



Tips and Tricks
for
Successful Xeriscaping

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Our Goals:

Introduce you to some great plants for Colorado



Inspire you to spend time in your garden

Schools of Thought

Dryland gardening

Purist level – no additional water – little to no soil amendments – use only native and adapted plants for your local growing environment.



Water wise and adaptable gardening

Xeriscape principles for plant selection

- 1) Planning and design
- 2) Soil improvements
- 3) Efficient irrigation
- 4) Right Plant - Right Place - Hydrozone
- 5) Mulch
- 6) Limit Turf – have room for more plants!
- 7) Appropriate Maintenance



Xeriscape Colorado
Colorado WaterWise
Council

Xeriscape Principle

1. Planning and Design

- Create a base map – to scale drawing showing existing features on your site
- Identify goals for the site
- Develop a planting plan adaptable to the location

Function – Goals for the Site

- ❖ Family needs
- ❖ Maintenance
- ❖ Provide shade
- ❖ Create beauty
- ❖ Create focal points
- ❖ Frame views
- ❖ Screen views or wind
- ❖ Create enclosure

Environmental Conditions

Location – Location - Location

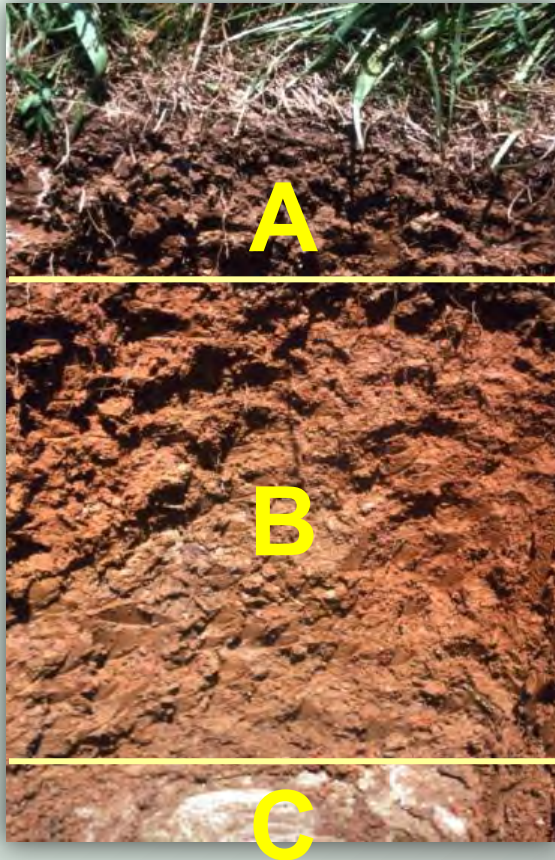
- ❖ Connect the site with surroundings (Think habitat)
- ❖ Identify Micro climates (protected sites)
- ❖ Topography (Terrain – slopes)
- ❖ Soil composition
- ❖ Sun exposure
- ❖ Wind exposure
- ❖ Access to water

Xeriscape Principle

2. Soil improvements

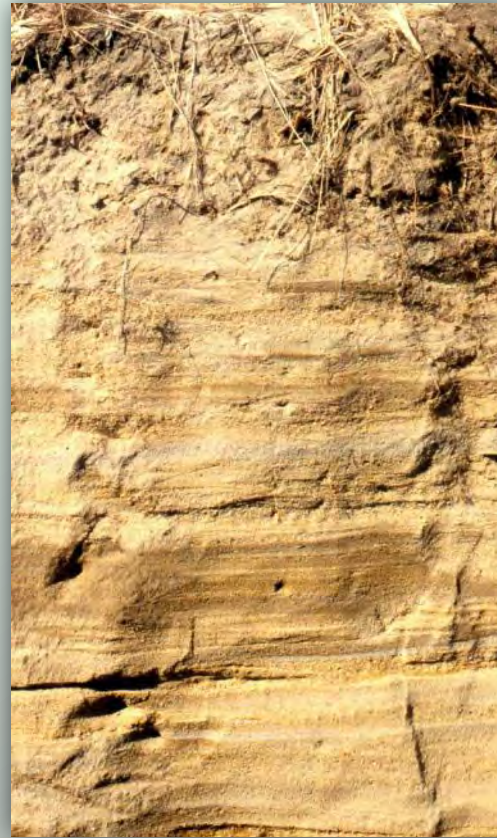
- Soil test or visual inspection
- Amend soil as necessary with organic matter and or squeegee
- Most important loosen compacted soil and improve drainage

Undisturbed Native Soil



A living, self-sustaining system

Compacted, Unamended Landscape soil



- ✓ Mixed horizons
- ✓ Loss of OM
- ✓ Compaction
- ✓ Poor aeration & water infiltration
- ✓ Few organisms

“Dead dirt”, needs help to grow plants

Xeriscape Principle

3. Efficient Irrigation

- Zone turf areas separately
- Use drip irrigation where possible for shrub beds
- Water deeply and infrequently to develop deep roots
- Water between 9pm and 9am – best in early morning

4. Right Plant Right Place

Hydrozoning of Plants

- Group like water need plants together

Tools of the Trade

WaterWise Landscaping with Trees, Shrubs and Vines Jim Knopf, Chamisa Books

- **H - High Water need**

Ex: Bluegrass turf – always wet on surface

Uses 18-20 gals./s.f./season = 1.5 inches of water, once per week (in July)

- **M - Moderate Water need**

Ex: turf type Tall Fescue – ½ the water of Bluegrass turf

Uses 10 gal./S.F./season = ¾ inches of water, once per week

- **L - Low Water need**

Ex: Buffalo grass turf – needs rain and occasional watering

Uses 0-3 gals./S.F./season = ½ inch of water per 2 weeks, optional

- **VL - Very Low Water need**

Ex: too dry for any turf grass (drier than Denver) no irrigation required

Xeriscape Principle

5 Mulches

- Keeps roots cool
- Minimizes evaporation
- Reduces weed growth
- Gives beds a finished look
- Weed barrier or not.....
- Bark - vs – rock

6 Turf Alternatives

- Minimize irrigated turf areas
- Make room for more interesting plants.....



Combination rock and bark



Shredded cedar mulch



Pea gravel

Xeriscape Principle

7. Appropriate maintenance

All Landscapes need maintenance.....

