

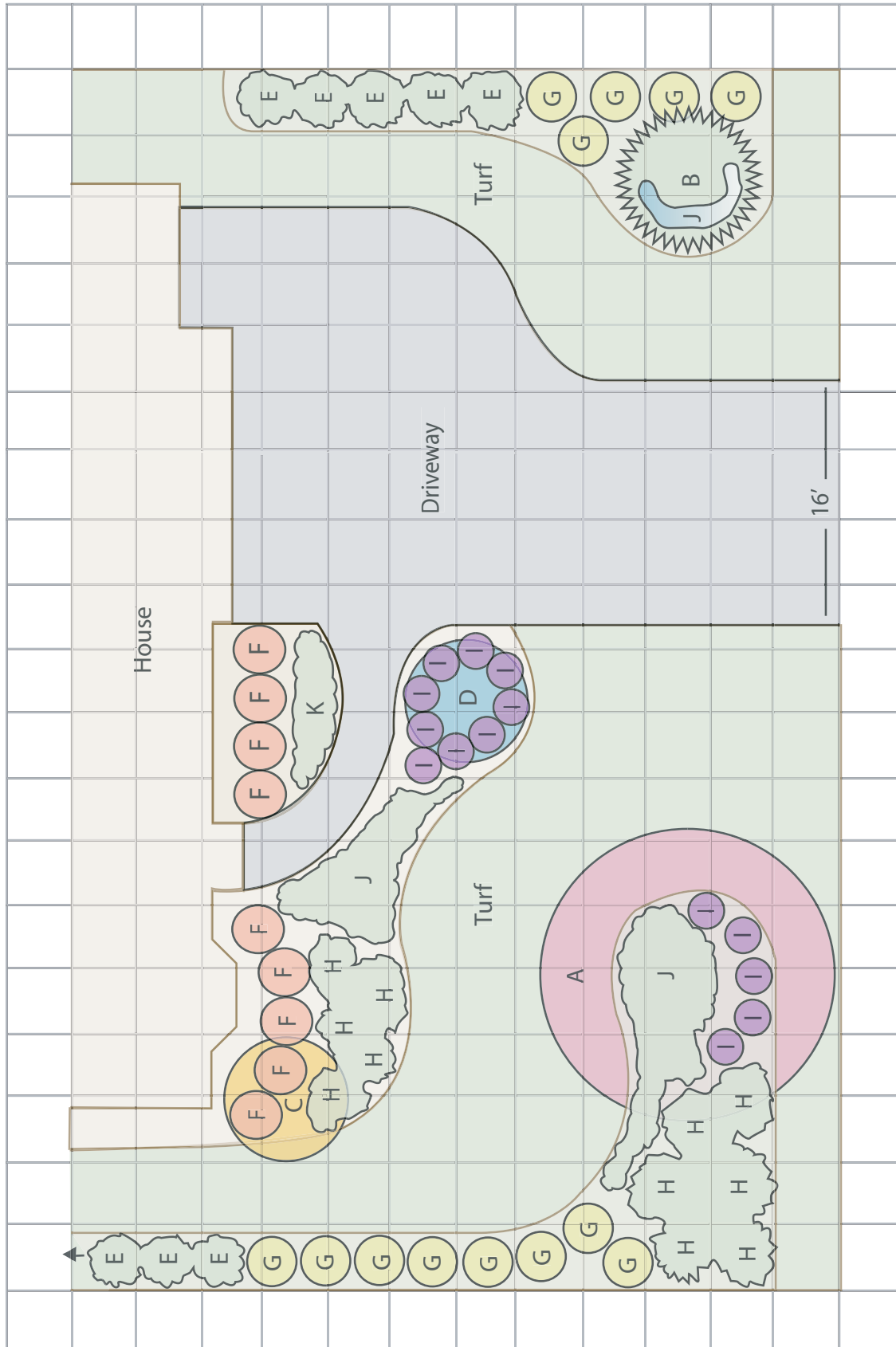
LANDSCAPE PLANS



A Large, Welcoming Front Yard

TODAY'S FRONT YARDS, NO MATTER THE SIZE, SEEM TO BE FILLED WITH THE DRIVEWAY, AND THE HOUSE'S GARAGE FACES THE STREET.

