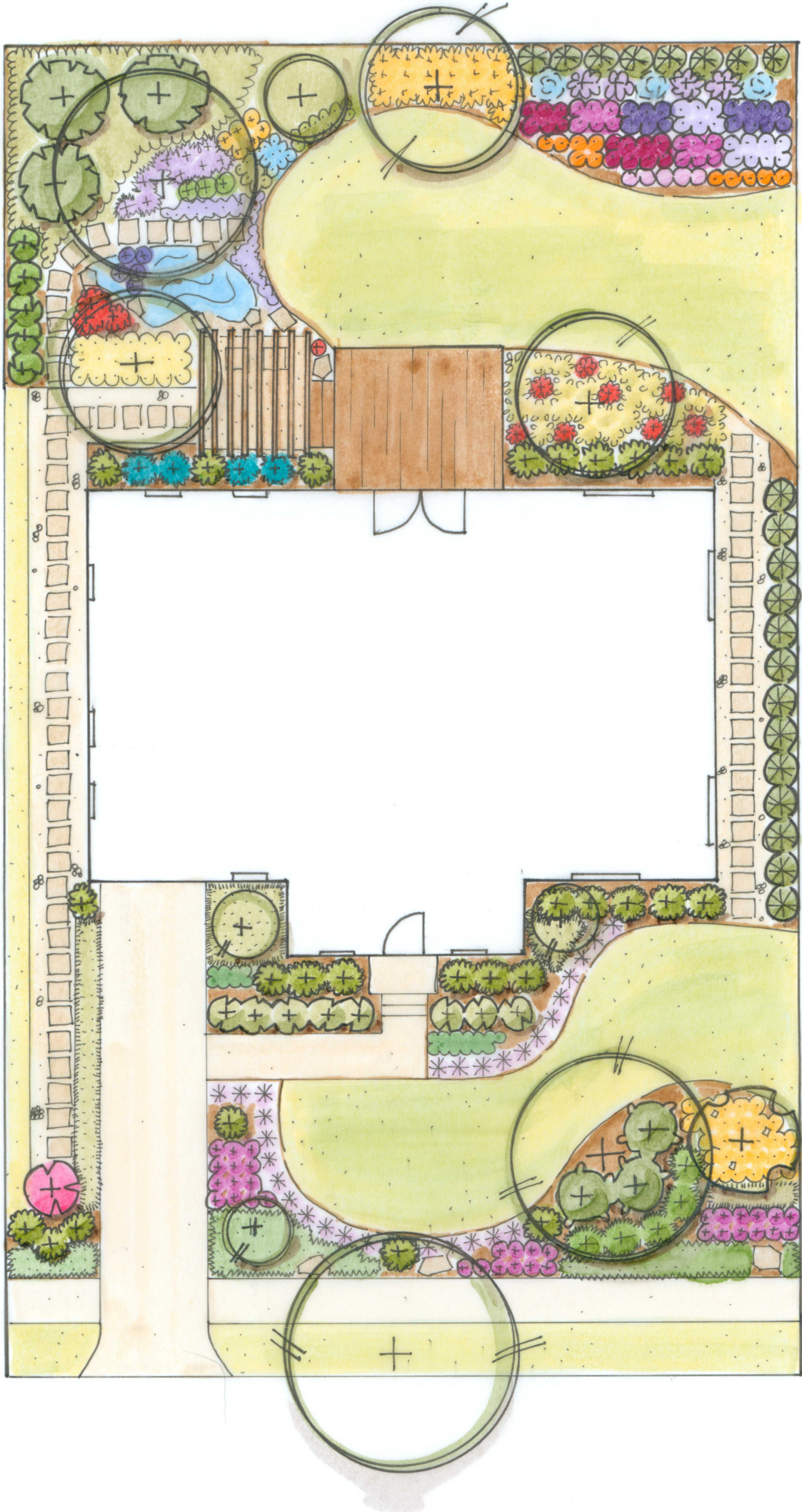
