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## Planning Your Home Landscape II

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### Landscaping Between Your House and the Street

Every home landscape needs a well planned entrance. You and your family need to come and go safely and conveniently. Visitors appreciate the hospitality of obvious approaches to suitable doorways. Delivery men work more efficiently when they can see clearly where you want vehicles to unload supplies or pick up outgoing materials. If your house is visible from the public roadway, a logical, attractive arrangement of buildings, driveways, and plantings can contribute to a pleasant neighborhood.

This folder is prepared to help you develop a detailed plan for the entrance or public area of your property. See *Planning Your Home Landscape I*, AG-FO-1431-B, for the way to begin an overall plan. Use sheets of tissue paper as overlays on your plan for activity areas and circulation patterns. Make trial drawings with a soft pencil until you have found a solution that satisfies you.

### Consider Required Elements

Begin by thinking of the area between your house and the public roadway as a three-dimensional space planned for use. Forget the old idea of an expensive plant collection lined up against the house front to be viewed by passers-by. This stereotyped solution to entrance planting has led to much wasted space, too many overgrown plants serving no purpose, and expanses of front yards unshaded, unsheltered, and uncomfortable.

Here is a list of landscape elements needed between the house and the street on most properties:

- Safe, adequate driveway and parking space. With smaller cars, hard surfaced areas may be reduced.
- Entrance walk at least 5 feet wide, well lit, with hand railings at flights of steps or significant changes in levels.
- Visible, lighted doorway for visitors and guests with easily read house number, or a driveway sign, if more appropriate.
- Clearly identified service entrance, if required by house and driveway arrangement.
- Clean ground surfaces--cool in summer and warm in winter as possible--covered with lawn, ground cover plants, or construction materials, according to intended use.
- Summer shade for entrance, parking space, windows, and house roof, if possible.

- Winter wind shelter, if possible. Many open properties also need wind protection at other seasons and from other directions.
- Pleasant views from windows and doors.
- Simple and attractive plantings to blend house and surroundings into a three-dimensional landscape.