This practical design often isn't the optimum in visual design. So we have created a welcoming, soft landscape that focuses on the entrance to the home, yet provides privacy from the street and sidewalk. Large trees provide shade without overwhelming the house and yard. The plant choices offer seasonal displays throughout the year.



1 square - 5 feet

Key to Planting Plan

This garden plan has been designed for maximum flexibility. The base plan includes general recommendations for plant types. This allows you to select trees, shrubs, and other plants that are suited to your location and your personal preferences. We have also included a set of suggested varieties for five regions. See below for more details.

Note: Dimensions are approximate mature height.

A Shade tree 50', 1

B Evergreen 50', 1

C Ornamental tree or shrub, upright 12-20', 1

D Ornamental tree 10-12', 1

E Evergreen or dense shrub for privacy, upright 8-15', 8+

F Flowering shrub or evergreen for foundation 4', 9

G Flowering shrub 4-6', 8

H Evergreen 12-18", 11

I Flowering shrub, low and spreading 12-36", 14

J Perennials/Ground cover, number required depends on variety

K Annual

Plant Recommendations by Region

The plants suggested above are arranged by general region of the country. Use the map as a general guide to the plant lists that might be best suited to your location. Because climate can vary substantially within each region, we suggest that you verify your plant choices with a local nursery or garden center professional. If a particular variety we list is not available in your area, your garden professional should be able to suggest a substitute.



MIDWEST

A Acer platanoides (*Norway Maple*) 50-60', rounded, dark green foliage is yellow in fall; Zones 4-7

ALTERNATE PLANTS

Gleditsia triacanthos var. inermis 'Shademaster' (*Shademaster Honeylocust*) 50-60', symmetrical, dark green leaves, yellow-green fall color, fruitless, thornless; Zones 4-7

Quercus rubra (*Northern Red Oak*) 60-80', pyramidal to rounded, dark green leaves, red to reddish brown fall color, 1999 Tree of the Year; Zones 4-8

B Abies concolor (*White Fir*) 50', bluish needles, 2000 MI Growers' Choice Award; Zones 4-7

ALTERNATE PLANTS

Picea abies (*Norway Spruce*) 40-80', stately, pendulous green branches; Zones 2-7

Picea pungens (*Colorado Blue Spruce*) 50-60', gray-green needles; Zones 3-7

C Crataegus crugalli 'Cruzam' (*Crusader Hawthorn*) 15', rounded, thornless, single white flowers in spring, dark red fruit; Zones 4-7

ALTERNATE PLANTS

Euonymus bungeana 'Verona' (*Prairie Radiance Winterberry*) 12-15', green foliage with red fall color, pink capsules beginning in August open to red arils; Zones 3-7

Malus 'Sentinel' (*Sentinel Crab*) 20', upright and narrow, white-tinged pink flowers, red fruit into winter; Zones 4-7

D Malus 'Camzam' (*Camelot Crab*) 10', rounded, fuchsia on white flowers, burgundy fruit; Zones 4-7

ALTERNATE PLANTS

Salix caprea 'Pendula' (*Weeping Pussy Willow*) 5-6', weeping form of pussy willow grafted to a standard, silky catkin in early spring; Zones 4

Syringa meyeri 'Palibin' (*Dwarf Korean Lilac*) 6', shrub form grafted to standard, globe shape with fragrant lilac blooms; Zones 4-7

E Juniperus scopulorum 'Blue Trail' (*Blue Trail Juniper*) 15', columnar, bright silvery-blue foliage; Zones 3-7

ALTERNATE PLANTS

Thuja occidentalis 'Smaragd' (*Emerald Arborvitae*) 10-15', emerald green foliage, compact, pyramidal; Zones 5-8

Thuja occidentalis 'Wareana' (*Siberian Arborvitae*) 6-8', makes good hedge, bright green; Zones 3-8

F Hydrangea arborescens 'Annabelle' (*Annabelle Hydrangea*) 4-5', rounded, large white flowers clusters much of summer; Zones 3-9

ALTERNATE PLANTS

Ribes alpinum (*Alpine Currant*) 3-5', rounded, suitable for shearing, greenish flowers; Zones 2-7

Syringa meyeri 'Palibin' (*Dwarf Korean Lilac*) 4-5', compact, small dark green leaves, pale lilac flowers; Zones 3-7