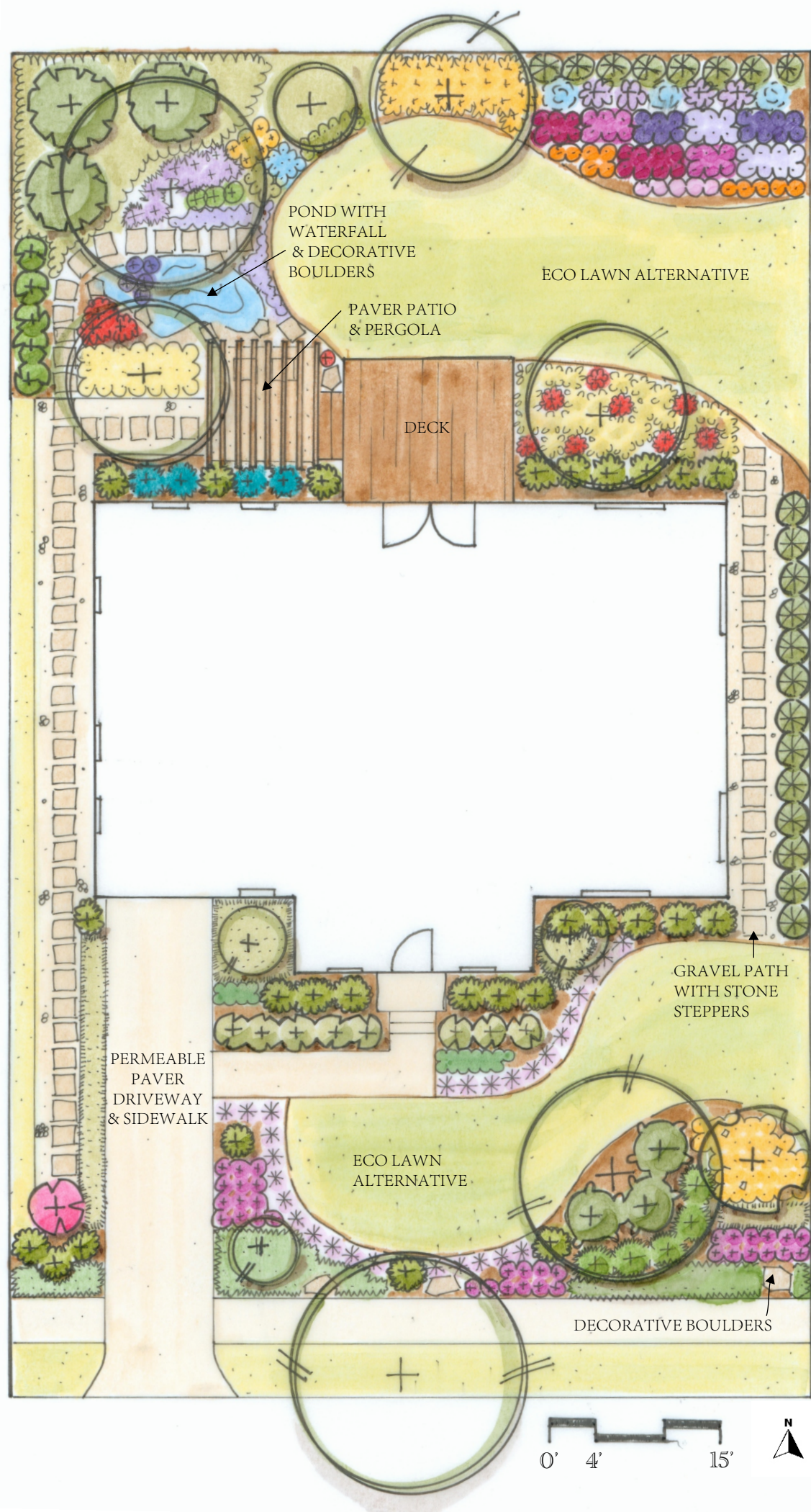