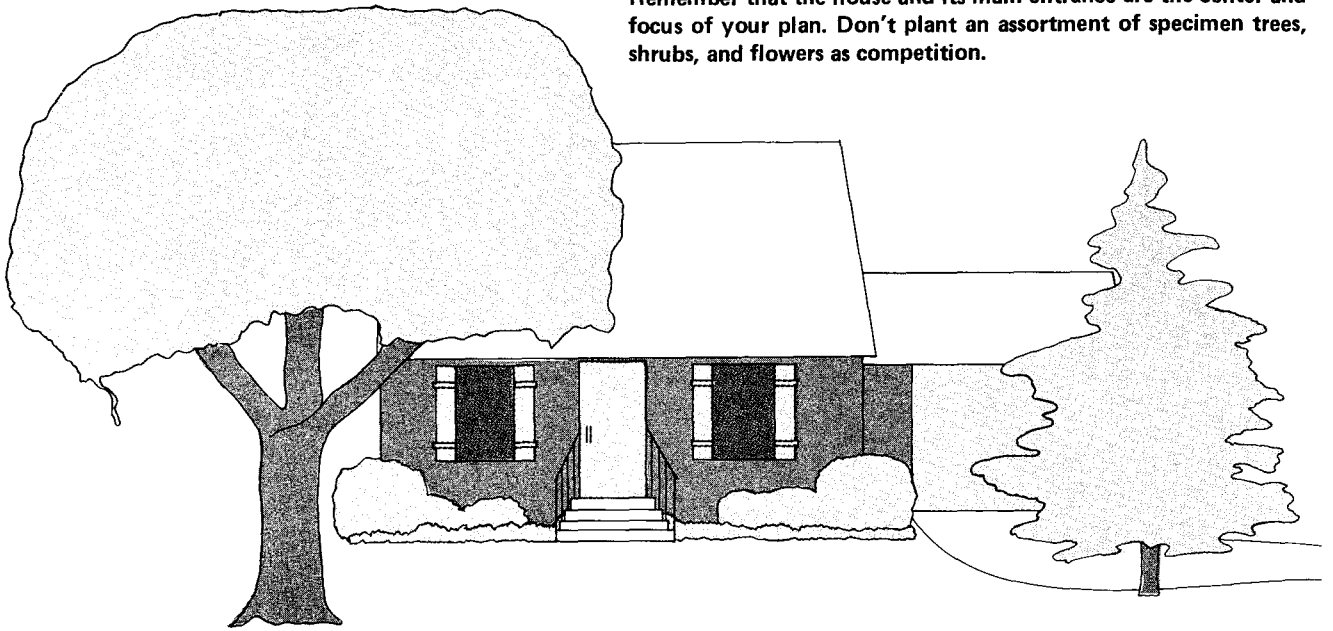
### Choose Secondary Features

Your own preferences may dictate the selection of other features between the house and street; however, these choices should not be made without considering your neighborhood. Small front yards are rarely seen separately--they become part of the community landscape or "streetscape." For example, a house barricaded with a high front fence in a block where other houses have open, tree-shaded lawns can affect both scenery and friendly relationships. Such barriers are more appropriate for large grounds bordered by heavily traveled highways. Some of the alternative arrangements to consider are:

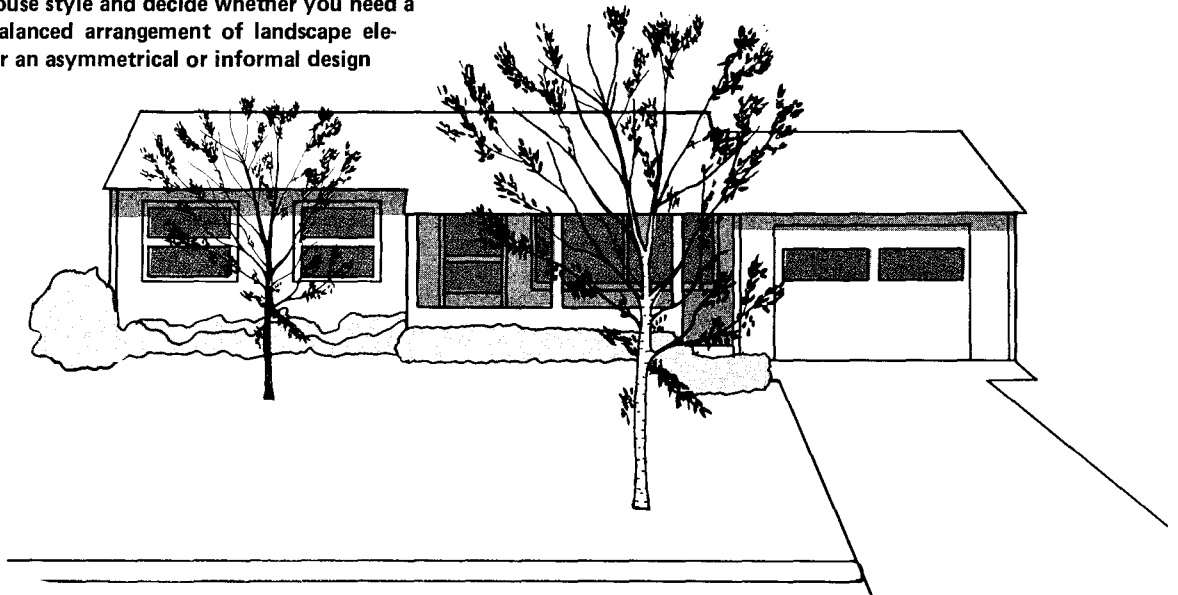
- Lawn with widely spaced trees or groups of shrubs set in a parklike neighborhood without front yard divisions.
- Plantings arranged to allow a limited view of the house, but heavy enough to suggest a wooded or semiwooded lot.
- Shrubs and trees completely screening the front yard, except for 15 to 20 feet on either side of the driveway entrance.
- Low fences to define property lines and discourage casual trespassing.
- High fences for protection or privacy.
- Landscape designed to fit plans for limited investment of maintenance work and/or money.
- Space organized for intensive gardening.

