

Edible Landscaping

If you're the type of person who loves simple pleasures like picking tree-ripened fruit or gathering homegrown veggies to create the salad of your dreams, then the edible landscape gives you a chance to do both: create an unusual distinctive landscape while also providing a bounty of more flavorful and nutritious fruits and vegetables than is obtainable from the grocery store.

Edible landscaping is not a new concept. In fact, most of our landscapes that hail back in time are built around the beauty and functionality of edible plants. Fruits, herbs, and



vegetable plants were the mainstay of the 1800's cottage garden. These loose, cheerful gardens were full of fruiting pears, apples, and peaches, borders and hedgerows of blueberries and blackberries, and beds of herbs, vegetables, and old-fashioned flowers, all adding to the charm and uniqueness of a country garden.

Some of the added benefits of an edible landscape are the ability to create a more year-round look to your landscape. Most fruit trees do double duty, providing a spring blossom show as well as a fantastic summer show of ripe fruit, and they may even end the year with brilliant fall leaf color.

The functions that you need in the landscape (hedges, ground covers, shade trees, and evergreen screens) are easily found in the range of fruits that grow well in our area. Just check out the list of great possibilities below.

Need an evergreen screen to block an unsightly view? Try pineapple guava, which grows 18' to 20' or can be sheared to a small 6' hedge. Fruit ripens in the fall and are great in fruit salads with other fall ripening fruits like persimmon and Satsuma tangerines. Loquat is a beautiful tree with broad tropical-looking leaves, and clusters of apricot-flavored fruits. This is a tree that will give your landscape a tropical look and mixes well with bananas and citrus. Taller growing citrus trees like Meyer lemons, grapefruits and pummelo also make great screening plants. Olive trees are beautiful in hedges, offering a silvery note to the color scheme, and mixing well with the blue green foliage of pineapple guavas.



Creating shade to cool buildings or provide areas to enjoy a hot summer day is most important. Nut trees like pecan, chestnut and black walnut are easy to grow or you might try a mulberry for instant gratification: mulberry if tended well can grow up to eight feet a year. Larger growing varieties of persimmon like Giombo, Saijo, Tamopan and Rossyanka are excellent choices. Pergolas or arbors are another great way to create shade in the landscape, and fruits like grapes and kiwi are well adapted to grow on them. Muscadine grapes require little care and ripen in late summer and early fall, filling a much needed niche in the year-round fruit schedule. Their sweet spicy flavor is great fresh or for making home made wines. Kiwi fruit is also a good choice for arbors, they are fast growers, and the fruit will store up to 6 months in the fridge.

For low hedges try rosemary. Highly fragrant and tasty foliage is a treat to brush up against and get that fresh, pungent scent. Tough as nails and evergreen to boot. Blueberry, blackberry and boysenberry also make great low hedges with beautiful, bell-shaped and daisy-like white blooms. By choosing varieties that ripen at different times it's possible to have these summer berries ripening from Early May until late July. Small-growing citrus like kumquats, orangequats, and limequats are great low evergreen hedges, while the taller-growing orange, grapefruit, and lemon are fantastic specimen trees grouped in the shrubbery border.



If you're looking for a fantastic spring flower show, the best of the group are apples, peaches, nectarines, and quince for a showy cloud of pink blossom. On the other hand, pears, mayhaws, and plums produce beautiful clouds of pure white. Some of the best for lining avenues or driveways are pears and plums, which are very stately in form. The fall show of a persimmon is unsurpassed. Most color their fruit before leaf color changes, giving the tree a luscious look of jade green leaves covered with bright orange fruit. As cool weather approaches, the leaves begin to take on fiery red, cherry pink, and brilliant yellow colors. Outstanding!



The winter landscape can also be beautiful. Figs when bare of leaves are architectural wonderments. Evergreen, twisted and gnarly olive trees come to life when the rest of the landscape is bare, and the oranges become the jewels of the winter garden with their bright orange fruits.



Consider groundcovers of fragrant herbs such as thyme or mint, and borders of dill, fennel, or basil. Strawberries make a rewarding and low-maintenance groundcover. And if you need a lovely summer vine, why not choose one of the many varieties of cherry tomatoes? These may continue to produce well into the late fall.

For those who are apartment dwellers, many fruit trees are well adapted to growing in containers. Citrus, blueberry, kiwi, fig, pomegranate, and pineapple are especially well suited for containers. Be sure to add some herbs and colorful veggies like red chard, chili peppers, and cherry tomatoes for a show that's sure to dazzle and bring good conversation to your patio.



Edibles can easily be incorporated into your current landscape by inter-planting with ornamentals. Your yard will acquire a uniquely beautiful flair and offer you a healthy return on your labors!

Fruitful Hedges Come in All Shapes and Sizes!

Tall Evergreen Screens:

- Pineapple Guava
- Loquat
- Oranges
- Lemons
- Grapefruits

Espalier Fruiting Hedges:

- Fig
- Peach
- Apple
- Plum
- Pear
- Nectarine
- Persimmon

Short Evergreen Screens:

- Bayleaf
- Rosemary
- Kumquats and their hybrids

Outstanding Flower and Fruit Shows:

- Pomegranate
- Blueberry
- Blackberry