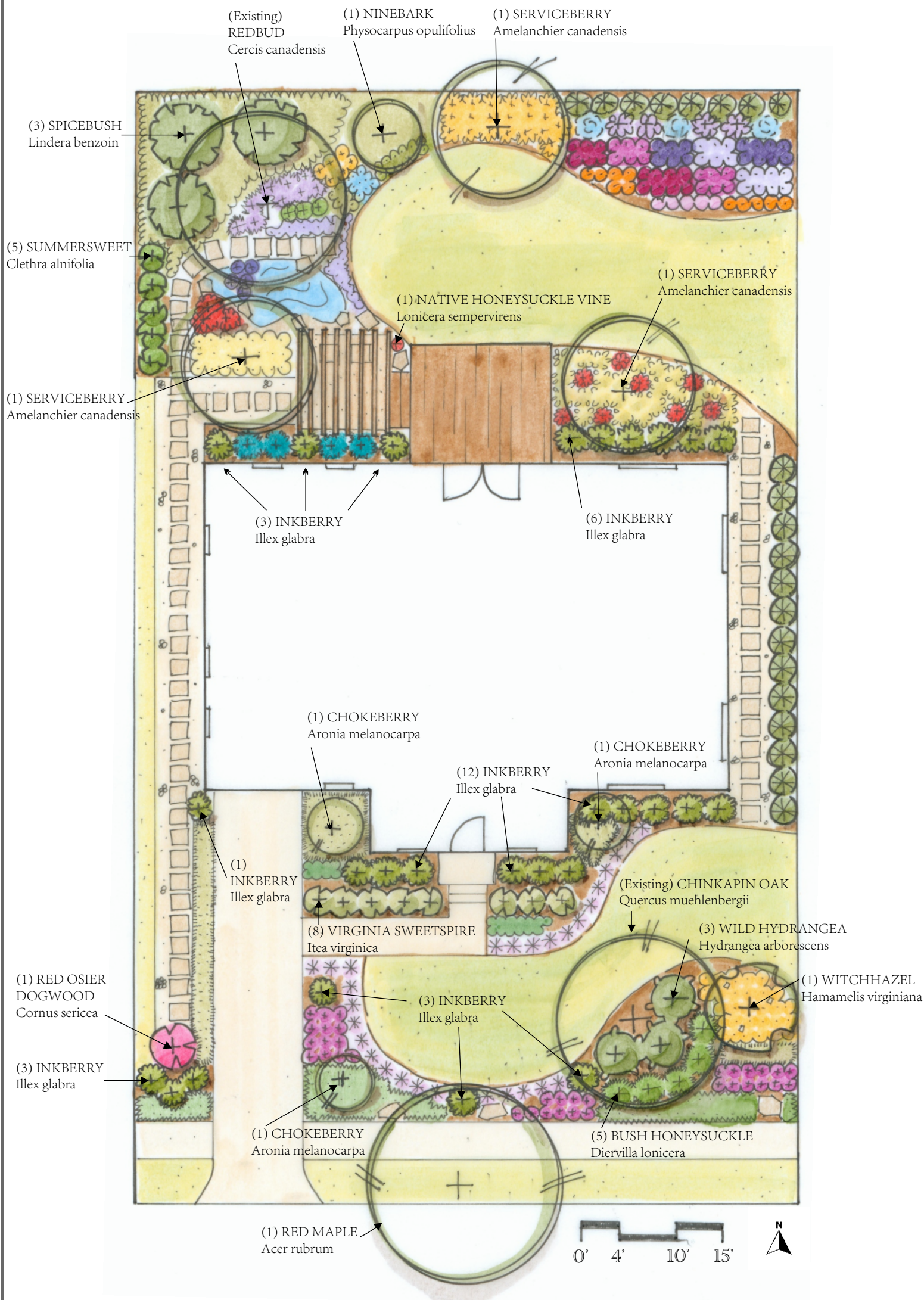
**Wild Ones Native Garden Design:  
Lexington, Kentucky**  
Design by Katrina Kelly  
EARTHHeim Landscape Design