- Watering
- Pruning
- Weeding
- Fertilizing
- Pest control



Example Garden Design

Our goals:

- Build a wind and privacy screen
- Create an attractive view from living room window
- Extend outdoor entertaining space
- Use native and low water plantings
- Use local materials
- Access from back yard to front yard

View of home

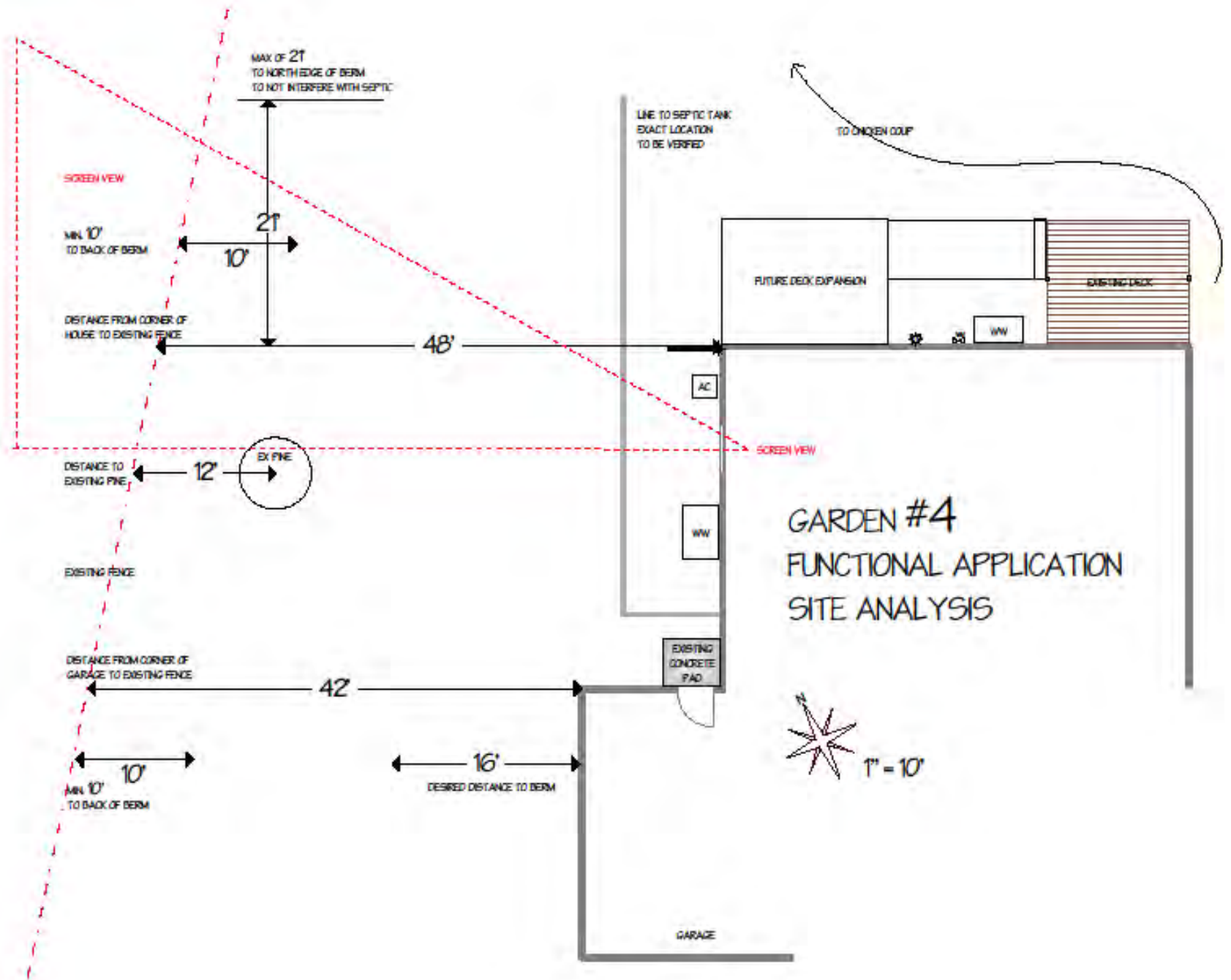


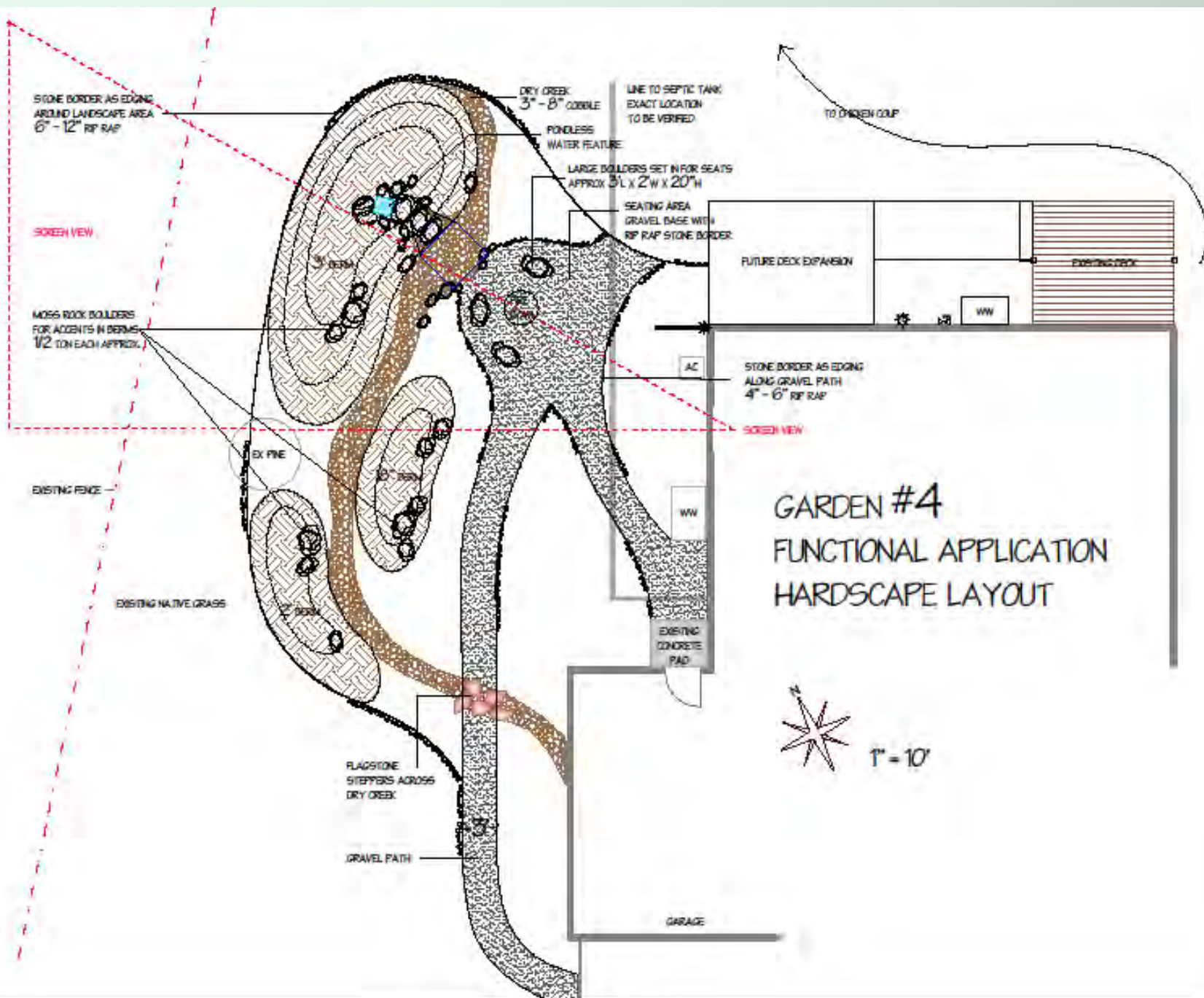
View out living room window

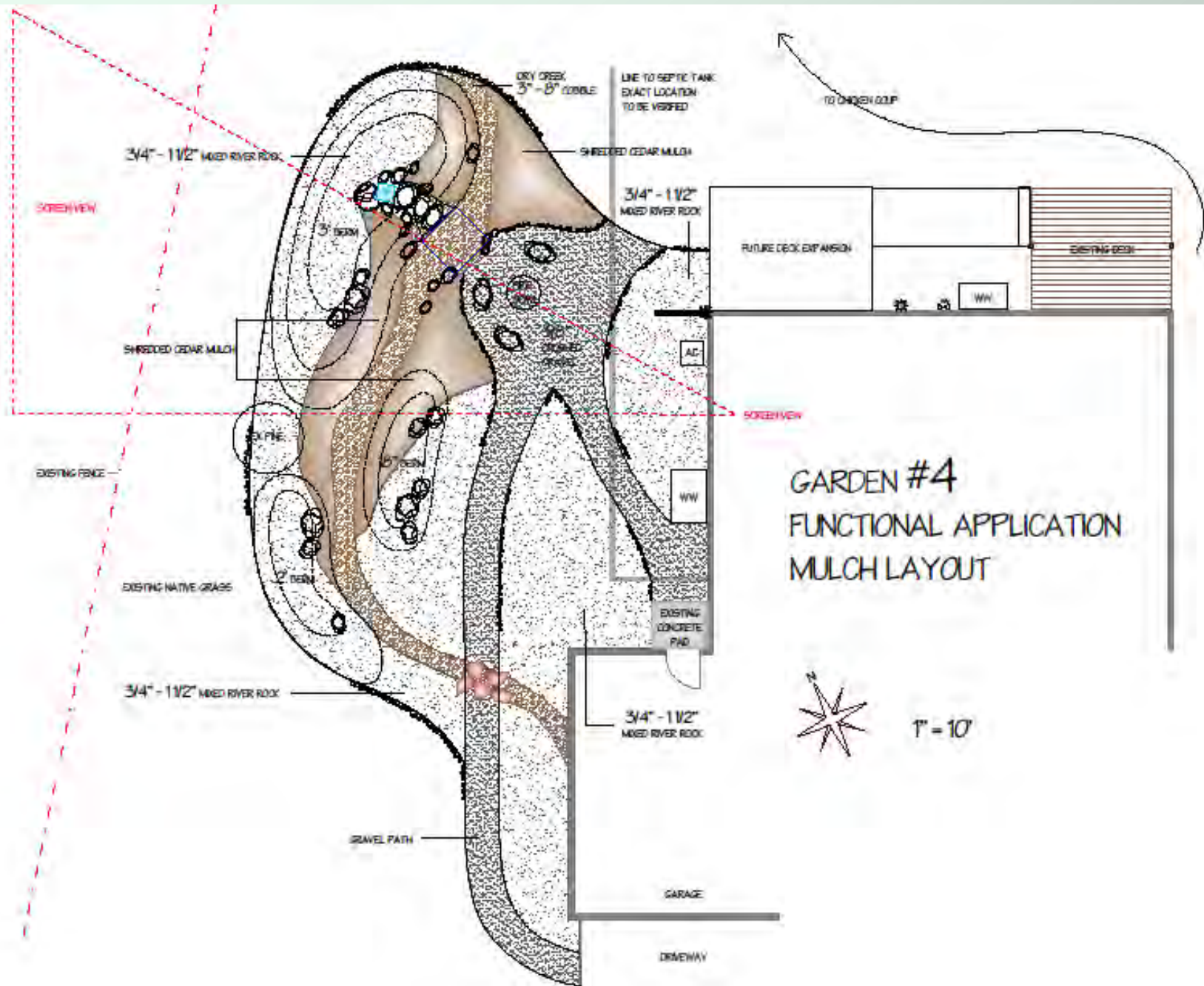


Area to screen for wind and privacy











LINE TO SEPTIC TANK
EXACT LOCATION
TO BE VERIFIED

TO DRIVEN GOLF

SCREEN VIEW

FUTURE DECK EXPANSION

EXISTING DECK

WW

SCREEN VIEW

EXISTING FENCE

EXISTING NATIVE GRASS

SMYRNE

WW

GARDEN # 4 FUNCTIONAL APPLICATION PLANTING DESIGN