Most of the functions listed as necessary, as well as those offered as choices, are practical matters, easily understood by anyone using the property. Such decisions include driveway width, direction of walks, and location of shade trees. But planting to blend house and grounds is more difficult because the art of design and the science of plant growth must be combined as the plan is drawn. Precise directions and definite rules are impossible to apply to every house, every family, and every location. Few homeowners want an exact copy of the landscape down the street, even if house styles are similar. Use the suggested drawings in this fact sheet to help you work out your own ideas.

Remember that the house and its main entrance are the center and focus of your plan. Don't plant an assortment of specimen trees, shrubs, and flowers as competition.



Consider your house style and decide whether you need a symmetrically balanced arrangement of landscape elements or whether an asymmetrical or informal design is desirable.



Blend house and grounds as simply as possible. Consider horizontal plantings where base planting is needed, rounded forms at house corners, and irregular tree masses to extend beyond high walls and break roof lines as in Figure A. Avoid the "front foundation planting syndrome" shown in Figure B.

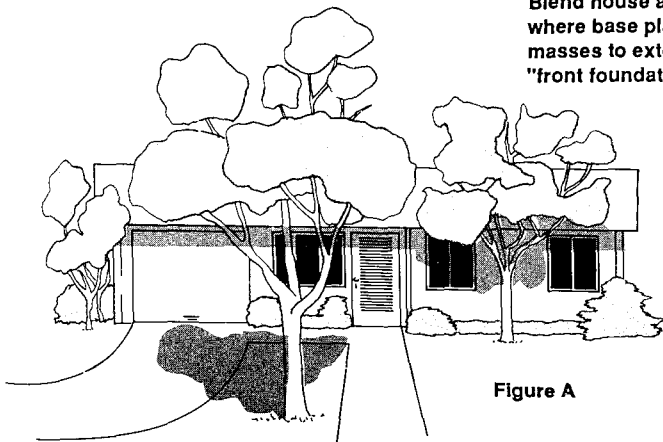
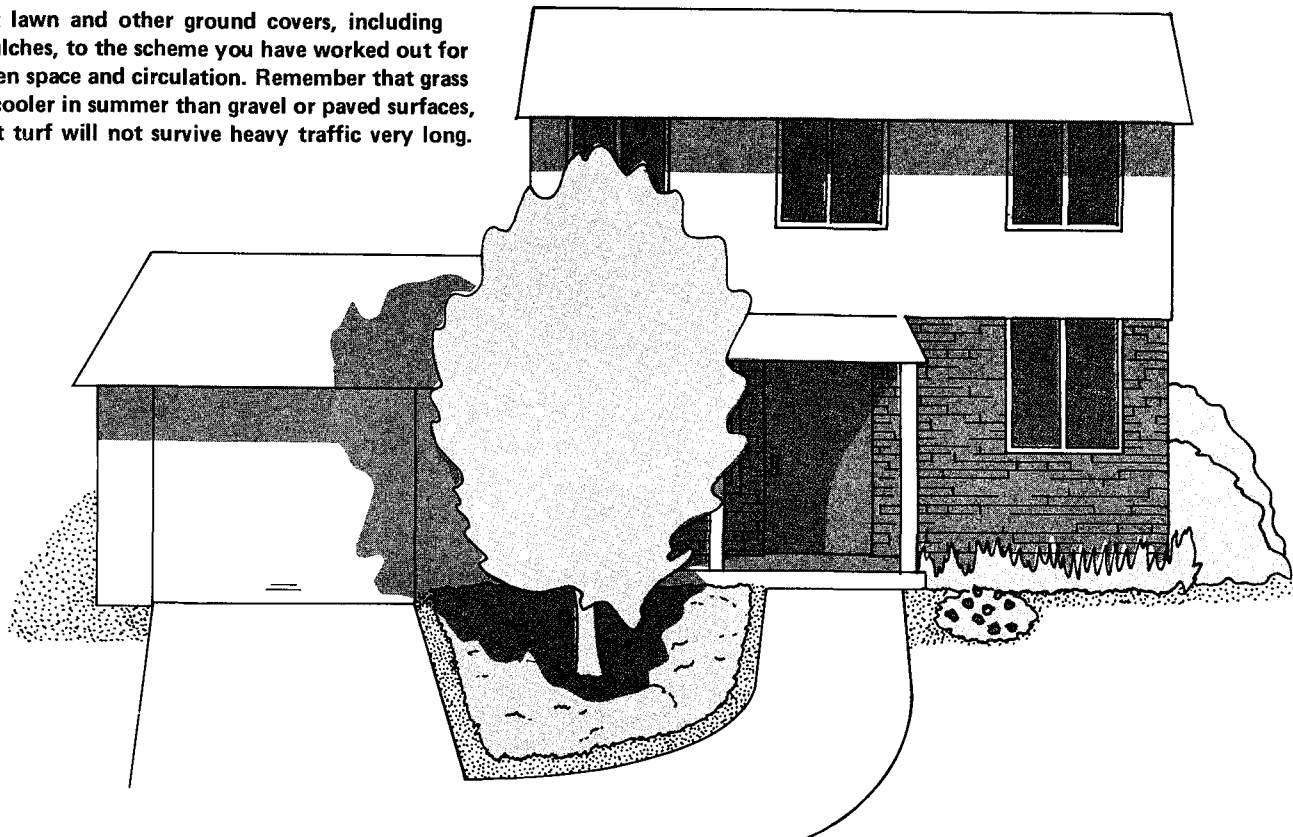


