



# OUTDOOR NATURE AWARD



## PROJECT: LANDSCAPING

### GOALS

- A. LANDSCAPING IDEAS:** Brainstorm potential landscape ideas.
  - B. LANDSCAPING DESIGN:** Plan your ideal landscape.
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### A. LANDSCAPING IDEAS

When designing a kid-friendly garden or landscape, kids have the best ideas! Unusual wooden structures, creative objects for vines to grow on, or moats and rivers are just a small sample of ideas for garden design. While your family may not be able to create a dream landscape, use your imagination to create a wonderful plan and see if there are any simple pieces you can add now.

#### Suggested Ideas

- Themed vegetable or herb garden (pirate bed, pizza bed, etc.)
- Area in a yard designated “just for digging”
- Birdhouses, feeders, or baths
- Labels for flowers, plants, and edibles
- Play areas (sandbox, playhouse, swing set, pathways)
- Structures for plants (trellis for vine, a bean teepee, plant tunnel, etc.)
- “Secret” hiding places
- Eating areas (tables and chairs) or rest areas (hammocks)

#### Step 1—Make a landscape that handles wear and tear

- Think about paths, walkways, and groundcover that allow people to roam freely through an area without destroying the landscape. Create borders to separate plant areas and play spaces.
- To make a growing area, have two kids stand facing each other with their arms stretched in front of them touching fingertips. Make the bed no wider than this so that children can reach it easily.
- Add a “digging” area. Digging holes is part of being a kid!
- Keep the most vulnerable plants out of play areas, and add hardy plants near the play area.
  - Hardy plants:* Shrubs, wood perennials, groundcovers.
  - Vulnerable plants:* New plants, vegetable gardens, herb gardens, most flowers.

#### Step 2—Make it safe

- Remove old bushes, weeds, and check for old debris. Remove areas of stagnant water. Check for poisonous plants and remove (berries, hydrangea, iris, rhubarb, bulbs, daffodils, oleander).
- Avoid adding opened ditches and large walls with a long drop and sharp edges near play areas.



### □ **Step 3—Design the “look” and add whimsy**

Use your imagination to pick the “look” you want! Use this list as a starting point.

- *Recycled theme* (used items, weathered wood)
- *Classy* (white fences, arches and trellises)
- *Fairy Tale* (garden gnomes, wooded plants, miniature landscapes, colorful flowers, tall trees)
- *Pirates* (rope swings, hammocks, a crow’s nest, nets)
- *Rainbow* (use colors of the rainbow for your plants; create a rainbow in the garden bed)
- *Complete Meal Gardens* (include all the things you’d need to make a meal)
  - *Pizza* (tomatoes, peppers, basil, zucchini, onions, garlic, spinach, and herbs)
  - *Salad* (beets, carrot, cucumber, lettuce, spinach, sweet bell pepper, and tomatoes)
  - *Salsa* (cilantro, garlic, hot pepper, onion, tomatillo, and tomatoes)
  - *Soup* (garlic, green beans, leafy greens (kale or chard), onion, corn, potatoes, or squash)
- *Zoo Beds* (pick only plants that are named after animals)
- *Family Picnic* (provide lots of seating areas for large groups of people)
- *Community Garden* (Create growing areas where families in your neighborhood could come and garden in your backyard! This is a great way to provide projects to work on together.)

### □ **Step 4—Make it welcoming for family and friends**

- Creating spaces for cooking, dining, sitting, and a great view when people look out the back window to your yard or patio.

### □ **Step 5—Use your small spaces well**

- For tiny growing areas, use containers. Use large wooden barrels, small paint boxes, ceramic pots, reused large plant containers from the nursery, or buckets. Just make sure there is a drainage hole, and be ready to water often. With a little creative planning, you can turn even a small area into a wonderful landscape.

## B. LANDSCAPING DESIGN

### Supply List

- graph paper or white paper
- colored pencils
- ruler
- measuring tape
- pencil

1. *Measure your garden:* Take graph paper, a ruler, colored pencils, and measuring tape. Measure the space you have and draw that on your piece of graph paper. Make sure to note the shape of your backyard, it's likely not just a square or rectangle, but a unique space with nooks and crannies. If you have a porch area or deck only, mark what structures are there, and plan the area using pots, window boxes, or small planting boxes. Draw the outline to your workable space on the graph paper. If you have no landscaping areas at all, choose a section of a local park and pretend to landscape that.
2. *Brainstorm with your parents:* Come up with a list of things you'd love to include. Do you want a pirate themed garden with a crows nest trellis? Do you love sandboxes? Have you always wanted a vegetable garden? Do you need a sitting area or picnic area?
3. *Mark "Growing Areas" and "Play Areas":* Measure how wide your growing areas should be and what areas are good for play. Draw those pathway/play areas and growing areas and then label what the growing areas should include. Again make sure vulnerable plants are protected from where a ball might roll.
4. *Add structures, eating areas, and themed objects:* Draw in your picnic benches, swingsets, sandboxes, birdhouses, lawn area, or digging bed.
5. *Show the plan to your family:* Once you have your plan, show the family. Allow them to give feedback and give additional ideas. Make changes as needed.

### RESEARCH MORE

- *The Book of Gardening Projects for Kids* by Whitney Cohen and John Fisher
- *Gardening with Shape, Line and Texture* by Linden Hawthorne
- *Landscaping for Dummies* by the Editors of the "National Garden Association"

*My child has successfully completed the Project Goals for the topic—Landscaping.*

Adult Signature: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

*(Complete SIX projects to earn your NATURE award)*