EXISTING
CONCRETE
PAD

GRAVEL PATH

GARAGE

DRIVEWAY



1" = 10'



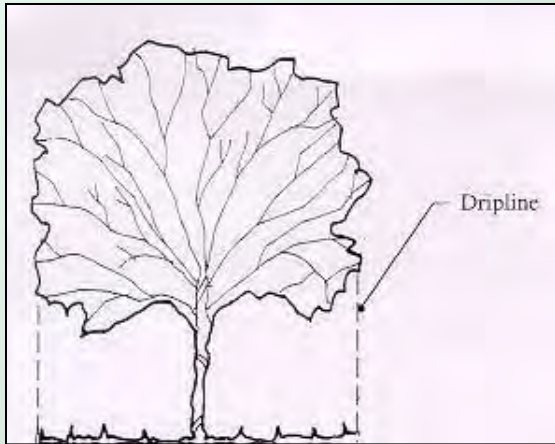


*Xeriscape Plants
For a Wind Screen and
Seasonal Beauty*



Watering for establishment

- Most tree roots are in the top 12” of the soil. Apply water within the drip line of the tree. Water deeply and slowly



- Newly planted trees will need to be watered 2 x per week for the first few weeks and you need to keep an eye on the tree and a finger in the soil to monitor the trees needs initially.
- Establishing shrubs, grasses and perennials is best done in spring or fall, and plants may require water daily for a few, then gradually reducing water to 1 to 2 times per week depending on the plant and the temperatures.