G Kerria japonica 'Superba' (*Superba Japanese Kerria*) 4-5', rounded, single golden-yellow flowers in spring, bright green stems year round; Zones 5-9

ALTERNATE PLANTS

Physocarpus opulifolius 'Nanas' (*Dwarf Ninebark*) 4-6', small green leaves, white flowers in May and June, numerous red seed pods, dense and bushy; Zones 2-7

Rhus aromatica (*Fragrant Sumac*) 5-6', small yellow flowers in May, small red berries, fragrant foliage turns scarlet in fall; Zones 3-9

H Juniperus horizontalis 'Hughes' (*Hughes Juniper*) 15" silvery blue, low growing; Zones 3-8

ALTERNATE PLANTS

Juniperus Sabina 'Arcadia' (*Arcadia Juniper*) 12-18", rich green lacy foliage; Zones 3-7

Taxus x media 'Densifolius' (*Dense Spreading Yew*) 3', compact form with dark green needles, broad spreading; Zones 4-7

I Buxus microphylla 'Wintergreen' (*Wintergreen Littleleaf Boxwood*) 2', upright, fragrant flower in April, bright green foliage turns coppery in winter; Zones 4-9

ALTERNATE PLANTS

Potentilla fruticosa 'Pink Beauty' (*Pink Beauty Potentilla*) 2', bright green foliage, clear pink flowers; Zones 2-7

Spirea x bumalda 'Dart's Red Spirea' (*Dart's Red Spirea*) 2-3', upright rounded, blue-green foliage, reddish purple fall color, rose-pink flowers; Zones 4-8

J Perennials or ground cover; use dwarf daylilies or a mix of nepeta and coreopsis

K Annuals of choice with spring bulbs

NORTHWEST

A Acer x freemanii 'Jeffersred' PP4864 (*Autumn Blaze Maple*) 50', upright oval, brilliant orange-red fall color; Zones 4-7

ALTERNATE PLANTS

Acer saccharum 'Green Mountain' (*Green Mountain Sugar Maple*) 50-75' upright oval, dark green foliage is orange-scarlet in fall; Zones 4-7

Quercus frainetto 'Schmidt' (*Forest Green Oak*) 50', deep green, glossy foliage; Zones 5b-9

B Abies concolor (*White Fir*) 50', bluish needles, pyramidal; Zones 4-7

ALTERNATE PLANTS

Abies grandis (*Grand Fir*) 100', dark to bright green needles, slight citrus smell; Zones 4-7

Abies procera (*Noble Fir*) 100', blue-green needles, purplish cones; Zones 5-6(7)

C Crataegus laevigata 'Superba' (*Crimson Cloud Hawthorn*) 15', large red flowers with white centers, red fruit; Zones 4-7

ALTERNATE PLANTS

Populus tremuloides (*Quaking Aspen*) 30', narrow oval, light green leaves tremble in wind, yellow fall color; Zones 3-8

Viburnum lentago (*Nannyberry Viburnum*) 20', upright vase shape, white flowers, blue-black fruit, purple-red fall color; Zones 2-8

D Malus sargentii 'Select A' (*Firebird Flowering Crab PPAF*) 5', globe shape, white flowers, red fruit into winter; Zones 4-7

ALTERNATE PLANTS

Prunus x cistena (*Purpleleaf Sandcherry, tree form*) 8', rounded, pinkish flowers, purple-black fruit, reddish purple leaves; Zones 3-8

Viburnum 'Emerald Triumph' (*Emerald Triumph Viburnum*) 5-6', rounded, deep green leaves are deep purple in fall, white flowers, red fruit turns black; Zones 4-7

E Juniperus scopulorum 'Medora' (*Medora Juniper*) 10-12', columnar, blue-green color; Zones 3-7

ALTERNATE PLANTS

Thuja occidentalis 'Sherwood Moss' (*Sherwood Moss Arborvitae*) 4-6' dwarf cone-shaped arborvitae with unique green foliage that turns bronze in winter; Zones 3-7

Thuja occidentalis 'Smaragd' (*Emerald Arborvitae*) 10-15', upright pyramidal, emerald green foliage; Zones 5-8

F Hydrangea arborescens 'Annabelle' (*Annabelle Hydrangea*) 4', large white clusters of flowers much of summer; Zones 3-9