Figure A

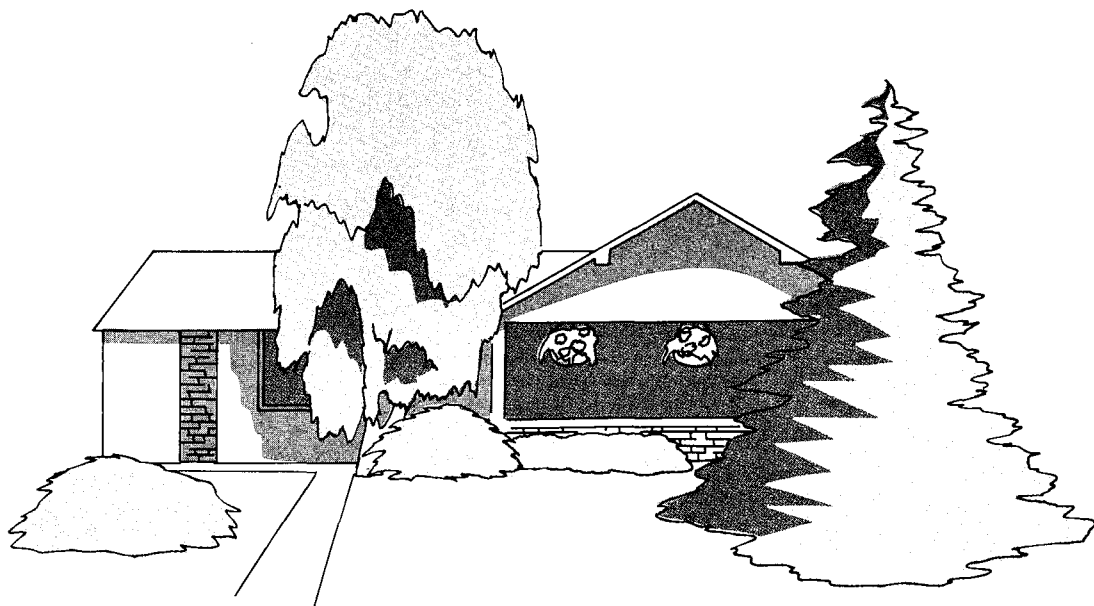


Figure B

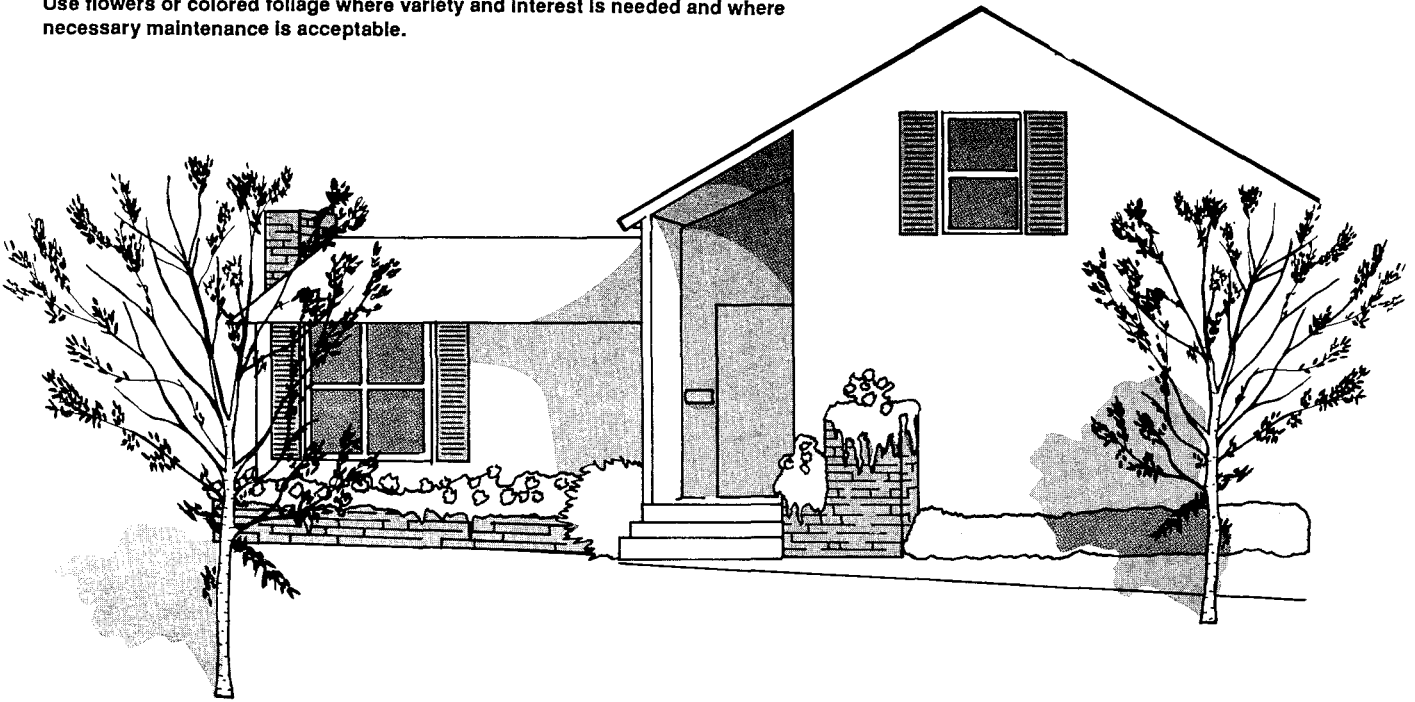
Fit lawn and other ground covers, including mulches, to the scheme you have worked out for open space and circulation. Remember that grass is cooler in summer than gravel or paved surfaces, but turf will not survive heavy traffic very long.



Locate deciduous shade trees where you need them and evergreen trees where four-season foliage and winter protection is needed. But beware forgetting the mature size of any tree you consider; small properties and low houses need small to medium trees in most locations. Keep plantings in scale with home and grounds.



Use flowers or colored foliage where variety and interest is needed and where necessary maintenance is acceptable.



Add garden art, ornaments, or accessories only after careful deliberation. Be sure that any unusual object suits your house style and blends into the overall landscape composition in a spot where you want to attract attention. Private outdoor living spaces are often better locations for such features. This entrance area is obviously overdone.

