



EARTH-KIND® GARDENING

Right Soil; Right Plant; Right Place!

**Debra Cook, Lake Granbury Master Gardener
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WHAT IS **EARTH-KIND**®

Earth-Kind

A common-sense, practical approach to landscaping that combines the best of organic and traditional methods to produce quality landscaping while protecting the environment and maximizing enjoyment.

Earth-kind sustainable landscaping promotes a balanced landscape ecosystem that conserves water and protects the environment through the judicious use of landscape irrigation, pesticides and fertilizers.





TWIN PILLARS OF **EARTH-KIND**®

EARTH-KIND SOIL MANAGEMENT

EARTH-KIND PLANT SELECTION





Or ... **How To Be a Root Farmer**

- ❖ Right soil
- ❖ Right plant
- ❖ Right place



Lake Granbury





WHY EARTH-KIND®

ENVIRONMENTAL CONCERNS

❖ Water

- Drought
- Waste through irrigation
- Runoff vs Absorption

❖ Misuse of Fertilizers and Pesticides

❖ Decline in Beneficial Insect and Pollinator Populations

❖ Landfills

- Lawn clippings and landscape debris
- Numbers are increasing





WHY EARTH-KIND®

EARTH-KIND GOALS

❖ Water

- Water conservation

❖ Misuse of Fertilizers and Pesticides

- Reduce the use of fertilizers and pesticides
- Promote the best plant genetics to thrive in the harsh Texas climate
- Increase plant diversity in landscapes

❖ Decline in Beneficial Insect and Pollinator Populations

- Increase and protect pollinators and other beneficial species in landscapes

❖ Landfills

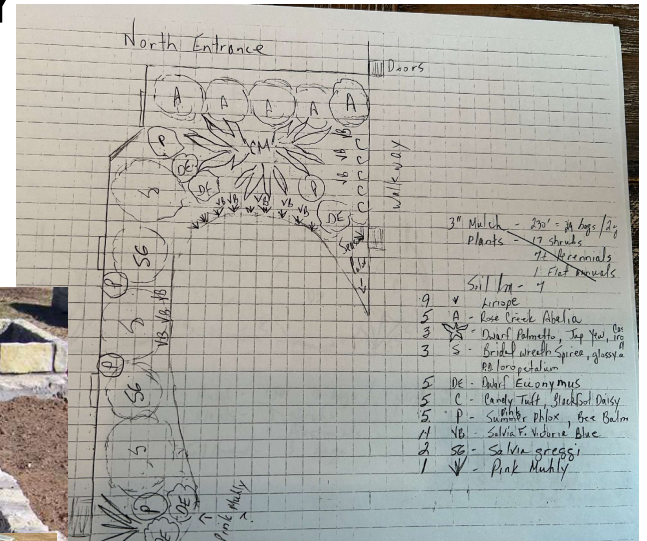
- Increase the use of organic compost and mulches in the landscape
- Judicious use of lawn areas



GETTING STARTED...

THE EARTH-KIND® WAY

- ❖ Have an overall Landscape Plan
- ❖ Decide where to start
- ❖ Soil Management
- ❖ Plant Selection



PLAN YOUR LANDSCAPE

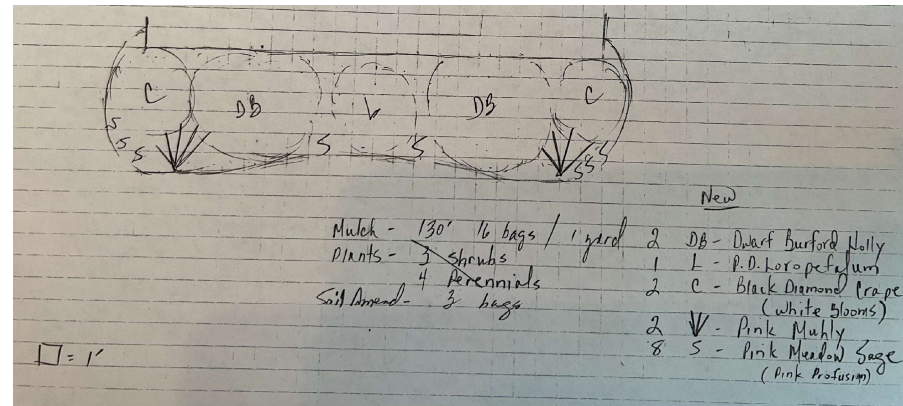
❖ Map the property: existing structures, paved areas, trees, etc.