ALTERNATE PLANTS

Ilex verticillata 'Afterglow' (*Afterglow Winterberry*) 3-6', compact globe, small glossy green leaves, yellow-green to purple, bronze in winter, orange red fruit, use one 'Jim Dandy' to pollinate; Zones 4-9

Rhododendron 'Hellikki' (*Hellikki Rhododendron*) 5', compact, dark violet-red blooms in spring, dark green foliage, from University of Helsinki; Zones 4-7

G Exochorda serratifolia 'Northern Pearls' (*Pearlbush*) 6-8', upright, flowers resemble a string of white pearls, yellow fall color; Zones 4-8

ALTERNATE PLANTS

Philadelphus 'Buckley's Quill' (*Buckley's Quill Mockorange*) 5-6', semi-dwarf, erect habit, fragrant double white flowers, COPF introduction; Zones 4-8

Syringa meyeri 'Palibin' (*Dwarf Korean Lilac*) 4-5', compact, pale lilac flowers, small dark green foliage; Zones 3-7

H Juniperus horizontalis 'Hughes' (*Hughes Juniper*) 15" silvery blue, low growing; Zones 3-8

ALTERNATE PLANTS

Juniperus Sabina 'Arcadia' (*Arcadia Juniper*) 12-18", rich green lacy foliage; Zones 3-7

Taxus x media 'Densiformis' (*Dense Spreading Yew*) 3', compact form with dark green needles, broad spreading; Zones 4-7

I Spirea albiflora (*Japanese White Spirea*) 2', rounded, rich green foliage, white flowers, prune back in spring for blooms; Zones 3-8

ALTERNATE PLANTS

Spirea japonica 'Magic Carpet' (*Magic Carpet Spirea*) 18", compact, light green foliage, red-tipped, deep pink flowers, russet-red fall color; Zones 3-8

Weigela florida 'Minuet' (*Minuet Weigela*) 24-30", green with purple tint foliage, slightly fragrant tubular flowers are ruby, lilac, and yellow; Zones 4-8

J Perennials or ground cover; use hosta, ferns, and hellebores

K Annuals of choice with spring bulbs

NORTHEAST

A Acer rubrum 'Northwood' (*Northwood Maple*) 40', broadly oval, medium green leaves turn red in fall; Zones 3-9

ALTERNATE PLANTS

Acer saccharum 'Green Mountain' (*Green Mountain Sugar Maple*) 45', dark green foliage has reddish orange fall color; Zones 4-7

Quercus rubra (*Red Oak*) 50' rounded shape, dark green with red fall color; Zones 5-8

B Picea glauca (*White Spruce*) 40-60', medium blue-green needles pyramidal form; Zones 4-6

ALTERNATE PLANTS

Pinus strobus (*White Pine*) 50-80', long soft blue-green needles; Zones 2-5

Pseudotsuga menziesii (*Douglas Fir*) 40-80', blue-green foliage, drooping branches; Zones 3-5

C Amelanchier canadensis 'Glennform' (*Rainbow Pillar Serviceberry PP9092*) 20', upright, white flowers in spring, blue berries, red-orange fall color; Zones 4-8

ALTERNATE PLANTS

Malus 'Mazam' (*Madonna Crab PP6672*) 15-18', upright, double white flowers, gold to red fruit; Zones 4-7

Viburnum lentago (*Nannyberry Viburnum*) 20', upright vase shape, white flowers, blue-black fruit, shiny green leaves turn purple-red in fall; Zones 2-8

D Aronia arbutifolia 'Brilliantissima' (*Brilliant Red Chokeberry*) 6-9', upright, white fragrant flowers in spring, red fruit into winter, red fall color; Zones 4-8

ALTERNATE PLANTS

Caragana frutex globosa (*Globe Caragana*) 4-6', globe caragana grafted onto a standard, yellow flowers in spring, deep blue-green foliage; Zones 2-7

Viburnum dentatum 'Christom' (*Blue Muffin Arrowwood Viburnum*) 5-7', upright rounded, white flowers, blue-black fruit, glossy green foliage; Zones 3-9

E Juniperus scopulorum 'Welchii' (*Welch Juniper*) 10-12', upright, blue-green color; Zones 3-7