Xeriscape Plant Selection

Xeriscape embraces plants considered xeric or
Drought tolerant plants

- *Drought tolerance* - ability to withstand drought without dying
- *Drought resistance* ~~can~~ endure drought and still look good
- *Drought* is a subjective and relative term to the region you live in
- *Definition* - a long period of no rain or absence of rain



Consider the features of plants to create visual interest

Form

- Size of the plant
Balance and proportion
Plan for growth
- Shape of plant
Vary to create visual interest

Color and Texture

- Bark
- Foliage
Evergreen or Deciduous
- Fruit and berries
Persistent
Edible
- Seeds
Visual interest
Maintenance
- Flowers
Color

Form

Pyramidal

Vase

Mounding

Spreading



Bark



Foliage



Seasonal Changes



Berries



Seeds



Flowers



Xeric Plant Selection

Part 1

Woody Plants

Deciduous Trees

A large, spreading deciduous tree with green foliage, situated in a landscaped area with rocks and other plants. The background shows a body of water and a cloudy sky.

Bigtooth Maple

Acer grandidentatum



Tatarian Maple

Acer tataricum



Autumn Brilliance Serviceberry
Amelanchier x grandiflora
'Autumn Brilliance'



Western Catalpa

Catalpa speciosa



Gets tall, but stays fairly narrow. 50' H x 30' W

Russian Hawthorn

Crataegus ambigua



berries



form



winter

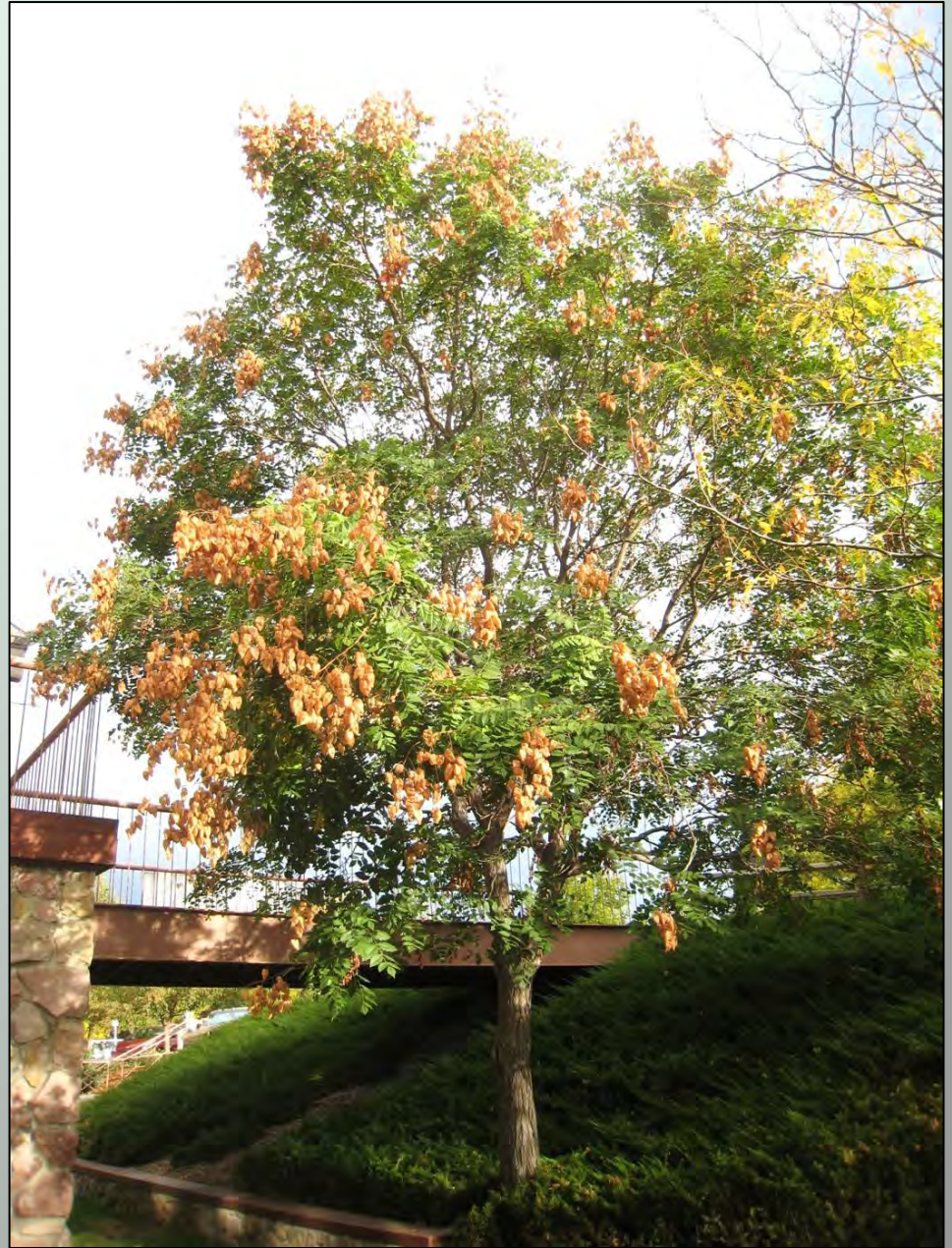
Thornless Cockspur Hawthorn

Crataegus crus-gali inermis



Goldenrain Tree

Koelreuteria paniculata



Wafer Ash
Ptelea trifoliata



Gambel Oak

Quercus gambelii



Evergreen Trees



Chinese Juniper Cultivars

Juniperus chinensis



Spartan Juniper



Rocky Mountain Juniper Cultivars

Juniperus scopulorum



Very drought tolerant



Cologreen Juniper



Wichita Blue Juniper



Woodward Columnar Juniper



Colorado Blue Spruce cultivars

Picea pungens



‘Pendula’



‘Montgomery’



‘Fastigata’

Columnar Evergreen Trees



Thompson Blue Spruce



Columnar Blue Spruce



Hoops Blue Spruce



Weeping White Spruce

Columnar Evergreen Trees



Arnold Sentinal
Austrian Pine



Iseli Fastigate
Bosnian Pine



Black Hills Spruce
(Requires a bit more moisture)



Columnar Norway Spruce
(needs some protection from
wind, N or NE side of home
requires more moisture)