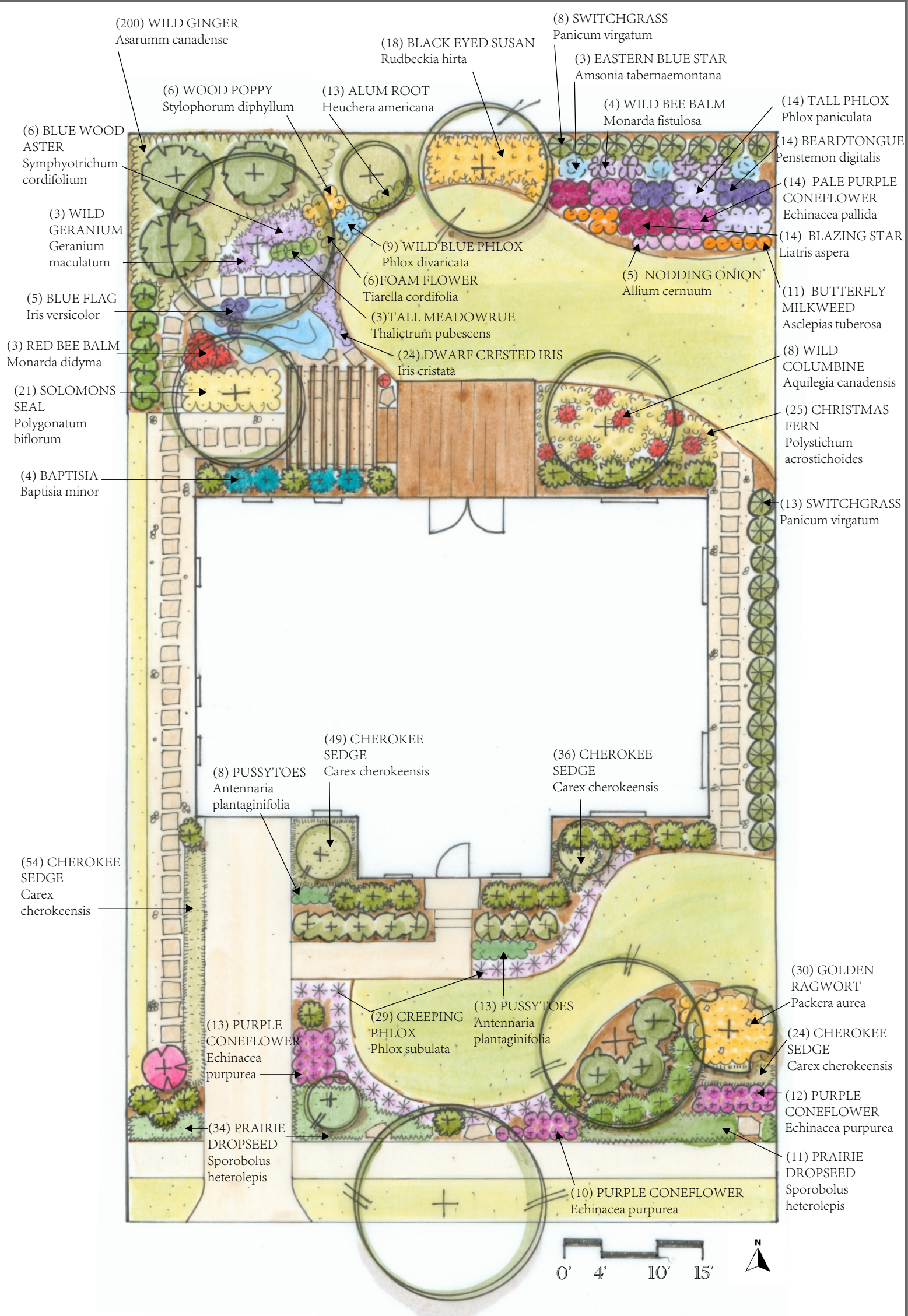












## Designer's Statement

"Remagic your piece of earth" is something that we can do on our own properties by planting native plants and designing our yards to encourage sustainability. We should not think the landscaping around our home needs to be something static that should remain the same and is only there to accent our homes. The structure on the inside of our homes may be mostly static and something only influenced by ourselves. The outside however is home to an ever-changing landscape with weather, insects, animals, and microorganisms which we have very little control over. While we do want to reduce landscape maintenance so it's practical for us to have, we must realize that it is a living landscape that should benefit the environment and wildlife.

Central Kentucky is now in USDA plant hardiness zone 7a. Our soils typically have a higher pH than Eastern Kentucky for example, because we have limestone in our area. Many of the natural areas in our city are overrun with invasive species such as Japanese bush honeysuckle, wintercreeper, privet, and Bradford pears. Our region has also felt the effects of climate change with an increase in flooding, ice storms, long hot summers, dry weather, and obscure weather events. Many people want to start using native plants because they will be hardier in our climate.

## The Design

This design was created by EARTHem Landscape Design in Lexington, Kentucky.

## Front Yard

On this design I wanted to aesthetically create the front yard for curb appeal and ease of care, while still being unique. Often, my clients want the front yard to appear tidier since it's viewable from the street. I began by locating evergreen Inkberry Holly shrubs along the foundation and as anchor points in the garden beds to offer some winter interest.

I used a repetition of purple coneflower, sedges, and grasses across the different garden beds to create a cohesive and peaceful feeling. Most of the plants in the front yard are shrubs and groundcover type plants with some Echinacea to offer some summer color. Some of the groundcover plants will stay green during the winter as well. Sedges and grasses offer a soft texture to the landscape, and will create movement in the garden on a breezy day.

Witchhazel is a late fall blooming shrub and is one of the only blooming plants in November and into December. Even in these cold months, I will see small native bees pollinating the yellow flowers of this native shrub. After it is done flowering, squirrels will come and feed on the seeds.