ALTERNATE PLANTS

Taxus cuspidate 'Hicksii' (*Hicks Yew*) trim to 8' or desired height, dark green needles; Zones 4-7

Thuja occidentalis 'Smaragd' (*Emerald Arborvitae*) 10-15', emerald green foliage; Zones 5-8

F Aronia melanocarpa 'Autumn Magic' (*Autumn Magic Black Chokeberry*) 3-5', fragrant white flowers in spring, clusters of black fruit into winter, red and purple fall color; Zones 3-7

ALTERNATE PLANTS

Hydrangea aborescens 'Annabelle' (*Annabelle Hydrangea*) 4', large white clusters of flowers much of the summer; Zones 3-9

Taxus x media 'Dark Green' (*Dark Green Yew*) 3-5', dark green foliage; Zones 4-7

G Ilex glabra 'Nordic' (*Inkberry*) 4', compact and rounded, deep green through winter, creamy flowers in spring; Zones 5-9

ALTERNATE PLANTS

Syringa meyeri 'Palibin' (*Dwarf Korean Lilac*) 3-5', fragrant pale lilac flowers in spring; Zones 3-7

Symphoricarpos albus (*Common Snowberry*) 3-6', arching branches, bushy and rounded, pinkish flowers in early summer, white fruit into winter; Zones 3-7

H Juniperus horizontalis 'Plumosa Compacta' (*Creeping Juniper*) 18', flat spreading, gray-green foliage turns light purple in winter; Zones 3-8

ALTERNATE PLANTS

Juniperus sabina 'Arcadia' (*Arcadia Juniper*) 12-18", rich green and lacy; Zones 3-7

Microbiota decussata (*Russian Cypress*) 12", bright green turning bronze in winter; Zones 3-9

I Cotoneaster apiculatus (*Cranberry Cotoneaster*) 2-3' mounded, dark green foliage, bronze-red fall color, pink flowers in summer, red fruit into winter; Zones 4-7

ALTERNATE PLANTS

Potentilla fruticosa 'McKay's White' (*McKay's White Potentilla*) 2 to 2 1/2', soft green, white flowers; Zones 2-7

Vaccinium angustifolium (*Lowbush Blueberry*) 6-24", dark blue-green foliage is scarlet in fall, blue fruit; Zones 2-5(6)

J Perennials or ground cover may include hosta, ferns, brunnera, and heuchera

K Annuals of choice with spring bulbs

SOUTHWEST

A *Celtis occidentalis* (*Common Hackberry*) 50', rounded, bright green turning soft yellow in fall, corky bark; Zones 2-7

ALTERNATE PLANTS

Fraxinus texensis (*Texas Ash*) 50', red, gold, or purple fall color, winged samaras; Zones 5-8

Gleditsia triacanthos var. inermis 'Shademaster' (*Shademaster Honeylocust*) 50-60', dark green leaves, ascending branches, yellow-green fall color, thornless and fruitless; Zones 4-7

B *Cupressocyparis leylandii* (*Leyland Cypress*) 60-70', feathery blue-green foliage; Zones 6-10

ALTERNATE PLANTS

Cupressus arizonica (*Arizona Cypress*) 40-50', green to gray-green foliage; Zones 7-9

Pinus sylvestris (*Scotch Pine*) 45', blue-green needles; Zones 3-8

C *Chilopsis linearis* (*Desert Willow*) 15-20', upright, rich green, flowers on new growth in later summer, fragrant blooms range from pink, white, and rose to lavender; Zones 7-9

ALTERNATE PLANTS

Crataegus crusgalli 'Cruzam' (*Crusader Hawthorn*) 15', rounded, glossy green foliage, white flowers, dark red fruit, thornless; Zones 4-7

Vitex negundo (*Chastetree*) 15-20', vase shape, blue-purple to lavender flowers; Zones 6-8

D *Caragana frutex caragana* (*Globe Caragana*) 4-6', globe caragana grafted to 3' standard, yellow flowers, deep blue-green foliage; Zones 2-7

ALTERNATE PLANTS

Hibiscus syriacus (*Rose of Sharon*) 8-10', upright, large rose, red, pink, or white flowers; Zones 5-10

Morus alba 'Pendula' (*Weeping Mulberry*) twisted habit with pendulous habit; Zones 5-8(9)