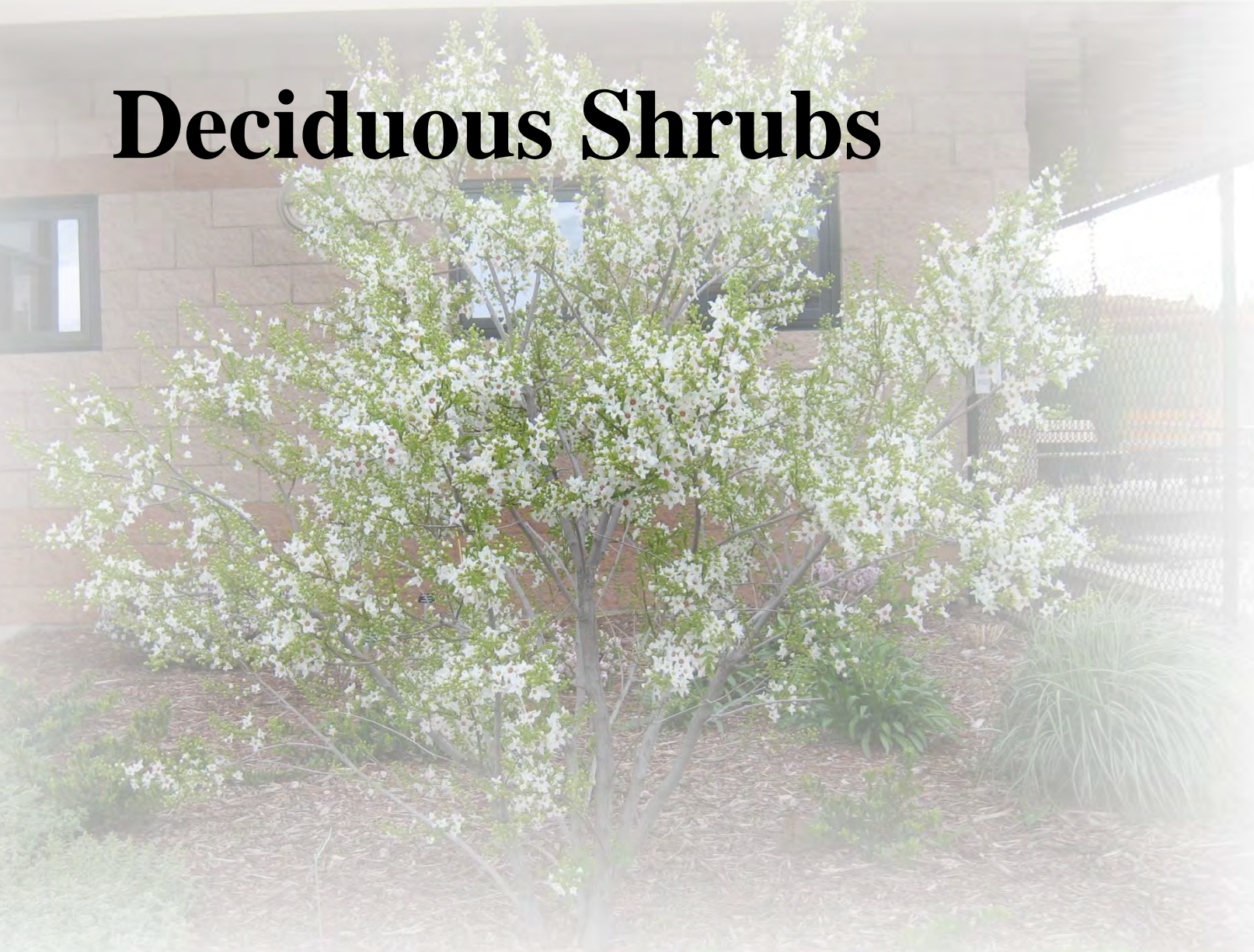
Ponderosa Pine Cultivars



'Mary Ann Heacock'
Dwarf Ponderosa Pine



Deciduous Shrubs



Saskatoon Serviceberry

Amelanchier alnifolia



Dwarf Leadplant

Amorpha nana



Tidy Peashrub

Caragana microphylla 'Tidy'



Fernbush

Chamaebatiaria millifolium



Carol Mackie Daphne

Daphne x burkwoodi 'Carol Mackie'





Rock Spirea

Holodiscus dumosus



Photo credit Sally
Guthart
Earthborn Landscape

Summer Wine Ninebark

Physocarpus opulifolius 'Seward'



Pawnee Buttes Sandcherry

Prunus besseyi 'Pawnee Buttes'



Fernleaf Buckthorn

Rhamnus frangula 'Asplenifolia'





Golden Current
Ribes aureum



Yellowhorn
Xanthocercus sorbifolium



Evergreen Shrubs



‘Panchito’ Manzanita
Arctostaphylos coloradoensis



Curl-Leaf Mountain Mahogany

Cercocarpus ledifolius



Bluestem Joint Fir
Ephedra equisetina



Common Juniper
Juniperus communis



'Blueberry delight'



Yucca spp.



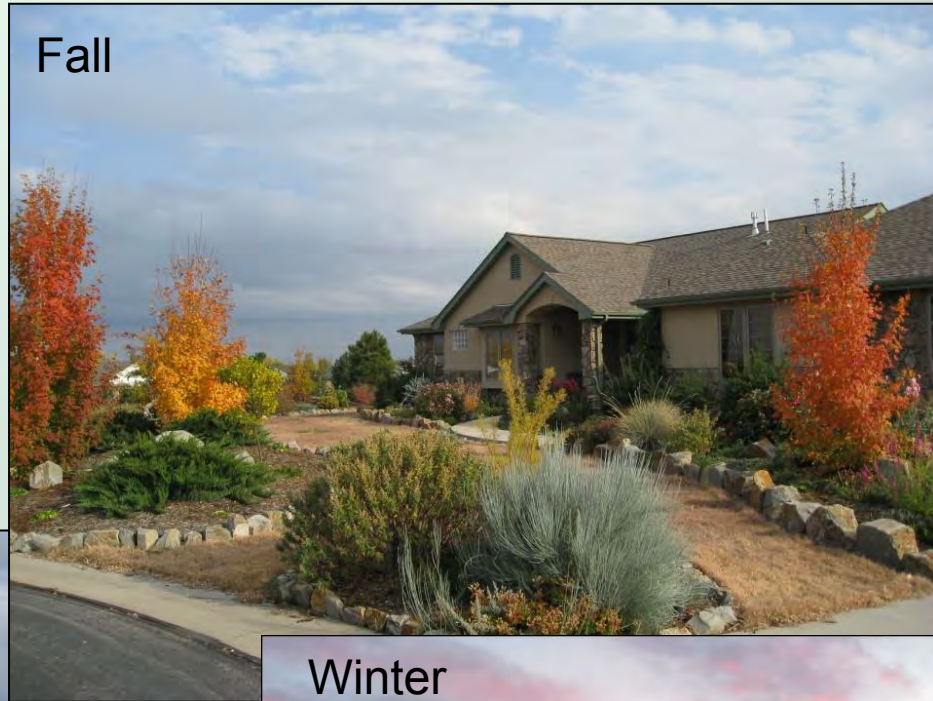
Banana Yucca



Red Yucca

Through the
Seasons
Clark yard

Fall



Summer



Winter



A photograph of a field of tall, thin grasses with several purple flowers. The grasses are a mix of green and yellowish-brown, suggesting some are dry. The purple flowers are scattered throughout the field, with a few in the foreground and others in the background. The overall scene is a natural, outdoor setting.