## Frontyard Shrubs:

- Witchhazel *Hamamelis virginiana*

- Chokeberry *Aronia melanocarpa*
- Inkberry Holly *Illex glabra*
- Wild Hydrangea *Hydrangea arborescens*
- Virginia Sweetspire *Itea virginica*
- Bush Honeysuckle *Diervilla lonicera*
- Red Osier Dogwood *Cornus sericea*

#### Groundcover Type Plants:

- Creeping Phlox *Phlox subulata*
- Sedge *Carex cherokeensis*
- Prairie Dropseed *Sporobolus heterolepis*
- Pussytoes *Antennaria plantaginifolia*

#### Bird Habitat

At the Southeast corner of the frontyard, there is a shrubby corner to create a small wildlife habitat for birds under the large shady Oak tree. Birds like to roost in natural areas that have layers. Here we have the oak as a canopy tree, then a layer of large and small shrubs, perennial plants, and groundcover. The chokeberry shrubs, purple coneflower, prairie dropseed, and sedge groundcover offers berries and seeds for birds to forage on.

#### Sideyards

At the side yards, I designed a gravel pathway with inset stepping stones. When we install designs, we like to use a gravel that will compact so it is sturdier under foot. Depending on the color of the home, the gravel and stone can be of a cool or warm tone. On the East side of the home, the walkway is lined with switchgrass to offer a soft texture along this property line. On the West side of the home, the walkway begins along the driveway in order to expand the functionality of the driveway by offering additional space to get in and out of the car.

In the backyard I wanted to have more relaxed plantings that was viewable from the deck and an additional hardscaped patio with a pergola. A native Honeysuckle Vine can be grown on the pergola, which will attract hummingbirds.

#### Pond

Off of the patio there is a small pond with a circulating waterfall feature. This will attract birds who are looking for a water source and could attract frogs, dragonflies, and other wildlife too. Native Blue Flag iris can be planted in pots and set into the pond. A pathway wraps around the pond for viewing access from all sides.



A pond kit that includes the liners and pumps can be purchased from different retailers who specialize in pond construction. Different size boulders, cobblers, and gravels can be ordered from local landscape suppliers to hold the liner in place and decorate the pond. Here in zone 7a, ponds can generally be operated all year unless we have below normal winter weather conditions. This provides much needed habitat for birds in the winter.

### **Backyard Northwest Shade Garden**

Under the existing Redbud tree and around the pond is a small shade garden. In this shade garden we have used layering with a Redbud understory tree, Spicebush shrubs, and Wild Ginger as a groundcover. This layering affect creates more habitat that will attract more birds to this area of the yard. There are several species of native plants that will bloom from spring and into fall. Blue Wood Aster is a fall blooming shade aster with beautiful blue flowers. Wild Blue Phlox is a blue spring bloomer and adds a soft fragrance to the air.

### **Sunny North East Pollinator Garden**

At the Northeastern part of the yard, there is a colorful pollinator garden featuring native plants that bloom during the summer months. This is sunny area in the backyard that will attract butterflies and bees. There is a layering effect to this garden. The back border of switchgrass adds a soft background to the garden. The next layer of plants are taller bushier native plants of Wild Bee Balm and Amsonia, then other tall prairie type of plants Purple Coneflower, Tall Garden Phlox, Beardtongue, and Blazing Star. The front border are shorter plants of Butterfly Milkweed and Nodding Onion. Many of these plants will reseed themselves in the garden in given the right environment.

### **North Shade Garden**

The North side of the home against the back of the house will be one of the shadiest areas on the property. Under the Serviceberry tree East of the deck, is a Christmas Fern garden with Wild Columbine scattered throughout that will offer some color in the spring and attract hummingbirds. The Christmas Fern will stay evergreen through the winter, offering some seasonal interest.

### **Eco-Lawn Alternative**

There are some eco-lawn seed alternatives on the market if you are looking to remove traditional turf grass and install a lawn that is less maintenance. A homeowner should consider what kind of seed blend would be appropriate for their microclimate when researching seed blends. Many seed blends are made for sunnier sites rather than shade. Some seed blends only need mowing once or twice per year.

Native Sedges (*Carex* species) may also be considered a lawn alternative, which would not require mowing. There is also a trend of creating a clover lawn (although non-native) or using Buffalo grass which is native to North America. When spreading seed, it is important to keep seed-to soil contact and to keep watered for effective germination.

### **A Garden's Ecosystem Services**

The key elements of this design aiding climate change and providing ecosystem services include:

- Reducing lawn, which takes high water use, carbon emissions/resources for mowing, and associates with chemical usage.
- Increasing shade by planting trees to lower surrounding temperatures in the summer months.
- Plantings which will catch carbon dioxide, produce oxygen, and capture/filter stormwater runoff.
- Providing habitat and food sources to wildlife and pollinators.
- Using permeable materials for the driveway and hardscape allows water to filter through instead of contributing to stormwater runoff.