E *Juniperus scopulorum 'Blue Trail'* (*Blue Trail Juniper*) 12-20', bright silvery blue foliage; Zones 3-7

ALTERNATE PLANTS

Juniperus scopulorum 'Medora' (*Medora Juniper*) 10-12' blue-green color; Zones 3-7

Juniperus scopulorum 'Welchii' (*Welch Juniper*) 10-12', conical shape, blue-green color with silvery new growth; Zones 3-7

F *Anisacanthus thurberi* (*Hummingbird Trumpet*) 3-5', red honeysuckle-like flowers; Zones 6-10

ALTERNATE PLANTS

Cotoneaster apiculatus (*Cranberry Cotoneaster*) 2-3', densely mounded, pink flowers, red fruit into winter, dark green leaves turn bronze-red in fall; Zones 5-7

Prunus besseyi (*Western Sandcherry*) 4', spreading, gray-green leaves, white flowers, sweet purple-black fruit; Zones 3-6

G *Philadelphus microphyllus* (*Littleleaf Mockorange*) 4', small dark green leaves, pure white flowers are very fragrant; Zones 6-9

ALTERNATE PLANTS

Rhus triloba (*Skunkbush Sumac*) 3-6', bright green foliage turns yellow-orange-scarlet in fall; Zones 4-6

Syringa patula 'Miss Kim' (*Korean Lilac*) 4-6', fragrant lilac flowers; Zones 3-7

H *Juniperus horizontalis 'Compact'* (*Andorra Compact Juniper*) 18", light green foliage turns plum in fall and winter; Zones 3-8

ALTERNATE PLANTS

Juniperus horizontalis 'Blue Chip' (*Blue Chip Juniper*) 10" prostrate, blue all season; Zones 3-8

Juniperus sabina 'Broadmoor' (*Broadmoor Juniper*) 12" rich green color with slight blue cast; Zones 3-7

I *Cotoneaster salicifolius 'Repens'* (*Dwarf Willowleaf Cotoneaster*) 6", dark green turning red in fall foliage; Zones 6-7

ALTERNATE PLANTS

Spirea x bumalda 'Crispa' (*Crisp Leaf Spirea*) 2-3', pink flowers, reddish crinkled foliage; Zones 4-8

Spirea japonica 'Mertyann' (*Dakota Goldcharm Spirea*) 18", low mounded, bright pink flowers, yellow foliage with red tips; Zones 4-8

J Perennials or ground covers such as sedums**K** Annuals of choice

SOUTHEAST

A *Liriodendron tulipifera* (*Tuliptree*) 70-90' greenish yellow tulip-shaped flowers, broad leaves, conelike fruit into winter; Zones 4-9

ALTERNATE PLANTS

Q *Quercus alba* (*White Oak*) 60-80', glossy green foliage, purple-red fall color; Zones 3b-9

Q *Quercus stellata* (*Post Oak*) 40-50', dark green lobed foliage, small acorns; Zones 5-9

B *Cupressus arizonica* (*Arizona Cypress*) 40-50' blue-green foliage, red brown bark; Zones 7-9

ALTERNATE PLANTS

P *Pinus taeda* (*Loblolly Pine*) 60-90', dark green turning yellowish with cold, loosely pyramidal to open form; Zones 6-9

T *Taxodium distichum* (*Baldcypress*) 50-70', sage green in summer, deciduous conifer; Zones 4-11

C *Acer buergerianum* (*Trident Maple*) 20', rounded, foliage is glossy green with pale undersides, red-orange fall color; Zones 6b-8b

ALTERNATE PLANTS

L *Laburnum anagyroides 'Columnaris'* (*Columnar Goldenchain tree*) 20', narrow upright, dark green foliage, bright yellow clusters of flowers; Zones 5-7 (not for Deep South)

M *Magnolia stellata 'Royal Star'* (*Royal Star Magnolia*) 10', upright, double white flowers in spring, yellow fall color; Zones 5-8(9)

D *Amelanchier arborea 'Spring Glory'* (*Serviceberry*) 8-10', compact columnar form, white flower and bright orange fall color; Zones 4-9

ALTERNATE PLANTS

I *Ilex crenata 'Compacta'* (*Boxleaf Holly*) 6', dark green flat leaves, black fruit, light green flowers; Zones 5-6