❖ Decide on Practical Turf areas

❖ Add proposed areas of new landscaping

❖ Draw to scale

- Remember to keep 8 – 12 inches of clear space between the side of a structure and the edge of the closest plant!



PICK A SPOT TO START

- ❖ Know the size of the area
- ❖ Take notes on sun, shade, drainage and any limiting features
- ❖ Decide General usage: Tree, shrubs, flower garden, vegetables, etc.



SOIL MANAGEMENT

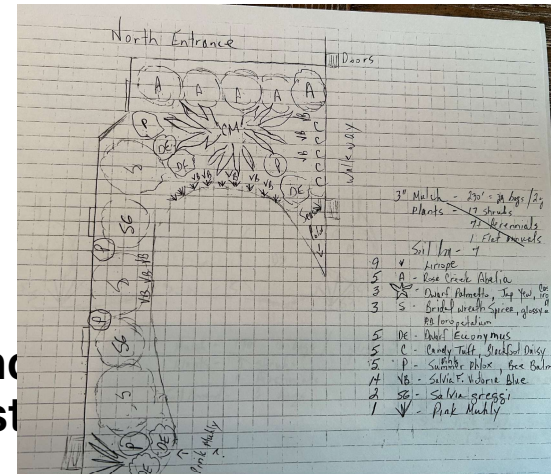
- ❖ Prepping the soil is Key
- ❖ Add organic matter
 - Compost, humus and manures
- ❖ Build pore space
 - Leave old decaying matter
 - For heavy clay soils, add expanded shale
- ❖ Compost once; mulch forever

Bottom line is, we want to emulate how mother nature manages the floor of a mature hardwood forest.



PLANT SELECTION

- ❖ Mature size is important! Don't over plant and don't forget to look up!
- ❖ Sun and watering requirements for all plants need to match
- ❖ Know growth tendencies: Aggressive growing vs Well-Behaved plants
- ❖ Reseeding
- ❖ Diagram plant placement to scale
- ❖ Allow for some space between plants.
Air flow helps keep plants healthy and minimizes the spread of disease and pest





EARTH-KIND[®] PLANTS

- ❖ **Look for Earth-Kind[®] designation. This ensures plants**
 - are research-backed to provide the strongest, best adapted and most pest resistant genetics, and
 - have been field tested across the state.
- ❖ **Texas A&M AgriLife provides Selection resources**
 - Earth-Kind roses
 - Texas Superstars
- ❖ **Texas Native Plants**
- ❖ **Texas Adaptive plants**



EARTH-KIND® ROSES

❖ Dwarf Shrub

- Marie Daly, Souvenir de St. Anne's and The Fairy

❖ Small Shrub

- Caldwell Pink, Cecile Brunner, Perle d'Or

❖ Medium Shrub

- Belinda's Dream, Carefree Beauty, Ducher, Duchesse de Brabant, Spice

❖ Climbers

- Mannerly Climbers: Climbing Pinkie and Sea Foam
- Vigorous Climbers: New Dawn and Reve d'Or



TEXAS SUPERSTARS

- ❖ Rigorously tested to provide superior performance, heat tolerance and disease resistance in Texas
- ❖ Annuals, Perennials and Per-Annual
- ❖ Woody Shrubs
- ❖ Trees
- ❖ Specialty Plants



TEXAS SUPERSTARS

❖ Annuals, Perennials and Per-Annual

- Annuals: 3 types of bluebonnets, 4 types of petunias and Vina Cora series
- Perennials: 3 types of hibiscus, 3 types of grasses and Lantana Camara varieties
- Per-Annual Plants: Brazilian Red Hots' Alternanthera and Caesalpinia, Pride of Barbados

❖ Woody Shrubs

- Blue Angel Althea, Rock Rose, American Beautyberry and Texas Lilac Vitex

❖ Trees

- Basham's Party Pink Crapeyrrtle, Shantung Maple, Lacey Oak and Chinkapin Oak

❖ Specialty Plants

- Multiple types of vegetables, herbs and fruits



TEXAS NATIVES

❖ *Native plant* means plants that were growing naturally here before European colonization

❖ Why Natives?