### **Installation Phasing**

The first step to this garden's installation would be to install the hardscape features before any of the plantings are installed surrounding the hardscape to prevent damage to the plants.

Individual garden beds can be installed one at a time until the full landscape is installed.

Trees and shrubs are always nice to plant first since they need more time to mature and will make a nice impact. However, I urge clients to install garden beds in full, rather than installing small bits across the whole property since you will not gain as much impact and it will be a lot of maintenance until plants fully cover the ground.

### *Groundcover Plants*

If needed, groundcover plants such as *Carex*, Wild Ginger, Solomons Seal, Black Eyed Susan, Dwarf Crested Iris, and Golden Ragwort can be installed in smaller numbers and allowed to spread on their own. Some companies also sell plants as 'plugs' which are sold in trays of larger quantities for a lesser cost than larger plants.

### *Lawn Removal*

Existing lawn can be removed in several ways either by manual removal with a sharp flat spade or a sod cutter machine. The sheet mulching or solarization methods can also be used but this is a longer process. Tilling should be avoided as this can damage soil and hurt native bees nesting in the ground.



### *Amending Soil*

In Central Kentucky, we have clay soils that are more alkaline due to our limestone soils. Especially in newer construction where often times the topsoil is removed, I recommend to my clients that a layer of compost be added to the garden beds right after planting, and then once per year in the fall. Some plants like the Inkberry Holly will benefit from an organic fertilizer made for acidic soil type plants since we have more alkaline soils here.

### *Planting Timeline*

Perennials can be planted in the spring as long as any threat of frost or freeze has passed, which is usually mid-May. Spring in Kentucky is often unpredictable. Perennials can be planted earlier if weather warms, but is risky due to late frost and freeze. The latest to plant perennials in Kentucky is mid-September. This allows roots to mature and harden before freezing winter temperatures settle in for the next few months.

Generally, spring blooming trees and slow growing hardwood trees should be planted in early spring. Faster growing trees can be planted in spring or early fall. Trees and large shrubs planted in the heat of the summer can have a hard time establishing and will suffer transplant shock.

## **Maintenance and Supporting Habitat**

### *Leaving the Leaves*

Leaves from trees that fall in autumn are a great source of organic matter for the garden. A garden bed or mulch ring with the leaves also creates a nice hibernating spot for pollinators and other beneficial insects through the winter. Leaving the leaves supports these beneficial insects like ladybugs and lightening bugs.

### *Spring Garden Cleanup*

Leaving plants stand through the winter also provides habitat and food sources for birds, pollinators, and wildlife. Cutting back this foliage in late spring gives a chance to the beneficial insects to hatch and leave their nest. Cutting and disposing of the brown plant material too early can also dispose of the pollinators and beneficial insects too. This brown matter also acts as insulation and helps plants overwinter.

### *Mulching & Living Mulches*

Reducing mulching needs is one way to reduce overall maintenance in a garden. Bare soil and mulched areas invite weeds and invasive species. Use groundcovers that will fill in areas underneath shrubs and between feature plants. This can include plants that spread by root or seed. Create a groundcover planting palette by choosing plants that have a similar competitive ranking of low, medium, or high spread rate.

## *Watering*

I tell my clients that the garden should receive an inch of water per week whether it's from rainfall or by manual watering. Those plants with a higher watering requirement should receive consistent hydration. A native plant garden can survive drought, but it will look better if it does have some consistent water. It is important for evergreen plants to stay hydrated in late summer and fall so they have better survival rate through winter and are less chance prone to browning. Drip irrigation can be installed to assist the homeowner and can be used when establishing plants or during times of minimal rainfall.

## **Designer's Methodology**

### *Meeting the Client*

The first step to my design methodology is to understand the client's needs and wants, which I do through phone call, an in-depth questionnaire, and an on-site consultation. Once I meet the client on site, I can learn more about the site and begin determining what is possible from their wish list. Many of my clients want a low maintenance, native plant garden to attract pollinators and wildlife with a feeling of privacy. There are usually on-site drainage issues that need correcting as well, and sometimes the client would like hardscaping features. At my office, I then make a list of features to include in the design and draw out a few starting concept sketches.