Xeric Plants

Part 2

Grasses and Perennials

HERBACEOUS PLANTS

(GRASSES AND PERENNIALS)

Plants that do not produce woody tissue and generally die back at the end of each growing season. Herbaceous plants survive the winter season as dormant underground structures.



ORNAMENTAL GRASSES

Why Plant Ornamental Grasses?



Ornamental Grass - Basics

- *Clump-Forming vs Runners*
- *Cool-Season vs Warm-Season*
 - Cool-Season grasses start to grow as soon as the temperatures rise above freezing in the spring. They begin flowering in the early summer.
 - Warm-Season grasses grow in warm weather. They require warm soil temperatures for about 2 weeks before they start to grow.
- *Cutting Back Grasses*
 - Cool-Season grasses: cut back in the later winter
 - Warm-Season grasses: cut back in early to mid spring
- *Spacing Plants*
 - Clump-Formers: use individually or plant in groups
 - Runners: use for erosion control or as a ground cover

Big Bluestem Grass

Andropogon gerardii



Summer Flowers and Foliage



Fall Foliage



Winter Foliage

Overdam Variegated Feather Reed Grass

Calamagrostis x acutiflora 'Overdam'



Spring Foliage



Summer Flowers



Early Fall Seed Heads

Korean Feather Reed Grass

Calamagrostis brachytricha



Late Summer Flowers (PERC)

Northern Sea Oats

Chasmanthium latifolium



Blue Avena Grass

Helictotrichon sempervirens



Form



Summer Foliage (with Autumn Joy Sedum)

Photo credit: Anne Clark



Blue Avena Grass (with Autumn Joy Sedum) – Fall Colors

Mexican Feather Grass

Nassella tenuissima



Summer



Late Summer



Mexican Feather Grass – Late Winter Color and Form



Prairie Fire - Winter Seedheads

Switch Grass - variety

Panicum virgatum spp.



Northwind – Summer Foliage



Dallas Blues - Summer Flowers and Foliage

Dwarf Fountain Grass

Pennisetum alopecuroides 'Hameln'



Karly Rose Grass

Pennisetum orientale 'Karly Rose'



Late Winter Color and Form



Summer Flowers in the Early Morning Light



Summer Flowers – Denver Botanic Gardens

Blaze Little Bluestem Grass

Schizachyrium scoparium 'Blaze'

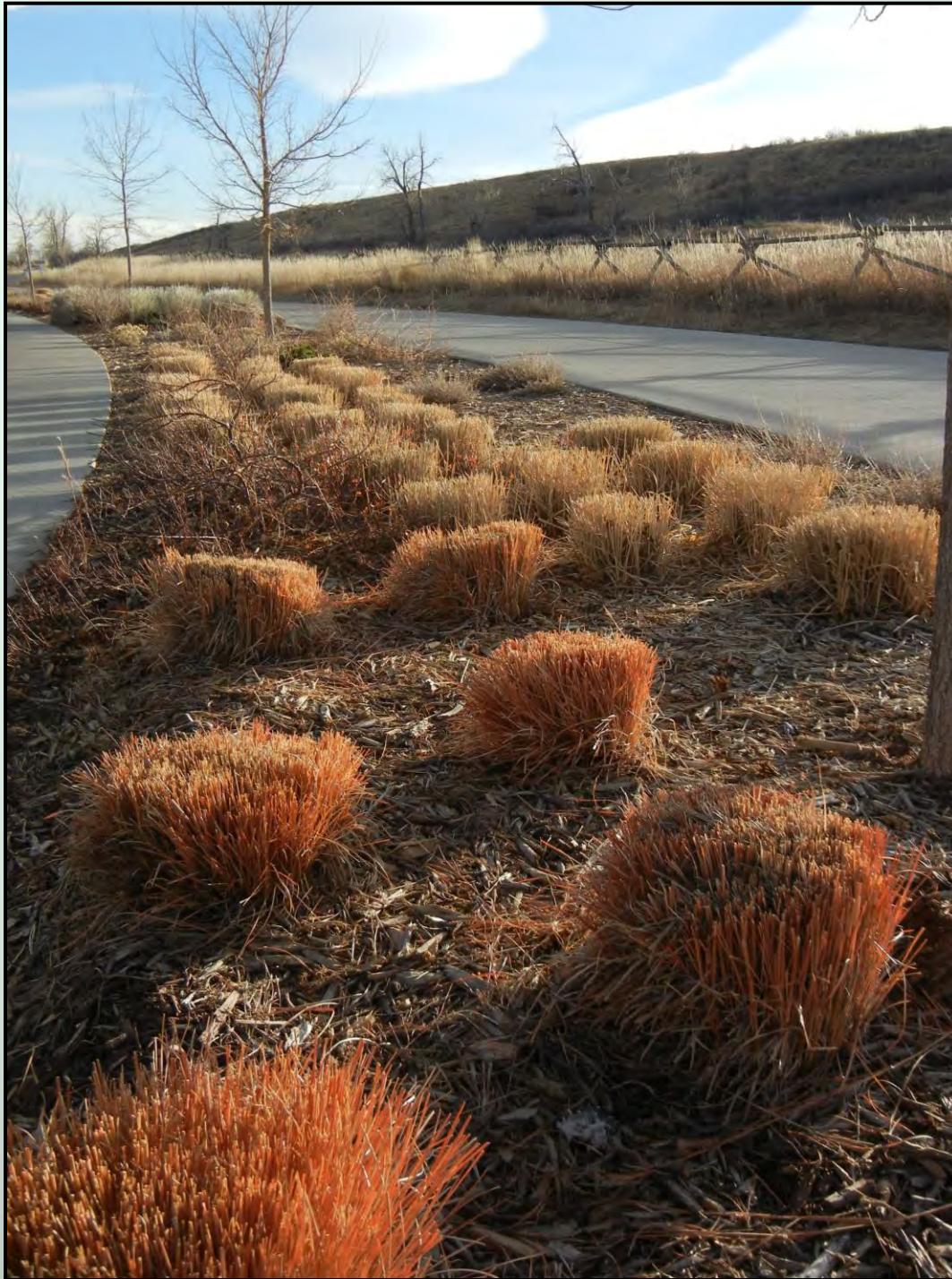


The Blues Little Bluestem

Schizachyrium scoparium 'The Blues'



Late Summer Color (shown with Black Jack Sedum)



What *NOT* to do...

Don't cut back ornamental grasses until late winter or early spring.

