

To plan your garden, you need to know three things:

- what you already have on the lot;
- how you want to use the lot;
- what resources you have available inside and outside the neighborhood.

WHAT DO YOU ALREADY HAVE ON THE LOT?

It's much easier to plan your garden if you start by making a map of what the lot looks like now.

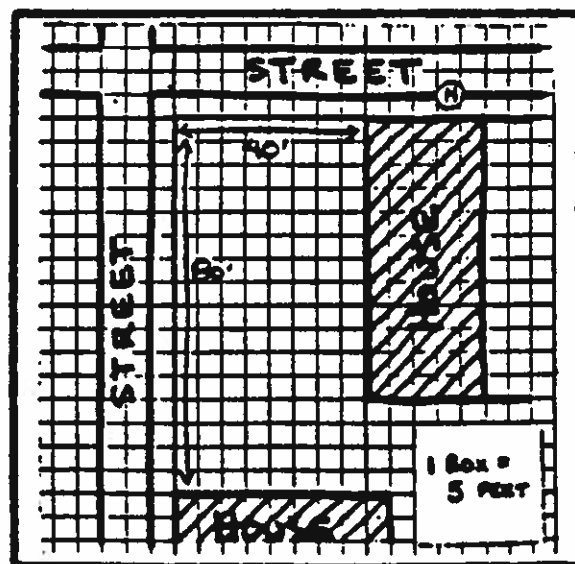
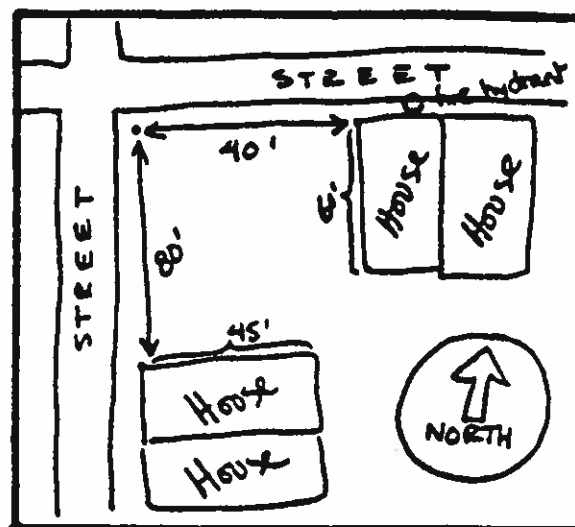
HOW TO MAKE A MAP:

- 1) Measure the lot's length and width.
- 2) Using graph paper, make a scale drawing of the lot. (This isn't as hard as it sounds.) Count the number of boxes along the long side of the graph paper. Compare this with the measurement of the long side of the lot, and determine how many boxes will equal one foot. For example, if the paper is 100 boxes long, and your lot is 50 to 100 feet long, let 1 box=1 foot. If the paper is 300 boxes long and the lot is 100 feet, let 3 boxes=1 foot.

Using the measurements you've worked out, draw the outline of the garden on the graph paper.

- 3) Draw an arrow on your map pointing north. This will show where the shadows of buildings and trees will fall.
- 4) Mark where the closest streets, sidewalks, houses, and hydrants are.

GARDEN PLANNING



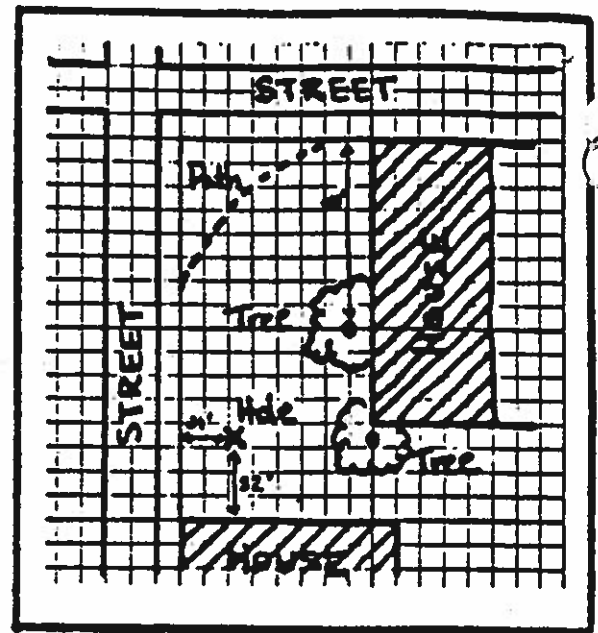
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- 5) Draw in anything else on the lot that's permanent. This includes trees, bushes, mounds of rubble that are too big to move, patches of concrete, large holes, and paths where people cut through the lot.

Take your map out to the site to check where things are. For large objects like trees, measure exactly where they are. (Because of their large size they often fool you, so be sure to mark where the trunk is.)



