



WELCOME PACKET

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(Please print and fill out before our first meeting)	



Hello

My name is Chris Todd, and I have been designing environmentally-sustainable and drought-tolerant gardens since graduating from Foothill College Horticulture Program in 2,000. I have an Associate in Science Degree in Ornamental Horticulture, with emphasis in Landscape Design. With a nursing background, I have a long term interest in developing and preserving healthy environments that support biodiversity. I am available for **Horticultural and Design Consults** as well as **Residential Landscape Design**.

Do you know that:

- By year 2025 there will be about 47 million people living in California, all competing for the limited water supply?
- San Jose's average rainfall is 12 inches per year, only in the cool winter season?
- A 25ft x 40ft traditional lawn needs 10,000 gallons of water each summer? (likely 60% of your water bill), --but there are pleasing lower-water, low-mow alternatives.
- And there is the pollution from the gas mowers and blowers; using a gas mower for one hour produces air pollution equivalent to driving a car for 350 miles!
- Over 100 million tons of synthetic fertilizers are applied to residential gardens each year.
- 80 million pounds of pesticides are used in American gardens each year, killing beneficial insects, worms, birds, and contaminating our water and ourselves.
- Now with the tremendous population growth, coupled with more cyclic drought, we are losing our clean water supply, and the habitat of beneficial predators and pollinators that control our pests naturally.

How will we cope?

The key is to use drought-tolerant plants that are adapted to our cool wet winters, dry, hot summers, alkaline and clay soils, very bright sunlight, and daily temperature fluxuations. California Native plants are well-adapted to our climate, and sustain our biodiverse birds, insects, and other critters. Some Southwest, and Mediterranean plants help as well. Coupled with modern, water-efficient irrigation, correctly applied, you no longer need to spend 40-50 hours a season in your busy life mowing, watering, fertilizing, weeding, and aerating a high-maintenance thirsty lawn, (and doing it over again and again).). Perhaps a low-mow meadow would be enjoyed by children instead of that high maintenance lawn.

You can have a colorful, low-water-use garden full of life, fragrance, and visual variety. With a well-designed drought-tolerant garden, plants will need only infrequent deep watering, once established, and if you are gone for a month without watering, you won't notice much degradation in your landscape. You'll also be supporting the birds, bees, and small animals with your ecologically responsible garden!

I would be glad to help you adapt to our perennial water shortages, and develop other garden opportunities by designing such a landscape.

Chris Todd, Landscape Designer and Horticulture Consultant, Certified by the Association of Professional Landscape Designers (APLD.org.), Member APLD, CLCA, CNPS, SLRB, Western Horticulture.



Why Hire a Designer for Your Yard? By Susan Wyche

Most homeowners would not begin a large remodel project without plans, a carefully prepared budget, and extensive discussions with their builder or architect. But that happens frequently with landscapes. As designer, I've spoken with clients who paid \$20,000 or more to have a front or backyard installed after only a short discussion with a contractor. Even under the best of circumstances, they didn't know exactly what they were getting until it was built, and typically the final cost exceeded the initial estimate.

Many contractors are quite talented at "design on the ground," but they are also at risk in this situation, because the end result may not be what the homeowner intended. And because initial details are sketchy, contractors have to build in a larger contingency mark-up to cover unexpected costs. The solution is design. A good design provides the contractor and the client with an objective basis for evaluating the success of the installation, and offers details that can help the contractor prepare a detailed and far more accurate estimate. This in turn can keep costs down, because the mark-up need not be as large, and decisions (and revisions) can be made on paper instead of after the concrete has set.

As a designer, I start my clients with a stack of books and clippings from my files. By looking at pictures, and marking what they like and don't like, my clients determine the look and feel they like. The materials expose them to new ideas that they often want to incorporate: a sandbox for toddlers that can later be made into a raised bed, an arbor over a patio to create shade, an alternative lawn to replace the traditional lawn that requires constant maintenance.