### *Site Analysis*

At the site, I assess and take measurements of the landscape for existing locations of all features such as buildings, hardscapes, utilities, and trees. Then I take a look at the existing vegetation to see what is salvageable and what should go. If there is an invasive species located on the property, I always propose a solution to the homeowner for its removal and what to replace it with. Next, I look at sunlight patterns, soil conditions, drainage, and at any unique issues on the site. I then try to visualize my design concepts at the site to see if they could potentially work in the space.

### *Design*

In the office I flush out the design layout beginning with hardscape features if applicable. Then I work on dividing the area to be designed into planting zones based on the microclimate of each area. I'm also thinking of how to use the plants to make each zone aesthetically pleasing. From there I create a planting list starting with feature plants, then those plants providing interest in winter, then fall, then spring, then summer. In Kentucky there is not much greenery for 5 months of the year, so I like to include plants that have some interest throughout the winter. There are actually quite a few native plants that will stay green here through a milder winter so I like to incorporate them when possible.



It is important to me to create a landscape for my clients that will be lesser maintenance. My goal is to put the right plant in the right place and space them properly according to their mature size to reduce the need for pruning. Another goal is to cover the ground with a 'living mulch' as much as possible with plants to reduce the need for hardwood mulching. I also take into account the watering needs for the different species of plants. If a plant likes moister soils, then I will use it in an area that may naturally collect more rainwater, or where drainage from structures will be diverted.

I try and educate my clients with interesting facts about plants as I collaborate with them through the design process. I think this makes the design more memorable knowing how the native plants are providing ecosystem services.

### **Local Resources**

*Links to relevant resources and local native nurseries*

Dropseed Nursery: [dropseednursery.com](http://dropseednursery.com)

Fields to Forest Nursery: [fieldstoforest.com](http://fieldstoforest.com)

Ironweed Native Plant Nursery: [ironweednursery.com](http://ironweednursery.com)

Kentucky Native Plant Society: [knps.org](http://knps.org)

Michler's Gardens and Greenhouses: [michlers.com](http://michlers.com)

Springhouse Gardens: [springhousegardens.com](http://springhousegardens.com)

Tina's PlantNSuch: [Goldensolidago@hotmail.com](mailto:Goldensolidago@hotmail.com)

Oakland Farm Trees: [oaklandfarmtrees.com](http://oaklandfarmtrees.com)





*A patch of purple coneflower offers a burst of summer color*



*This warm toned boulder adds a new texture in the garden and offers a place for birds to perch*



*A small pond or water feature draws in wildlife and adds to the sense of sound in a garden*



*Creating layers in a garden will draw more birds, creating a sense of safety and food sources.*

*Covering the ground with plants that spread will reduce weeding and mulching needs, and look aesthetically pleasing.*



