Wildlife Landscape Planning

After learning about the four habitat components needed by wildlife – space, food, water and shelter- you are ready to begin planning your wildlife landscape. Your habitat design plan should benefit wildlife and be compatible with the needs of your home and property. These steps will vary for each individual. Many people already have completed habitat areas on their property. Utilize whichever steps pertain to you and, most importantly, have fun.

5 Steps for Wildlife Landscaping

Site Selection

This step is probably completed since you already have a yard, a porch or some other area that you are planning to utilize as wildlife habitat. However, what part of the yard you will use may be in question. Does it provide water, food, and shelter? In the summer, will there be shade for wildlife to seek relief from the heat? If you are hoping for a butterfly garden, is it in a sunny spot that is protected from the wind? In this stage of planning, it is time to bring together all of these considerations.

Site Analysis

Inventory and evaluate the features already present on your site. This is an inventory of the insects, birds, small mammals, amphibians and reptiles that are present in your neighborhood as well as a map of your backyard including physical structures and vegetation and other features. This evaluation will be an on-going process. As you add habitat to your yard, you could begin to notice wildlife that you did not previous know lived in your area.

Rough Plan

With your map of what is already present, the next step is the rough plan of your ideal wildlife garden. Try out different configurations of the habitat features you hope to create in your garden, and see how they all fit together. For some people this will entail creating areas to compliment what habitat is already available in their yard.

Final Plan

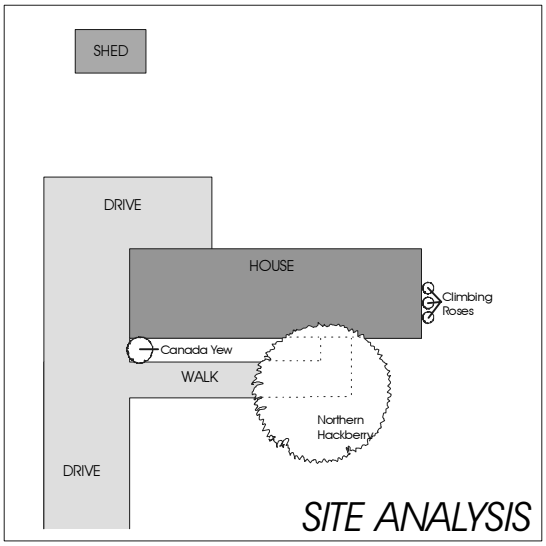
Now you are ready to draw up your final plan. Graph paper can be very useful for this task because it will keep your ideas to scale, which will give you a good idea of how the features fit in relation to one another. Add your list of plant names to this final plan, and you are ready to begin!