Good designs begin with dreams, but the realities need to be addressed too.

What's the soil like? How much sun does the property receive? What condition are the plants in? Are there problems with drainage, privacy, or noise from a nearby street? I spend as much time observing the land as I do with the clients.

Finally, designers help clients confront the reality that no one wants to talk about but underlies most decisions: the budget. Many people have no idea that a small yard can cost \$20,000 to \$30,000 to install. Add a flagstone pathway that runs a few feet and you can add another \$5,000. A new irrigation system can add another \$2,000 to \$3,000. Few people can spend these amounts without concern. A designer can find less expensive ways to build a path or patio, can suggest ideas for phasing the project in

over one or more years, and can also head off bad decisions to save money, such as foregoing an irrigation system (which can cause an entire landscape to fail).

Typically, designs take place over a few weeks. Clients receive a concept plan, a planting key, construction details and notes for the contractor, and more importantly, a process for identifying their vision, and solutions for achieving it. Designers can also research and identify contractors and specialists—arborists, masons, artists, irrigation and lighting specialists.

In some cases involving larger or more complex projects, clients will hire the designer to serve as a liaison or project manager to see the design through from start to finish.

So, how much does a designer cost? Like contractors, they may differ. Some will charge a set fee for the project, based on time and complexity. Others will charge by the hour, and rates can range from \$60 to \$180, depending on experience and demand. A good rule of thumb is that a designer's time is worth 10-15% of an installed design. And if that seems expensive, remember that a good designer's value is returned in the quality of the design, and savings through the installation phase.

Many designers belong to the Association of Professional Landscape Designers (APLD), and clients can use the APLD website to locate designers in their area (www.apld.org). Many designers also have specialties according to style (Mediterranean, Japanese, contemporary) or function (low maintenance, sacred space, sustainable landscapes). Clients should feel free to ask for referrals, and to inspect portfolios of drawings or photos.

Finally, a designer's job is to translate your dreams into reality, so personal chemistry matters too. Some designers work quickly with minimal client contact—show them the site, tell them what you want, and let them get to work. Others may be more collaborative, and prefer to develop the project through a sequence of meetings, reviews, and sketches. Clients should not hesitate to ask how the process works, then choose the one that fits their own needs.

Susan Wyche, Green Perspectives

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DESIGN PROCESS AND FEES

FIRST MEETING: consultation and recommendations (Usually 1.5 hrs) **\$85/per hour**
(What is appropriate for your soil, microclimate, architectural style, and future uses, drainage options, irrigation planning, planning for pets, children, birds & bees, and edibles, etc, includes written design proposal.)

RESIDENTIAL LANDSCAPE DESIGN PROCESS **\$85/per hr.**

Landscape or Garden Design services are a series of steps in a process that results in a “blueprint” for a well- designed outdoor living environment for people, pets, and wildlife. The process involves meetings with you, measuring and information gathering of site conditions and your preferences, checking for property set-backs and other regulations, and meeting with experts such as arborists and contractors.

I plan such gardens with the use of artistry, ecology, technology (Irrigation, lighting, horticulture, soil structure and biology), and a good ear for my client’s needs. My primary goals are designing an ecologically sustainable garden, and education of my clients to help them develop safer and more ecologically sensible practices for their outdoor space.

I start by sharing knowledge with you, so that we can design a successful garden for you, and you can manage it better as it matures, even if you are not a gardener.

Landscape drawings, drawn to scale, are a component of design. They illustrate all the features, surface materials, sizes of structures, names and sizes of plants, and other details. There may be separate pages for large properties, such as; Layout for Hardscape (hard surfaces), Demolition, Grading and Drainage, Planting, Irrigation, Lighting, Construction Details, and Hydrozone maps and tables for water budgets and irrigation schedules. Usually photos or illustrations are used to convey the ideas clearly. **For some properties, a maximum water allowance calculation may be required by state ordinance.**

(Construction Details and Major Grading & Drainage Plans must be done by Landscape Architects, Licensed Landscape Contractors, Engineers, or other professionals, licensed to do those parts. I work with these professionals as needed to insure that you have a complete plan when permits are needed..)