- Drought-tolerant
- Natural to their eco-system
- Provide habitat and food for birds, butterflies, bees and other wildlife
- Don't need special pampering or fertilizing
- Help us maintain biodiversity



TEXAS NATIVES

❖ Perennials

- Green Milkweed, Butterfly Milkweed
- Common Yarrow, Prairie Verbena, Texas Verbena
- Mealy Blue Sage, Texas Sage, Mexican Hat

❖ Shrubs

- Prairie Acacia, Prairie Bluet, Fall Aster

❖ Trees

- Ashe Juniper, Desert Willow, Blackjack Oak



TEXAS ADAPTED

❖ Non-native plants that have proven to perform well in this area

- Drought-tolerant
- Provide habitat and food for birds, butterflies, bees and other wildlife
- Don't need special care
- Adds biological diversity

❖ Examples

- Baby Sun Coreopsis, Dianthus (Pinks), Purple Coneflower
- Trailing Lantana, Autumn Sage
- Verbena Hybrida (a native wildflower cultivar)



MAINTENANCE

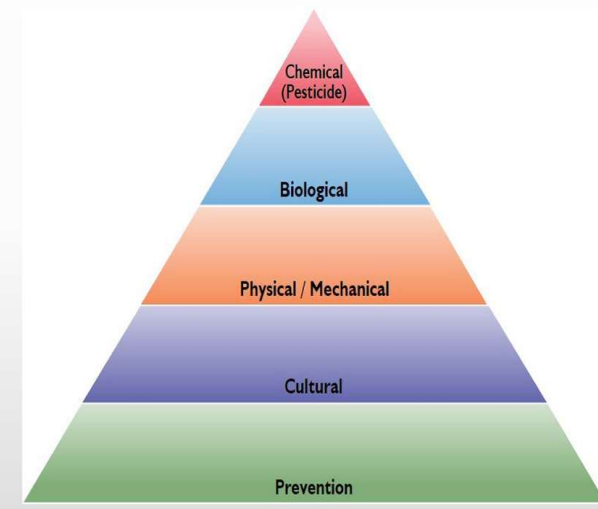
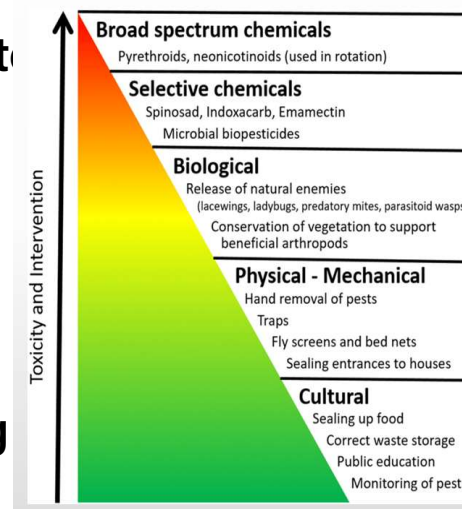
- ❖ Low maintenance once established
- ❖ Water
 - Should water first year to establish; no wet feet!
 - Research trials show little to no extra watering needed after that
- ❖ Mulch
 - Shredded mulch knits together and holds
 - 3" layer is ideal; more can result in too much water retention
 - Leave ~6" between mulch and trunks of woody perennials
 - Helps keep down weeds
 - Cools and adds nutrients to soil
- ❖ Weed beds as needed
- ❖ Cut back perennials after first hard freeze; trim trees and shrubs as needed during the year
- ❖ Trim roses in February and June



PEST MANAGEMENT

- ❖ Insects are important in backyard ecology
- ❖ Goal is **MANAGE**, not eradicate
- ❖ **Prevent Problems**
 - Choose pest resistant plants
 - Maintain soil health
 - Regularly inspect for pests and damage
- ❖ **Identify the pest before taking action**
- ❖ **Least toxic solutions first**
 - Mechanical and biological controls are preferred
 - Evaluate results: adjust your methods based on outcomes

Integrated Pest Management (IPM)





Technical Resources

Earth-Kind® Links:

Plant Selection PDF: <https://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/5/2010/10/plantselection.pdf>

Earth-Kind® Plant Selector: <https://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/EARTHKIND/plantselector/>

Earth-Kind® Landscape: <https://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/earthkind/planning-the-home-landscape/base-plan/>

Earth-Kind® Roses: <https://aggie-horticulture.tamu.edu/earthkindroses/cultivars/>

Texas Superstars:

https://texassuperstar.com/?_gl=1*_amjw*ga*MTgwMDQ2NzQ5My4xNzY5NDU2NzA5JGozNyRsMCRoMA..L*czE3Njk0NTYyODUkbzE2JGcxJHQxNzY5NDU2NzA5JGozNyRsMCRoMA..

Native Plant Society of Texas Plant Database:

<https://www.npsot.org/resources/native-plants/native-plants-database/>

The term, EARTH-KIND®, is a federally registered service mark of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, Texas A&M University System.



Contact Info

2026 Officers

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