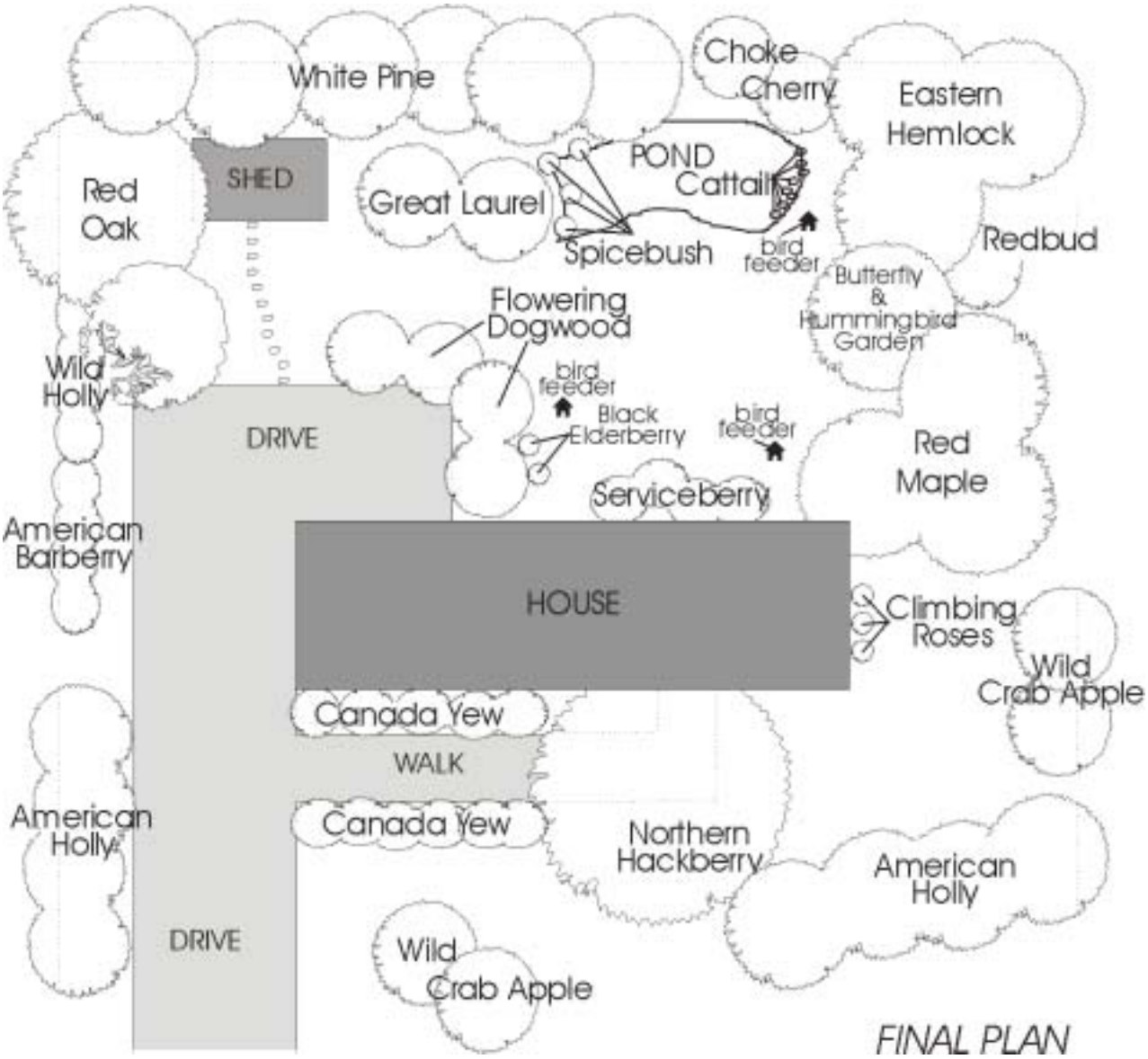
Building Your Garden

With your final plan in hand, you are ready to start creating or adding to your Wild Yard. Remember that creating habitat areas is a never-ending process, so be patient. Eventually you will see all the rewards of your hard work.

Examples of Site Analysis and Final Plan:

This ambitious plan shows how a plain, unplanted quarter of an acre yard can be turned into a wildlife haven. Make sure to select food bearing plants that provide a maximum variety of foliage, fruiting times and staggered heights. Also remember to provide water for your wildlife visitors.





Trees and Shrubs Used in Example Final Plan

Height	Common Name	Scientific Name
Trees		
60-80ft	Eastern white pine	*Pinus strobus*
40-60ft	Red oak	*Quercus rubra*
50ft	Red maple	*Acer rubrum*
50ft	American holly	*Ilex opaca*
35-60ft	Eastern hemlock	*Tsuga canadensis*
30-50ft	Black cherry	*Prunus serotina*
40ft	Northern hackberry	*Celtis occidentalis*
20ft	Choke cherry	*Prunus virginiana*
20ft	Common serviceberry	*Amelanchier arborea*
20ft	Redbud	*Cercis canadensis*
15-30ft	Wild crab apple	*Malus coronaria*
15-20ft	Flowering dogwood	*Cornus florida*
12ft	Spicebush	*Lindera benzoin*
12ft	Rhododendron	*Rhododendron maximum*
Shrubs & Others		
8ft	Black elderberry	*Sambucus canadensis*
8ft	Wild holly	*Nemopanthus mucronatus*
8ft	Climbing rose	*Rosa spp.*
5ft	Canada yew	*Taxus canadensis*
4-8ft	Cattail	*Typha latifolia*
3-4ft	American barberry	*Berberis canadensis*

(For Butterfly & Hummingbird Garden: see separate handouts)

General Landscaping Rules:

❖ Your new habitat should make caring for your yard easier. Creating backyard habitat by replacing part of your lawn with native species not only provides habitat, but it is less expensive and easier to maintain. Less lawn makes less mowing. And many native plants are hardy and drought-resistant so they need little or no water.

❖ Plant a variety of native evergreen and deciduous trees along the perimeters of your property. These will simulate a forest canopy and provide food, nest sites and protective cover for wildlife. They also will screen your property from streets and other properties as well as shade your house from the sun in the summer.

❖ Plant smaller flowering trees in clusters, not rows, near tall trees to begin an understory.

❖ Protective and food-producing shrubs and ground covers should be planted around the smaller trees. These will also provide shelter areas for ground-feeding birds and mammals.

❖ Nature tends to arrange in random, disorderly ways and your garden will be most successful if you incorporate design features of randomness.

Reminder:

A necessary part of landscape planning is developing a time schedule and a budget. Time is needed to develop a successful garden and your budget may play a deciding role in your wildlife landscape. You might want to plan to do a little planting each year until you have realized your desired wildscape.