Prairie Dropseed Grass

Sporobolus heterolepis



A dense garden bed of flowers. The upper portion is filled with numerous small, vibrant blue bell-shaped flowers. In the foreground, there are several larger, white, daisy-like flowers with many thin, radiating petals. The background is softly blurred, suggesting a larger garden setting.

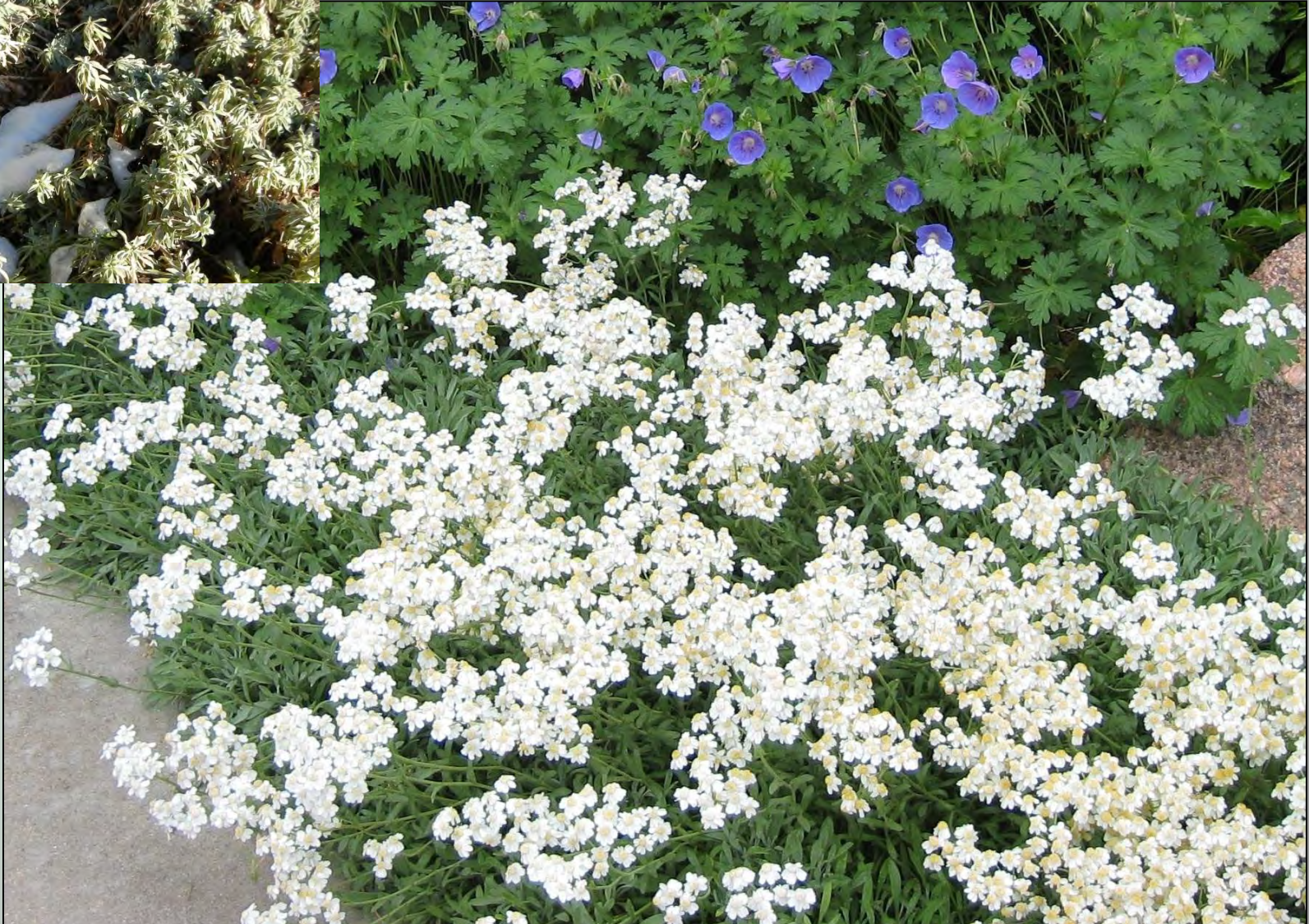
PERENNIALS

Serbian Yarrow

Achillea serbica



Winter Foliage



Spring Flowers and Foliage

Sunset Hyssop/Hummingbird Mint

Agastache rupestris



Foliage and Form – Early Fall



Hyssops Attract Bees, Butterflies and Hummingbirds

Sonoran Sunset Hyssop

Agastache cana 'Sonoran Sunset'



Orange Butterfly Weed

Asclepias tuberosa



Summer Flowers and Foliage



Fall – Seed Pods



Winter Form



Hardy Plumbago/Leadwort

Ceratostigma plumbaginoides



Late Summer Flowers and Foliage



Fall Foliage



Fall Flowers and Foliage

Ice Plant

Delosperma ssp.



Purple



Hardy Yellow



Lavender Ice

Mesa Verde Iceplant

Delosperma cooperi 'Kelaidis'



Purple Coneflower

Echinacea purpurea



Summer Flowers



Fall Texture



Winter Interest

Kannah Creek Buckwheat

Eriogonum umbellatum 'Kannah Creek'



Spring Flowers



Winter – Evergreen Foliage Changes to Burgundy



Summer – Flowers Age to Orange

Daylilies

Hemerocallis spp.



Prairie Blue Eyes Daylily



Happy Returns Daylily



Dwarf Red Spider Daylily



Joan Senior Daylily



Easy Ned Daylily



South Seas Daylily

Variegated Iris

Iris pallida 'Aurea Variegata' (white/green)



Iris pallida 'Argentea Variegata' (gold/green)

Spotted Dead Nettle, variety

Lamium maculatum



White Nancy



Beacon Silver



Orchid Frost



Pink Pewter



Golden Anniversary

Desert Four-O'Clock

Mirabilis multiflora



Penstemon Basics



- **Soil and Drainage** – Soil should drain freely and quickly to keep moisture away from the crown of the plant. Grow Penstemons in lean soil and go light on fertilizer.
- **Mulch** – Penstemons grow best in rock mulch. When using bark mulch pull it away from the crown of the plant.
- **Deadheading** – Let some of your Penstemons set seed by not cutting back the spent flowers. *The resulting seedlings will often live longer and be more durable than the parent plant.*
- **Cutting Down** – Do not cut down Penstemons in the fall - leave all growth intact until early or mid-spring. Old stems will help protect the plant's crown through the winter.