For renovation of existing landscapes that need only a planting plan and irrigation to match; at minimum, I first check soil composition, pH, absorption rate, drainage, and microclimate exposures, as well as your color & style preferences, and existing trees, their location and size, (which dictate what is used under them.) Factors considered in choosing plants may involve tolerance for deer browsing, drought-tolerance, clay tolerance, sun/shade exposure, toxicity for dogs and children, value to wildlife and beneficial insects, etc. A color illustration may be included. Soil amendment and planting instructions will be included.

When completed, I recommend a licensed landscape contractor who I believe is a good match for your project. If getting multiple bids, I can help you assess bids. *(Some contractors bid different materials and construction methods, based on their previous experience. It is important to check for deviations from the materials specified in the plans, and that all components of the plan are included in each bid, that the contractor is licensed, bonded, and insures his workers.)*

Garden Escapes by Chris Todd
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I usually search for, purchase, and place the plants to insure that you receive the correct plants, and that they are in the correct location. Contractor's and employees are not familiar with many drought-tolerant, native, and new plants.

Design services are charged by the hour, as each site is different, and each client's needs vary. The proposal is an ESTIMATE of the hours and services needed for the project.

GARDEN CONSULTATIONS \$85/hr Weekdays and Saturdays
(If over 20 miles from my office, a 2 Hr. Minimum Charge plus one-way travel time,)
The consultation fee is paid at the time of the initial consult.

Horticultural Consulting

(Problem areas, plants, maintenance of plants, soil health management, water management and conservation, proper pruning instruction, proper planting instructions, referral to experts such as arborists, irrigation specialists, etc)

Design Consults

(What is appropriate for your soil, microclimate, architectural style, site use ideas & hard surface materials, planning for pets, children, and edibles, sites for examples, etc)



How green is your garden?

What you do to your own plot of land affects the larger landscape around you—your neighborhood as well as nearby meadows, deserts, or forests, and rivers, lakes, and coastal waters. How well are you doing as a steward of the land? **Take our quiz and find out.** Add up your points (1 point for each "yes"), then find out what your score means at the bottom of the page.

Design

1. Paving

Does your garden utilize permeable paving (gravel, decomposed granite, pavers with spaces between for pebbles or groundcovers)?

2. Irrigation

- Is your garden watered by a drip system that includes an automatic controller?
- Do you regularly reprogram the controller to match the demands of the season (more water in summer, less in winter)?

3. Watering zones

- Do you group plants in the garden according to their water needs?
- Do you plant major areas that can survive on rainfall alone after their second season?

4. Water features

- Have you chosen pondless waterfalls or small recirculating fountains that use water respectfully, or did you substitute a dry creekbed or paving that mimics the look of water—or use no water features at all?
- Have you installed an infiltration pit or a rain garden (a small, planted basin) to catch and filter rainwater and keep it on-site?

5. Trees for shade

To conserve energy, are your deciduous trees sited to provide cooling shade in summer and to allow sunlight through their branches in winter?

6. Materials and furnishings

Are your arbors, decks, and furnishings made of sustainably harvested woods (ipe, bamboo) or recycled materials such as Trex?

Planting

7. Appropriate plants

Do you choose plants that are well adapted to your climate (natives or appropriate non-native species, for example)?

- Are they locally grown?
- Do you buy and plant disease-resistant varieties of fruit trees, roses, and tomatoes whenever possible?

8. Lawns

Do you grow an unthirsty lawn grass such as buffalo grass? Or does your garden have no lawn at all?

9. Plants for wildlife

- Does your garden feed and shelter birds, butterflies, and other wildlife?
- Have you planted flowers that attract beneficial insects (such as ladybugs and lacewings) to help control harmful insects?
- Have you also planted perennials such as echinacea, lavender, penstemon, or salvia that attract pollinators like bees and hummingbirds?