L *Lindera benzoin* (*Spicebush*) 6-12', light green foliage, yellow flowers, scarlet drupes; Zones 4-9

E *Juniperus virginiana 'Glauca'* (*White Redcedar*) to 25', upright, narrow, silver-blue foliage; Zones 3b-9

ALTERNATE PLANTS

L *Ligustrum japonicum* (*Japanese Privet*) 6-12', upright habit, evergreen, fragrant creamy white flowers, black fruit; Zones 6-10

T *Taxus cuspidata 'Hicksii'* (*Hicks Yew*) 8-10', columnar, dark green, shear at desired height; Zones 4-8

F *Abelia x grandiflora* (*Glossy Abelia*) 3-6', lustrous dark green foliage, fragrant white-flushed pink flowers; Zones 6-9

ALTERNATE PLANTS

C *Clethra alnifolia* (*Summersweet*) 4-6', fragrant flowers in white or pink late summer; Zones 5-9

I *Itea virginica* (*Virginia Sweetspire*) 3-5' lightly fragrant white flowers; Zones 5-9

G *Dirca palustris* (*Leatherwood*) 4-6', light green leaves, pale yellow flowers; Zones 4-9

ALTERNATE PLANTS

H *Hydrangea macrophylla* (*Bigleaf Hydrangea*) 3-6', pink or blue flowers; Zones 6-9

S *Spirea thunbergii 'Fujino'* (*Fujino Spirea*) 3-6', arching, light pink buds open white with a pink edge, yellow fall color; Zones 4-8

H *Jasminum parkeri* (*Parker Jasmine*) 12", evergreen, dark green with yellow flowers; Zones 8-10

ALTERNATE PLANTS

J *Juniperus horizontalis 'Compacta'* (*Andorra Compact Juniper*) 18", light green with plum winter color; Zones 3-8

N *Nandina domestica 'Nana'* (*Dwarf Nandina*) 2', stiff leafy mound; Zones 6-9

L *Leucothoe axillaries* (*Dog-Hobble*) 2-4', lustrous dark green with lighter undersides, white flowers; Zones 5-8

ALTERNATE PLANTS

S *Spirea japonica 'Little Princess'* (*Little Princess Spirea*) 2 to 2 1/2', mounded, mint green foliage, pink flowers in summer, dark red fall colors; Zones 3-8

S *Spirea x bumalda 'Coccinea'* (*Dwarf Red Flowering Spirea*) 2-3', rounded, blue-green foliage, red flowers; Zones 4-8

J Perennials or ground cover such as **hypericum**, **liriope**, or **santolina**

K Annuals of choice

Before You Begin. Preparation is the key to creating a garden that will offer a lifetime of pleasure. Before you head to the nursery or lift a spade, take the time to review all garden plan materials. Ask yourself the following questions:

- **Do I have a suitable location for this plan?** The layout diagram shows the dimensions for the plan as designed. In general, you can enlarge or reduce the size of the garden by adding or eliminating plants, although the character of the garden may change if you alter the size dramatically.
- **Does my yard offer the right conditions?** Check the plant list carefully to see whether the plan will do best in full sun, partial shade, or full shade. Also make sure that the plants are suited to your USDA Growing Zone. (In many cases, the alternative plants list includes varieties that will grow in other zones.)
- **Does my soil need improvement?** Most plants will survive in a variety of soil conditions, but well-drained, moist (but not soaked) soil is generally best. To test your soil, wet it thoroughly with a hose, wait 24 hours, then squeeze a clump in your hand. If the soil forms a ball that holds together, but breaks up easily when you poke it with your finger, your soil is ideal. If the soil won't hold its shape when squeezed, it is probably too sandy. If the clump doesn't break up easily, the soil may be too clay. In either case, you can improve your soil by mixing in organic matter like compost or peat moss.
- **Is my soil's pH and fertility okay?** Check at your local garden store for a soil test kit, or inquire about testing at a local county extension service office. Follow the recommendations that come with your test results if you need to correct the soil's pH (how acid or alkaline the soil is) or fertility.