WILD ONES Lexington Kentucky: Native Plant Residential Garden Planting List				
QTY	Type	Botanical Name	Common Name	Notes
<b>Trees</b>				
3	Tree	<i>Amelanchier canadensis</i>	Serviceberry	Spring white flowers followed by edible red berries.
1	Tree	<i>Acer rubrum</i>	Red Maple	Early spring pollinator source, great red fall color.
1	Tree	<i>Cercis canadensis</i>	Eastern Redbud	Early spring pink flowers supporting bees.
1	Tree	<i>Quercus muehlenbergii</i>	Chinkapin Oak	Medium sized oak supporting over 600 species of butterflies and moths.
<b>Shrubs</b>				
3	Shrub	<i>Aronia melanocarpa</i>	Chokeberry	White spring flowers, berries developing late summer.
5	Shrub	<i>Clethra alnifolia</i>	Summersweet	Fragrant white summer flowers attracting hummingbirds. Yellow fall color.
1	Shrub	<i>Cornus sericea</i>	Red Osier Dogwood	Colorful red stems in the winter.
5	Shrub	<i>Diervilla lonicera</i>	Diervilla	Attractive yellow flowers with red fall color. Host for Hummingbird Clearwing.
1	Shrub	<i>Hamamelis virginiana</i>	American Witchhazel	Yellow fall flowers when there is little nectar source for pollinators. Black walnut tolerant.
3	Shrub	<i>Hydrangea arborescens</i>	Wild Hydrangea	White summer flowers attracting pollinators.
27	Shrub	<i>Illex glabra</i>	Inkberry Holly	Native evergreen with glossy leaves. Will form berries when male and female plants present.
8	Shrub	<i>Itea virginica</i>	Virginia Sweetspire	White spring flowers supporting pollinators. Fall color
3	Shrub	<i>Lindera benzoin</i>	Spicebush	Yellow spring flowers. Host plant for Spicebush Swallowtail.
1	Shrub	<i>Physocarpus opulifolius</i>	Ninebark	White spring flowers with shaggy bark.
<b>Vines</b>				
1	Vine	<i>Lonicera sempervirens</i>	Native Honeysuckle Vine	Tubular red flowers blooming most of the season, attracting hummingbirds. Semi Evergreen
<b>Grasses/Sedges</b>				
21	Grass	<i>Panicum virgatum</i>	Switchgrass	Clump forming grass; host plant for skippers.
62	Grass	<i>Sporobolus heterolepis</i>	Prairie Dropseed	Native grass providing food for birds.
131	Sedge	<i>Carex cherokeensis</i>	Cherokee Sedge	Slow spreading clump forming sedge like tolerates average soils and partial to full sunlight.
<b>Perennials</b>				
5	Perennial	<i>Allium cernuum</i>	Nodding Onion	Soft pink blooms nod.
3	Perennial	<i>Amsonia tabernaemontana</i>	Eastern Blue Star	Early spring blue flowers. Foliage turns gold in fall.
21	Perennial	<i>Antennaria plantaginifolia</i>	Pussytoes	Silver gray foliage groundcover. Sends up white fuzzy flowers in spring.
8	Perennial	<i>Aquilegia canadensis</i>	Wild Columbine	Red spring flowers attracting hummingbirds. Self seeds.
200	Perennial	<i>Asarum canadense</i>	Wild Ginger	A dense forming groundcover short to the ground. Ants disperse the seeds.
12	Perennial	<i>Asclepias tuberosa</i>	Butterfly Milkweed	Orange summer flowers attracting pollinators.
4	Perennial	<i>Baptisia minor</i>	Baptisia	Blue spring flowers attracting bees.
14	Perennial	<i>Echinacea pallida</i>	Pale Purple Coneflower	Pink summer blooms attracting pollinators and seeds feeding goldfinches.
32	Perennial	<i>Echinacea purpurea</i>	Purple Coneflower	Pink summer blooms attracting pollinators and seeds feeding goldfinches.
3	Perennial	<i>Geranium maculatum</i>	Wild Geranium	Pink spring flowers. Tolerant of full shade to full sun.
13	Perennial	<i>Heuchera americana</i>	Alum Root	Semi evergreen small perennial with nice foliage color.
24	Perennial	<i>Iris cristata</i>	Dwarf Crested Iris	6" tall foliage acts as groundcover with purple blooms in spring.
5	Perennial	<i>Iris versicolor</i>	Blue Flag	Grouping planted in pots to sit in the pond.
14	Perennial	<i>Liatris aspera</i>	Button Blazing Star	Purple summer flowers attracting pollinators. Birds eat seeds.
3	Perennial	<i>Monarda didyma</i>	Bee Balm	Red flowers attracting hummingbirds. Fragrant foliage.
4	Perennial	<i>Monarda fistulosa</i>	Wild Bee Balm	Light purple summer flowers attracting butterflies, bees, and hummingbirds.
30	Perennial	<i>Packera aurea</i>	Golden Ragwort	Spreading groundcover with yellow flowers.
14	Perennial	<i>Penstemon digitalis</i>	Beardtongue	White summer flowers attracting bees and hummingbirds.
9	Perennial	<i>Phlox divaricata</i>	Wild Blue Phlox	Early spring blue flowers that are fragrant. Foliage spreads as groundcover.
14	Perennial	<i>Phlox paniculata</i>	Tall Phlox	Large pink summer flowers attracting pollinators and hummingbirds.
29	Perennial	<i>Phlox subulata</i>	Creeping Phlox	Semievergreen low groundcover with pink or blue spring flowers.
25	Perennial	<i>Polystichum acrostichoides</i>	Christmas Fern	Fern staying evergreen during the winter months.
21	Perennial	<i>Polygonatum biflorum</i>	Solomon's Seal	Shady groundcover foliage plant with small white flowers.
18	Perennial	<i>Rudbeckia hirta</i>	Black Eyed Susan	Summer yellow blooms; biennial, self seeds.
6	Perennial	<i>Stylophorum diphyllosum</i>	Wood Poppy	Early spring flowers. Disappears when summer heat looms.
6	Perennial	<i>Symphyotrichum cordifolium</i>	Blue Wood Aster	Blue fall flowers attracting butterflies and bees.
3	Perennial	<i>Thalictrum pubescens</i>	Tall Meadowrue	Shade perennial with pretty foliage supporting several moth species.
6	Perennial	<i>Tiarella cordifolia</i>	Foamflower	Small shade perennial with white flowers.