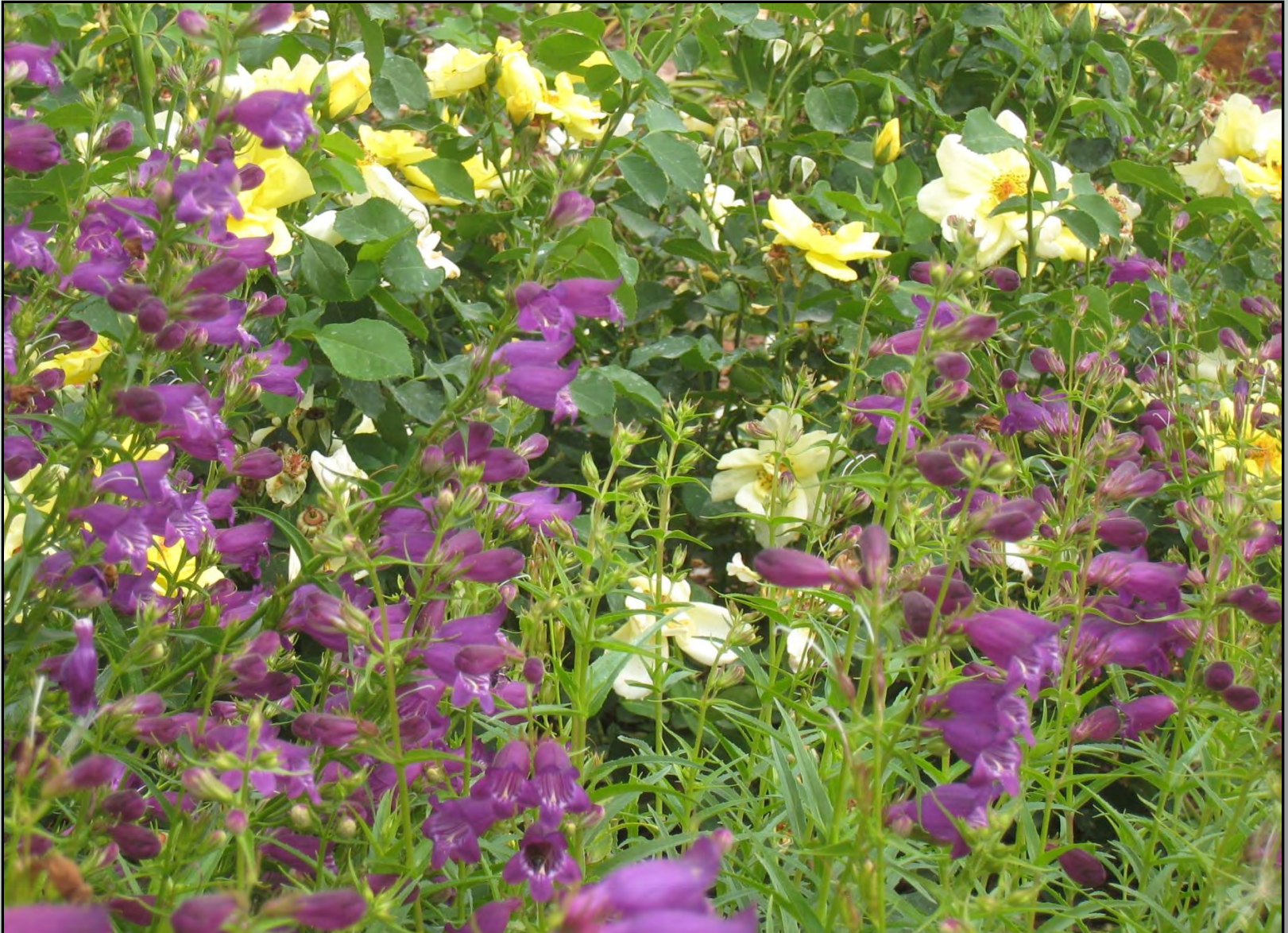
Firecracker Penstemon/Eaton's Penstemon

Penstemon eatonii



Pikes Peak Purple Penstemon

Penstemon x mexicale 'Pikes Peak Purple'



Pikes Peak Purple Penstemon – Summer (with Carefree Sunshine Roses)

Penstemon – variety

Penstemon spp.



Yellow Pineleaf Penstemon



Red Rocks Penstemon



Electric Blue Penstemon

Pasque Flower

Pulsatilla spp.



Autumn Fire Sedum

Sedum x 'Autumn Fire'



Spring Foliage



Late Summer/Fall Flowers



Winter Flowers and Form

Schubertii Ornamental Onion

Allium 'Schubertii'



Late Spring Flowers (shown with Caradonna Salvia)



Early Spring Growth



Late Spring Flowers

Spring Tips:

1. Clean up all debris.
2. Fertilize all plantings including turf with a slow release fertilizer in late spring. A good organic fertilizer is the brand Alpha One.
3. Water well if winter has been dry and cold.
4. Apply weed preventative treatment to beds and turf to minimize new weeds establishing in your yard. A good organic option is Corn Gluten. Apply in late March to early April.
5. Plan a vegetable garden to eat healthier and get more exercise. Plant cool season veggies by first of April, ie. peas, lettuce, spinach, radishes, carrots, broccoli, cabbage and onions.
6. Prune all shrubs and trees of any dead, broken or unwanted branches.

Summer Tips:

1. Stay on top of weeds, prevent new weeds by not letting them go to seed.
2. Adjust water according to the temperatures and moisture received from mother nature.
3. Spend time outdoors with you family and friends, have a BBQ or 2.
4. Prune early-flowering shrubs that bloom on old wood such as Forsythia, Lilac, Vanhoutte Spirea, immediately after flowering.
5. Plant a salsa garden or other warm season vegetables such as beans, cucumbers, and squash.
6. Make sure garden is well mulched to protect plants during the heat.
7. Deadhead perennials to encourage more flowers.

Fall Tips:

1. Add bulbs to the garden now for early spring bloom. Loosen compacted soils and amend areas to be planted.
2. Fall is a great time for planting, and many nurseries discount their plants.
3. Divide perennials with spreading root systems such as Iris, Coral Bells, Daylilies, Cranesbill and Peonies.
4. Fertilize your lawn but not your trees and shrubs. This is the most important time to fertilize your lawn to help it overwinter.

Winter Tips:

1. Winter water is important!
2. Water at least twice in late fall and again later in winter if season is dry. Water only when temperatures are above freezing and the soil is not frozen. Do it early in the day so the water has time to get to the roots before freezing at night.
3. Wrap the trunks of newly planted trees with tree wrap from the base to the first branch.
4. Mulch perennial beds with leaves, wood shavings or other materials to help retain soil moisture and insulate vulnerable roots.
5. Prune deciduous trees and shrubs in late fall or winter except early spring bloomers.

***What to do
with all this information....***

- Visit display gardens that feature Xeriscape plants
- Read inspiring books by passionate local gardeners
- Participate in local gardening classes
- Consult with a local nursery professional or a landscape designer for advise and planning

Be brave – and just do it!