Creating the Bed. To lay out your bed, use a garden hose to mark the edges. When you are satisfied with the layout, use striping paint (available at many home centers) to mark the outline. (Or, sprinkle flour along the hose for a more temporary mark.) Using a sharp spade, dig along the marked line to set the edge of your bed.

If the garden location is currently covered with lawn, you have a couple of options. For smaller areas, you can strip the sod using a straight-edged shovel. To make this easier, wet the area thoroughly, then use the shovel to cut the lawn into strips that are the width of the shovel and about three feet long. (Expert tip: Sharpen the edge of the shovel frequently with a file.) Use the shovel to pry up and roll back the strips of sod. Once the sod is removed, you can loosen the underlying soil with a shovel or a power tiller.

For larger areas covered by lawn, consider using a heavy-duty garden tiller to grind the sod into the underlying soil. This has the twin benefits of adding organic matter to the soil and eliminating the need to discard or compost sod.

Regardless of how you are preparing your bed, be sure to use this opportunity to mix in organic matter (such as compost, peat moss, or rotted manure) and loosen the soil at least 6 inches deep, or even 8 to 12 inches if you can. Don't mix in fertilizer unless your soil test shows a need; in general, excessive amounts of fertilizer will do more harm than good.

After your bed is prepared, water it thoroughly and wait a week. This will allow some weed seeds to germinate. Remove these seedlings or dig them back into the soil. If you choose to use chemicals to kill the weeds, follow the instructions to the letter, including the time to wait after application before planting.

Edging. Most beds are easier to maintain if they have an edging that keeps surrounding grass or vegetation from invading. Choose plastic, metal, stone, or brick -- whatever you prefer. If you have lawn around your bed, consider also including a mowing strip, a 6- to 12-inch-wide swath of masonry or stone set even with the surrounding soil.

Planting. Now comes the fun part! If you have all of your plants on hand, keep them in their pots and set them out on the planting bed. This will give you a preview of how the bed will look and allow you to make adjustments. Use the tags that come with the plants to ensure that the spacing is correct. Don't worry that the bed looks sparse; the young plants need room to grow.

When you're satisfied with the arrangement, plant your garden from largest to smallest container (usually trees first, then shrubs, perennials, and finally annuals). Each plant type does best with a specific planting method:

- **Trees.** Dig a hole that is slightly larger than the pot or root ball and deep enough so the top of the root ball or pot is slightly higher than the surrounding soil. For potted trees, remove the tree from the pot, loosen the soil slightly around the roots, then place the tree into the planting hole. For balled-and-burlapped trees, loosen the burlap after the tree is in the hole, cutting away as much of the burlap as possible. When the tree is in place and straight, fill the hole one-third with soil, tamp firmly to make good contact between roots and soil, then water. Repeat twice more until the hole is filled. Make a shallow collar of soil around the hole to catch water and hold it near the root zone. Water the tree thoroughly by letting a hose run slowly for 30 minutes.
- **Shrubs.** Plant shrubs in a hole that's about twice the diameter of the root ball. The top of the root ball should be slightly above the surrounding soil level. Backfill with garden soil, tamping firmly to ensure a contact between soil and roots. Water immediately by slowly running a hose at the shrub's base for about 20 minutes.
- **Perennials and Annuals.** Set these plants in soil at the same level they were growing in the pot. Firm the soil around each plant with your hands, then water thoroughly.

Mulching. As you place each plant, it's a good idea to add mulch to conserve moisture, cool the roots of plants, and protect the soil from washing away in the rain. Organic mulches like shredded bark will require periodic additions as the mulch decays. Mulches like crushed stone are more permanent, but may not offer the character you prefer.

Aftercare. The first season of growth is the most critical for your garden. A good guideline is to water thoroughly every other day for the first two weeks, then twice weekly for the remainder of the first season. The following year, you can let nature take its course, supplementing dry periods with deep watering.

You should also be diligent about weeding your bed during the first year. As the plants mature and fill in, there will be fewer opportunities for weeds to gain a foothold. A thick layer of mulch will also help keep weeds in check.

Ongoing Maintenance. Most plants will thrive with only minimal care. Apply a general fertilizer according to package directions in the spring after growth has started. If you need to prune trees or shrubs to maintain their shape or size, do it in late winter before growth has started. The exception to this general rule is spring-flowering shrubs like lilacs that should be pruned immediately after flowering.