Maintenance

10. Composting

Do you regularly compost all the green and brown waste your garden produces—fallen leaves, weeds without seeds, grass clippings, spent flowers, and vegetables?

11. Fertilizing

When you mow the lawn, do you let grass clippings fall instead of bagging them, so they can refertilize your turf? Do you use natural fertilizers such as aged chicken manure or liquid fish emulsion to feed your veggies and annuals?

12. Mulching

Do you mulch your soil regularly with organic materials to keep down weeds and conserve water?

13. Nontoxic controls

Do you always first try soft insect controls (jets of water for aphids, corn gluten to stop weeds from germinating, handpicking or copper barriers for snails)?

Client Checklist:

- Do you educate yourself on pest-, disease-, and weed-control products before you use them in your garden?
- Do you avoid using any garden chemicals (which can contaminate runoff) before, during, or after rains?

14. Recycling

- Do you recycle (not toss) materials you no longer need, such as brick, broken concrete, or empty nursery containers?
- Do you properly dispose of chemicals through the appropriate local agencies?

15. Soils

Before planting at the start of each season, do you refresh flower and veggie beds by tilling in generous amounts of organic soil amendments, such as aged compost?

16. Tools

Do you use hoes (to dispatch weeds), reel mowers (to cut the lawn), or rakes (to clean up fallen leaves) instead of gas-powered tools that cause dust, noise, and air pollution?

17. Watering

- Do you water your plants efficiently, so there's no runoff or waste? (That is, slowly, deeply, and infrequently, always in early morning or evening, and never on windy days.)
- Do you irrigate established trees slowly and deeply with soaker hoses or deep-root irrigators in hot weather?
- Do you regularly capture rainwater in barrels during wet weather, to use later for watering your plants?

18. Weeding

- Do you stay ahead of weeds, pulling them before they set seed and spread?
- Do you make sure that the plants you're setting out are not invasive in your area—as are English ivy and buddleja in the Northwest, pampas grass or Scotch broom in California, and grasses and Kahili ginger in Hawaii?

How are you doing? 1-6: It's a start.

7-15: Good job; keep it up.

16-24: High five—you're nearly there.
25-32: Congratulations! You're a true steward of the land. ■

* SEE GREENING PAY OFF: sunset.com/ecogardens



Questionnaire

Before our first meeting:

To assist me in developing a personalized garden design for you, please take a few moments to answer the questions below

Contact(s) Information:

Name (s)		
Home Phone		
Home Fax		
Work Phone		
Work Fax		
Cell Phone		
E-mail		

Who will be my primary contact during this project? _____

Where do you prefer to be reached? (Work, home or cell phone) _____

Project site :

Mailing address	
Job site address (if different)	
Referred by	

Users of the Garden

List all family members, pets Age, M/F How each would use the garden:

List all family members, pets	Age, M/F	How each would use the garden:

Will pets have free run of the garden? _____

(Family pets and wildlife habitats are mostly not compatible)

Areas of garden that you would like designed: (Front, side, back, courtyard, front curb)

Budget

Keeping in mind that projects can be done in phases, what is your total budget for this project, including hard surfaces, structures, lighting, irrigation and planting? This is important because it gives me a sense of how simple or intricate a design to develop.

Total Budget range _____

Will homeowner construct or install any of the landscape? _____



PREFERENCES

Which of the following should I consider when designing your outdoor space?
 Mark all that apply:

- | | | |
|----------------------|----------------------------------|---|
| Privacy Screening | Bird Bath | Pervious paths |
| Views | Bird Feeders/Houses | Children's Play Area |
| Curb Appeal | Outdoor Dining | Sport Court (tennis, basketball, volleyball, tetherball, bocce, petanque) |
| Seasonal Interest | Built-in Barbecue | Flower-Cutting Garden |
| Scent | Deck, Patio | Herb Garden |
| Color | Fence replacement | Veg/ Fruit production |
| Interesting Plants | Fountain | Potting Bench |
| Drought Tolerance | Pond/ Waterfall | Compost Area |
| Low Maintenance | Dry Stream | Greenhouse |
| Sustainability | Pool (New/Remodel) | Storage shed |
| Solitude/Meditation | Pool House | Service area (trash, clothesline screening) |
| Garden Art/Sculpture | Removal of Pool | Dog area |
| Boulders | Removal of lawn | Other _____ |
| Gazebos | Replace lawn with low mow meadow | |
| Arbors | Driveway replacement | |
| Habitat for Wildlife | | |

Your answers to the following will help guide my plant selections for your garden. It will also be very helpful if you provide me with pictures you have collected of gardens you find beautiful and appealing.

Please give me some words that describe your preferred garden style (formal, informal, lush, simple, geometric, linear, free-flowing, naturalistic, California modern, English borders, French cottage, Mediterranean, Woodland, Japanese, Zen, etc)

- What color palette of flowers do you like? _____
- Colors you do not like, prefer to avoid, or to minimize: _____
- Specific trees, shrubs, flowers you would like _____
- Specific plants you dislike _____
- Would you like to include any ornamental grasses, or alternative lawns, ground covers that use less water or less mowing? _____
- Are you allergic to any plants? If so, please List _____
- Would you like to incorporate plants for pollen and nectar-feeding birds & insects? ___ Native plants? _____
- Quite a few beautiful plants are toxic to small children or pets, if eaten. (These plants also have fewer garden pests.) If this is a concern, please indicate your comfort level with their use: Do you want to avoid all, or use some, only in areas of limited access: _____
- Do deer have access to your yard? _____ If so, please indicate which areas: _____
- Are gophers and squirrels causing problems? _____
- Do you want lighting for your yard? _____ If so, are there specific trees or elements you would like to highlight? _____
- Do you plan to hire a gardener to maintain your garden after landscaping? _____
- If not, how many hours per week are you realistically able to spend in the garden weeding, deadheading, pruning, raking, mowing, composting mulching,? _____
- Do you have a preference for type of patio and path materials? _____
- Are you interested in reuse or recycling of materials on site, harvesting and conservation of rain water, solar heating panels, shade for summer energy conservation? List any you are considering: _____



Please list any special site considerations or restrictions you are aware of:
(public utility easements, utility lines, drainage problems, preservation of existing trees, neighbor screening, wind protection, need for electrical outlets for fountains, cooking, or tool power source) _____

Do you have a base map or previous plan of you property with your house on it? _____ It may save me some measuring time.

Current Maintenance Practices

The following will assist the designer in considering low maintenance alternatives to current maintenance practices.

1. Do you have a gardening service to maintain your garden? _____. How many hours per week? _____
2. If a maintenance service is used, does it only provide mowing, trimming, blowing, and watering? _____ Pruning or other services? _____
3. Does the pruning job produce a bare-branched, box/ball, "shaved" look? _____
4. Are lawn clippings left to recycle (decompose) in place, ____ or hauled away? _____
5. Do you know if your maintenance company rinses off their mowers between properties? _____
6. Are you currently using any chemical pesticides or fertilizers? _____
7. Are you currently using compost for fertilizer? _____
8. Does the sprinkler system coverage seem uneven? _____
9. Are the irrigation areas on timers? _____
10. Is the family away from home for extended periods frequently? _____
11. Does someone need to water for those periods? _____
12. How many homeowner hours per week are currently spent in garden maintenance? ____ (weed, mow, water, prune, collect dog droppings, rake leaves, etc.)
13. How many hours per week are currently spent in non-maintenance garden enjoyment? _____

Any other comments? _____

Thank you! This will be a great help in designing your landscape.

To request my reference list, please call my office at (408) 530-0122.
Be sure to leave your name, address, and phone number if you reach my voicemail.