Contemplative Food Gardening: “FEED YOUR HEAD” (EDIBLE LANDSCAPING & DESIGN)

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OUTLINE

- Overview & Goals of Contemplative Food Gardening Presentation Series
- Short Review of Contemplative & Organic Food Gardens
- Edible Landscaping
Contemplative Food Gardening Series Titles

- Introduction
- Feed Your Head (Edible Landscaping & Design)
- Growing Food When People & Place Matter (FL Climate, Crops and Soils)
- Ancient Traditions (Companion Planting and Biodynamic Agriculture)
- Sacred Community (Attracting Beneficials)
- Soil Food (Compost & Earthworms)
- Back to the Future (Contemplative Design & Container Gardening)
Goals for Talks on Contemplative Food Gardening

– Food for your freshest nutrition
– Food for thought
– Food for community benefits
– Food for your soul
Approach of Talks on Contemplative Food Gardening

- Integrate the concepts of contemplative gardens to edible landscaping, using organic food gardening practices
- Provide background information on the science and principles from agroecology for successful organic food gardening
- Offer an opportunity to participate in the setup of a contemplative food garden
- Provide additional educational resources
A contemplative garden provides an ambience conducive to examining issues beyond and/or larger than oneself in a thoughtful, deliberate, perhaps religious or mystical way.

Why Do Contemplative Gardening?

• Relief from stress of modern life
• Promoting inner growth and wisdom
• Reflection and synthesis of knowledge
• Exploration and mindfulness
• Source of inspiration
Review: What is Food Gardening?

Cultivating a wide diversity of edibles including vegetables, fruits, herbs, flowers, etc.
Review: What Is Organic Food Gardening?
Organic Food Gardening

• It’s a science and art
• Incorporates the entire landscape design and environment, e.g., to improve and maximize the garden soil's health, structure, & texture
• Maximizes the production and health of developing plants without using synthetic commercial fertilizers, pesticides, or fungicides

David Knauft, Horticulture Department, Univ. of GA
What is Different About Organic Food Gardening?

- **Incorporates a Systems Level Approach to Management and Design of the Agroecosystem**

- Consider a message from excerpt from Sand County Almanac by Aldo Leopold (1949)
  
  - Message in the value of biodiversity for the function of the ecosystem
  - These teachings served as foundation in land ethics for many applications

Aldo Leopold
“A deep chesty bawl echoes from rimrock to rimrock, rolls down the mountain, and fades into the far blackness of the night.

It is an outburst of wild defiant sorrow, and of contempt for all the adversities of the world.

Every living thing (and perhaps many a dead one as well) pays heed to that call.”
“Thinking Like A Mountain”

“To the deer it is a reminder of the way of all flesh, to the pine a forecast of midnight scuffles and of blood upon the snow, to the coyote a promise of gleanings to come, to the cowman a threat of red ink at the bank, to the hunter a challenge of fang against bullet.

Yet behind these obvious and immediate hopes and fears there lies a deeper meaning, known only to the mountain itself. Only the mountain has lived long enough to listen objectively to the howl of a wolf.”
“Thinking Like A Mountain”
- Aldo Leopold

• Message = Wolf – Deer – Forest dynamics & inter-relationships are critical for ecosystem function!

• Similar message in the value of biodiversity applies to organic food gardening too!
What is Edible Landscaping?

The thoughtful arrangement of edible plants in the landscape into a unified, functional biological whole to maximize their aesthetic appeal and food production.

Treating Edibles as Ornamentals
Why Do Edible Landscaping?

Best of both worlds – edible & ornamental

Inter-planting reduces pests

New textures, forms, colors

Grow what you like best

Fun for kids

Responsible water use

Great conversation piece
Any Landscape Can Become an Edible Landscape

- Choose for appropriate size
- Plant what you like to eat
- Choose for desired maintenance level
- Select appropriate varieties of edibles
Edible Landscape
Homestead Level Example

http://stlucie.ifas.ufl.edu/UrbanGardenSeries.html
Edible Landscape Design Approach

..."outdoor rooms" are created by taking advantage of sweeping curves and border plantings of flowering shrubs and trees
Edible Landscape
Plant Growth Requirements

• Light
• Support
• Nutrients
• Temperature
• Water
• Seasonality
Design Element: Color

Kale

Leaf lettuces

Chard
Beans & peas on trellis for height

Strawberry for groundcover

Squash for size and form
Design Elements with Herbs

Basil
colors &
flavors

Sage
texture &
colors

Thyme
aromas &
flavors
Design Element: Edible Flowers
Edible Landscape Design Example

http://www.slideshare.net/UMNfruit/edible-landscaping
Edible Landscape Design Examples
Edible Landscape Installation Example
Food For Beauty And Nourishment
Contemplative Garden
Design Elements

Properties for the “rooms” in your garden:

• Clarity
• Complexity
• Mystery
• Refuge

http://www.gardenguides.com/663-contemplation-gardens.html
Contemplative Garden
Design Elements: Clarity

✓ The area is not confusing to those looking at it. It has, first of all, clarity of purpose.

Threshold – a clear entry

Border and pathway
Contemplative Garden
Design Elements: Complexity

✓ There is enough of interest going on within a given space that there is a reason to enter it and dwell there for a while, e.g., with a mix of textures, colors, smells, shapes, sizes and spaces
Contemplative Garden
Design Elements: **Mystery**

- The surprises and hidden features that may be hinted at but not revealed unless the visitor actively seeks them out.
Contemplative Garden
Design Elements: **Refuge**

- The "garden spots" both public and private should give off a feeling of retreat from the cares of the world.

![Garden Spot Image]
Contemplative Food Gardening with Edible Landscaping

Gardening outside the rows…creatively for personal inspiration and growth, as well as physical nourishment and growth
A few tips:

• **Remember timing, habit, requirements**
• Start planning early
• **Be creative…think outside the rows!**
• Think about combinations
• **Don’t be afraid to try something new.**
Contemplative Food Gardening Art

http://www.powershow.com/view/ae6a6-YWEyZ/Edible_Landscapes_Gardening_Around_the_House_flash_ppt_presentation
Resources

Resources


• Stevens, J.M. 2009. Organic Vegetable Gardening. UF/IFAS EDIS Publication #CIR375 – see http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/vh019

• Stevens, J.M. et.al. 2010. Florida Vegetable Gardening Guide. UF/IFAS EDIS Publication #SP103 - see http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/vh021

• Worden, E. and S.P.Brown. Edible Landscaping. UF/IFAS EDIS Publication #ENH971 - see http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/ep146