscape as well.

Basic Requirements:

Most food plants require good sun exposure and air circulation. There are a few exceptions that will fruit in shade.

Trees: Most food/fruit producing trees are deciduous, and can replace ornamental deciduous trees in the landscape. Some fruit trees have ornamental blooms, and some have good fall color. Most fruit trees are grafted, and come on a range of rootstocks that help determine size. Some forms to consider:

- Fruit fences/espalier (mini-dwarf and dwarf trees)
- Bush form/dwarf trees (mini-dwarf and dwarf trees)
- Larger tree forms (dwarf or semi-dwarf trees), planted in pleasing patterns rather than straight rows.



Choose disease resistant varieties when possible. When planting, consider access for pruning, picking, and spraying. Match the tree to your soil type and irrigation abilities. Check to make sure you have correct cross pollination.

Shrubs: Most fruiting shrubs are also deciduous. They can range in size from very dwarf blueberries, to elderberries which may grow to 12'-15'.

Groundcovers: These include some evergreens, including cranberries and lingonberries, and some herbaceous plants such as strawberries (day neutral).

Perennials: Rhubarb, asparagus, and artichokes are all ornamental during the growing season, and die to the ground in winter.

Vines: Most vines will need a support system; a trellis, fence, or pergola built to support the weight of the vine and the fruit. The best known fruiting vines are grapes and kiwis. Hops, grown for beer or medicinal purposes, is another easy vine.

Herbs: Shrubby herbs such as rosemary and thyme work well in sunny locations. Mint and comfrey will tolerate more shady locations.

Annuals: Colorful lettuce, kale, and chard varieties can be grown in the landscape easily; tucked among flowers in a flower bed, or among fruiting trees and shrubs where there is enough sunlight.



Right Plant, Right Place

Good choices for dry, sandy soil:

- Grapes, Seaberry, Autumn Olive, European Olive, Rosemary, Thyme, Lavender
- With summer irrigation, dry sandy soil is also great for most fruit trees

Good choices for rich, acidic soil:

- Blueberry, evergreen huckleberry, cranberry, lingonberry, tea (*Camellia sinensis*)
- Except the tea, all of these are *Vacciniums*, all need summer moisture in the soil, and integrate well with conifers and rhododendrons in mixed landscapes.

Good choices for partial shade (tolerate but don't need some shade):

- Shrubs- Elderberry, blueberry, gooseberry and currant, evergreen huckleberry, tea (*Camellia sinensis*)
- Trees- Paw Paw, American Persimmon
- Groundcover or herbaceous- Woodland strawberry (*Fragaria vesca*), mint, rhubarb
- Vines- Arctic Beauty Kiwi, *Schisandra* or Magnolia Vine, Akebia

Tolerant of winter wet:

- Trees- Pears on semi-dwarf rootstock, quince, plums, hazelnuts
- Shrubs- Black currant, elderberry, aronia (chokeberry)

Showy flowers:

- Some apples (Mott's Pink) and crabapples, peaches, medlar, quince, Mountain Ash crosses
- Some blueberry cultivars (Sunshine Blue, Toro), tea, rosemary



Fall foliage color:

- Asian Pears, persimmons
- Blueberries
- Many red wine grapes