HOW DO YOU WANT TO USE THE LOT?

The more things you want to do with the lot, the more work and people will be needed to take care of it. If you want to do more than one activity, how will you divide up the space to match the uses? Answering the following questions will help you to decide where to put what on your garden plan.

What uses do you have in mind? Does everybody agree? Work out these things before the garden gets off the planning map and out onto the ground.

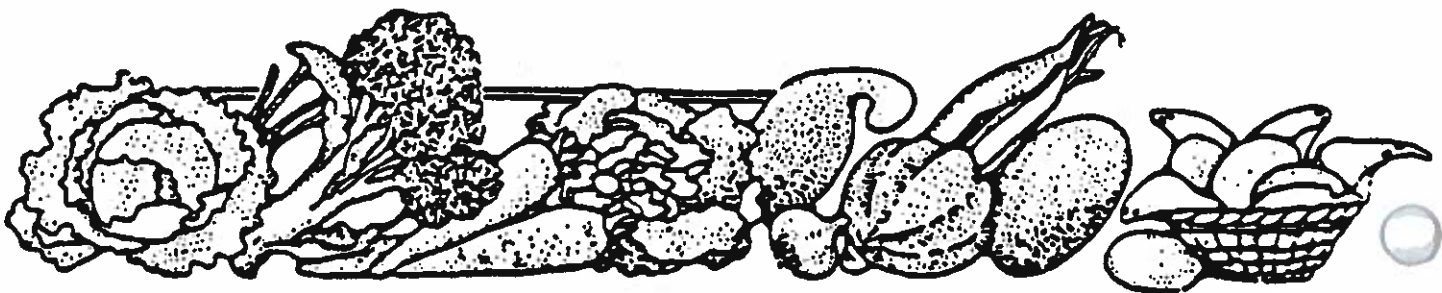
Vegetable gardening?

Flower gardening?

Is there enough sun for growing flowers or veggies?

Can you combine vegetables and flowers in the same beds? This saves space and makes the garden look prettier.

How many people want to have vegetable plots, and how big can the plots be?



A sitting area?

Do you want the sitting area to be in sun or shade?

What kind of plants do you want? perennials? annuals? trees? shrubs?

Play area for the children?

Will a childrens' play area be too close to where people will be planting?

Meeting place or barbecue?

A combination of several of these?

A storage area for compost or woodchips?

Something else?



Other concerns?

How can you work around problem areas?

For example, considering putting a barbecue pit on top of the chunk of cement in the middle of the garden, rather than trying to break up the cement and haul it away.

How will the garden affect neighborhood politics?

Do you need to think about arranging the front of the garden to satisfy the people who look at it every day? Evergreen shrubs might be a good idea to enhance the front in the winter when everything else looks dead.

How much room do you need to leave for full-grown shrubs and trees?

Once you've answered these questions and made your decisions, draw them in on the map. (Do this in pencil in case you change your mind.) Remember, none of these ideas are set in concrete until you actually plant, so don't be afraid



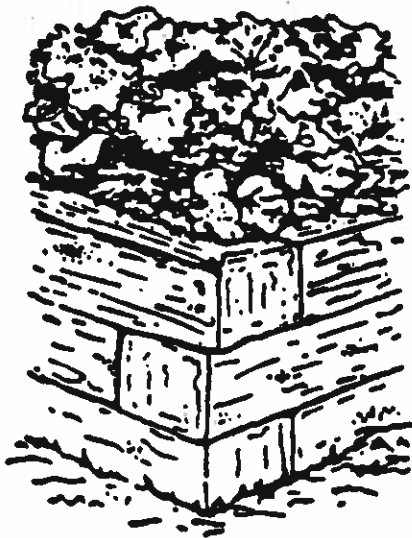
to rearrange things on the map until you get a plan that you're satisfied with.

Here are a few more questions to ask yourself now that you have a basic plan:

WHAT RESOURCES ARE AVAILABLE IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD?

Try to take advantage of things going on in your community.

- Who already knows about gardening?
- Who knows how to put up a fence or build a barbecue grill?
- Who has tools? a truck?
- Who will turn over the soil?
- Are any houses being torn down that could provide bricks and wood for fences, paths, or raised beds.
- Are you near a police stable that has manure?
- Are you near a place where the city dumps leaves?
- Are there any tree-trimming trucks in the area? These crews are always looking for a place to dump chips, which are great for paths, play areas, and mulching around plants.



Ask about other Philadelphia Green educational handouts:

**SOURCES OF ORGANIC MATTER
GROWING PLANTS IN THE CITY
RAISED BED GARDENING**

Answering these question can help to make working in your new garden a lot easier for you, and less trouble for all concerned.

