



Helping Communities face the challenges and impacts of growth while maintaining their character and sense of place.

## Edible Landscapes

### What are Edible Landscapes?

Unlike conventional landscapes, which utilize plants for purely ornamental purposes, edible landscapes incorporate food-producing plants, such as fruit bearing trees, berry bushes, vegetables, and herbs. Landscapes can be made exclusively of edible plants or edibles can be interspersed with ornamental plants. Edible landscaping design follows the same principles as its conventional counterpart, including the creation of balance, unity, and pattern, while integrating food producing plants into the design.

Edible gardening is not a new concept. Ancient Persian gardens combined edible and ornamental plants, and medieval monastic gardens included fruits, vegetables, and medicinal herbs. During WWII, "Victory Gardens" significantly contributed to a family's supply of fresh fruits and vegetables at a time when these amenities were greatly reduced due to world affairs.

iTRaC is the Nashua Regional Planning Commission's new approach to community planning that focuses on integrating transportation, land use and environmental planning. The program was developed to assist communities in dealing with the challenges of growth in a coordinated way that sustains community character and a sense of place.



Photo: ediblelandscaping.co.uk



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### Why use edible landscapes?

- Provides fresh produce from your own yard
- Allows control over pesticide & herbicide use
- Saves money
- Encourages growth of unusual varieties
- Reduces transportation related impacts
- Provides fun outdoor activity
- Results in an aesthetically pleasing yard
- Decreases pressure on uncultivated land

### Food for Thought

- 1-2% of America's food is locally grown (*Worldwatch Institute, 2005*).
- Produce in the average American dinner is trucked 1,500 miles to get to the plate, an increase of 22% in past 2 decades (*Leopold Center for Sustainable Agriculture, Iowa State University, 2001*).
- More than 485,000 truckloads of fresh fruit and vegetables leave California each year and travel anywhere from 100 to 3,100 miles to reach their destination (*CA State University, Fresno, 1999*).



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**What to plant if you are looking for...**

- Vines ~ grapes, squash, beans, peas
- Low ground cover ~ strawberry, creeping thyme, chamomile
- Shrub, bush, or hedge ~ blackberry, blueberry, currant, elderberry, gooseberry, raspberry, corn
- Large shrub or small tree ~ apple, cherry, peach
- Large tree ~ butternut, chestnut, hickory, walnut
- Attractive blossoms ~ apple, cherry, peach, crabapple, plum
- Attractive fall foliage ~ blueberry, crabapple, persimmon
- Food source for wildlife ~ blueberry, cherry, crabapple, raspberry, strawberry, nut trees
- Containers for patio or decks ~ dwarf apple, blueberry, crabapple, currant, gooseberry, dwarf peach, strawberry, chard, kale, herbs, tomatoes

To the right: Corn is used here as a privacy fence between two driveways.

**Developer Provided Amenities**

Planning boards and staff can work with developers to include garden plots, small greenhouses, or edible planting packages into landscape plans for individual lots. Alternatively, a portion of the required open space in a subdivision could be set aside for a community garden. The developer could install raised garden beds, a tool shed, and fencing in the community garden. As new residents move into the subdivision, they can take advantage of this amenity while building a sense of place and community pride (*APA Planning Magazine August/September 2009*).

**Community Provided Amenities**

Municipalities may also provide space for residents to grow their own food. The American Community Garden Association estimates that there are 18,000 community gardens throughout the United States and Canada. In Nashua, the Parks & Recreation Department offers community garden plots in Greeley Park. This year, Alvirne High School in Hudson created a community garden as well, with help from the NH Charitable Foundation. More information about the Alvirne High School garden can be found at <http://www.alvirnehs.org/?q=node/804>.

**Resources**

National Gardening Association ~ <http://www.garden.org/ediblelandscaping/?page=edibleprimer>

Edible Estates ~ <http://www.fritzhaeg.com/garden/initiatives/edibleestates/main.html>

University of Florida ~ <http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/ep146>

Purdue University Cooperative Extension ~ <http://www.hort.purdue.edu/ext/HO-190.pdf>

The Urban Farmer ~ [http://theurbanfarmer.ca/edible\\_landscaping.html](http://theurbanfarmer.ca/edible_landscaping.html)

Edible Landscaping Online ~ <http://www.eat-it.com/>

Edible Landscaping & Gardening Plant List ~ <http://www.efn.org/~bsharvy/edible.html>

American Community Gardening Association <http://www.communitygarden.org/learn/starting-a-community-garden.php>

