



# Edible Landscapes

The incorporation of food plants into an ornamental setting.

## Why do Edible Landscapes?

- Rising cost of food and push towards eating locally
- Unusual varieties that are rarely found in the grocery store
- Offers textures and colors that are unmatched by many ornamentals
- Inter-planting that helps reduce pests
- Lawn area will be reduced + water will be used to produce foods
- Great pleasure from picking vegetables amongst flowers!



## What plants to include?

- For eating - choose your favourite vegetable or fruit
- For look:
  - colour, texture, size & shape
  - plants that look good throughout the season
  - plants that will fill a void left by edibles that are picked (e.g. beets, carrots)
- Plants that attract pollinators or other beneficial insects
- Special considerations for the shade garden
- **\*\*Do not include plants that are toxic\*\*** (e.g. Datura, Foxgloves)

## Edible Plant Selection

- Annual vegetables; Perennial vegetables; Ground cover vegetables and fruits; Fruit shrubs ;
- Herbs ; Vines (fruits and vegetables); Small and large fruit trees; Edible flowers

## How to start an Edible Landscape?

### ***Start simple and start small with easy and delicious plants:***

- *Chard* - easy to start and very attractive
- *Kale* - easy to start and very attractive
- *Leaf lettuces* - easy to grow and come in a wide range of colours
- *Herbs* - wide range of textures
- *Mesclun mix* instead of annuals
- *Currant* or *blueberry* for a shrub
- *Strawberries* for a groundcover



## Creating a Landscape Plan

- Planning for enjoyment and utility
  - Making the most of your outdoor space
  - Family considerations
  - Activities
- Time, money, and restrictions
  - Time and effort
  - Budget
  - Construction/zoning restrictions
- Base plan: starting point
  - Drawing a base plan to the scale of the property
- Choosing a design/model:
  - Formal, informal, containers, raised beds
  - Lawn or no lawn?



## Challenges for the North

***In the northern part of Ontario, summers are short and nights are cool (and sometimes the days!)***

### ***What grows well here?***

- Cold-hardy (frost hardy) vegetables/fruits
- Vegetables that normally grow in a short period of time (check “Harvest/maturity date”)
- Extra-early/early varieties
- Varieties that produce higher yields
- Varieties that produce smaller fruits
- AVOID warm-crop vegetables/fruits and vegetables/fruits (e.g. Bell peppers, cantaloupe, watermelons, okra) that have longer maturity dates (90 days and more)

### ***How to increase productivity?***

- Sunny and wind protected area of the yard
- Best fertile and well drained soil (1/3 top soil - 1/3 compost/manure - 1/3 peat moss)
- Good quality seeds
- Optimal cultivation
- Extend the length of the season
- EXPERIMENT with new varieties and have fun!

***Text by Louise Nadeau, Master Gardener, Thunder Bay District Master Gardeners, Thunder Bay, Ontario, March 2012***