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Ecological Landscape Principles

We are designers, landscapers, and gardeners guided by the ethics of sustainable land and community stewardship. We work together to enhance the form and function of our client properties. We take a comprehensive view of the outdoor environment that includes hardscapes, stormwater management, and energy efficiency. These are our guiding principles:

DESIGN

Minimize the disturbance of existing soils, native species, and habitats when siting homes and landscape elements. Promote gardens that buffer and protect natural areas adjacent to buildings.

Use native plant species in designed landscapes and gardens where appropriate.

Mitigate drainage and erosion impacts using bio-engineering techniques, storm water catchments, gutters, and rain gardens as needed. Storm drains are not emptied directly into lakes and/or streams.

Turf areas are sized for specific uses, recreation, and borders. Turf is not the “go to” design choice for large expanses of property.

Hardscapes should be permeable to storm water and constructed on base materials that are drained to green belts, catchments, or rain gardens.

Design to minimize the need for permanent irrigation systems. Use temporary irrigation as needed to establish plants that are deep rooted and adapted to the ecosystems found on site.

PROJECT DEVELOPMENT

Preserve and enhance on-site soils using weed-free soil amendments. Minimize importing topsoil.

Minimize the compaction of soils by heavy equipment and confine activity to planned travel lanes. Avoid compacting existing tree root zones.

Strive to use locally propagated, quality plant stock. Promote the use of local seed sources.

GARDENING AND MAINTENANCE

Renovate existing gardens and create new gardens by first eliminating weeds and unwanted vegetation.

Use base grasses and ground covers to minimize exposed soils and need for mulching and herbicide weed control.

Preserve and promote healthy soil biota by minimizing soil disturbances and removal of organic debris. Compost plant materials on site if possible. Use composting facilities for off-site disposal.

Fertilize, as needed, with organic products.

Conserve water by retaining storm water on site where feasible. Monitor irrigation systems to avoid overwatering, and to detect leaks.

Minimize energy usage, for example by

- Using power equipment only when it is necessary and cost-effective.
- Combining service calls and project work into efficient routes as much as possible to reduce travel time and fuel use.

Preserve and promote plant diversity in our landscapes.

Introduce native plants to clients.

Use local/regional genotype plants and seeds as available.

Control invasive species.