

# Put Your Plant In Its Place – The Right Place!

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Alabama Cooperative Extension System



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## Right Plant, Right Place

- One of the most important steps in landscape design
- Prevents common problems
- Reduces maintenance requirements



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## Remember...

Successful planting design is a compromise between the science of growing plants and the desire for artistic expression with plants.



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Ask yourself...



- Functionally: What do I want the plant to do?
- Aesthetically: What do I want the plant to look like?
- Environmentally: What conditions does the plant need to grow?  
What conditions do I have?

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Functional Characteristics

- Human comfort
- Screens and barriers
- Soil protection



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Functional Characteristics

- Climate Control
  - Humidity
  - Air temperature
  - Air movement



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### Functional Characteristics

- Visual Control
  - Screen unwanted views
  - Create privacy
  - Focus



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### Functional Characteristics

- Erosion and Water Control
  - Leaves – break the impact of raindrops
  - Bark & twigs – slow water movement
  - Fibrous roots – trap and retain soil



Photo courtesy of www.lsuamich.edu Photo courtesy of www.colostate.edu

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### Functional Characteristics

- Noise and Odor Control
  - Can be mitigated with plants
  - Effectiveness depends on
    - Type
    - Density
    - Height
    - Location



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### Aesthetic Characteristics

- Color
- Texture
- Form



Photo courtesy of www.gardeningolutions.flsu.edu

Photo courtesy of www.uscainc.edu

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### Aesthetic Characteristics

- Color
  - Most attractive – most fleeting
  - Sun – warm, bright colors
  - Shade – shades of white, pastels



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### Aesthetic Characteristics

- Texture
  - Wide range – coarse, medium or fine
  - High variability – changes
    - With the seasons
    - Viewing distance

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### Aesthetic Characteristics

- Form
  - Most recognizable trait
  - Determines location
  - Correct form for desired function
  - Proportions change over time

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### Aesthetic Characteristics

- Size
  - Consider mature size
  - Growth rates vary
  - Not too large
  - Not too small
  - Just right!!



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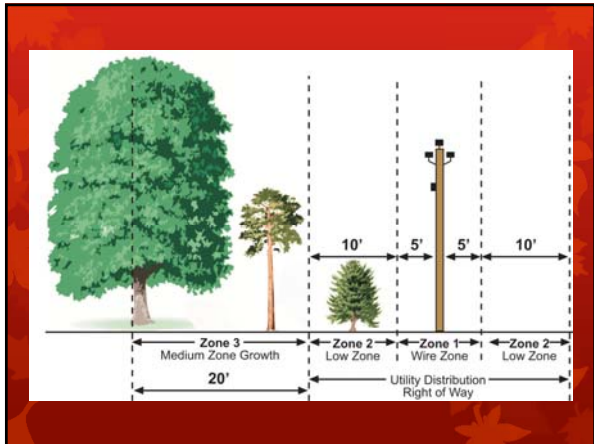
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### Planting Guide

- Zone 1
  - Shrubs – mature size should be < 10 ft.
  - Azalea, forsythia

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### Planting Guide

- Zone 2
  - Ornamental trees – mature height should not exceed 15'
  - Nellie Stevens Holly, camellia

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## Planting Guide

- Zone 3
  - Ornamental trees – mature canopy should not exceed 20-30' in diameter
  - Blackgum, tulip poplar

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## Environmental Requirements

- Soil Characteristics
  - pH
  - Fertility
  - Moisture



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## Environmental Requirements

### Light Level

- Buildings and structures
- South & west – exposed to more light
- Sun plants vs. shade plants




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Photo courtesy of www.dentonian.linn.edu




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## Environmental Requirements

### Sun Plants

- Winterking Hawthorn
- Crabapple
- Dwarf Indian Hawthorn
- Hollies
- Rose
- Juniper
- Daylily
- Yellow Coneflower
- Lamb's-ears

### Shade Plants

- Japanese Maple
- Florida Dogwood
- Leatherleaf Mahonia
- Azaleas
- Coastal Leucothoe
- Rhododendron
- Lenton Rose
- Hosta
- Coralbells

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### Environmental Requirements

- USDA Hardiness Zone Map
- 5 Zones – 7a to 9a
- Plant accordingly
- Heat island effect



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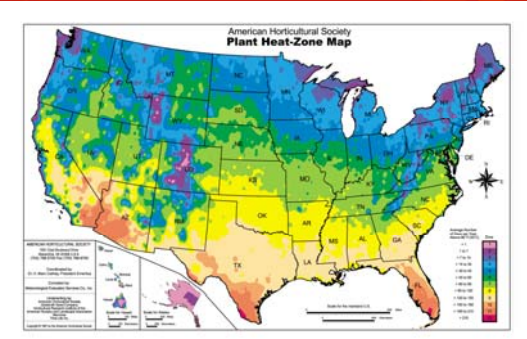
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### Environmental Requirements



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### Environmental Requirements

- Anticipate Diseases and Pests
- Stressed plant = increased pest susceptibility
- Choose resistant varieties



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### Maintenance & Cultural Practices

- Limited or difficult accessibility – choose low maintenance plants
- Outdoor living spaces – avoid plants that require frequent spray applications
- Plants that require more attention should be used in limited areas

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Maintenance & Cultural Practices

- Plants have a lifespan
- Long-lived plants
  - Majority of landscape
- Short-lived plants
  - Use in areas of high visibility

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Remember, for a landscape that is.....

- Healthy
- Long-lived
- Low-maintenance
- Less expensive

Put your plant in its place – the RIGHT place!!!

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