

COMPONENTS OF LANDSCAPES AND GARDENS

Thoughtful planning of garden features and ornaments make a garden beautiful. Garden has not only living components (plants) but also many non-living components /enrichment items.

Living components

1. Lawn

- a. Lawn is a natural green carpet of a garden. It is a ground cover made of perennial fine grass which is maintained by continuous and close mowing.
- b. Eg: Bermuda grass/Dhoob grass/Haryali grass – *Cynodon dactylon*
- c. Korean grass – *Zoysia japonica*
- d. Blue grass – *Poa annua*

2. Trees

- a. Tree is a woody perennial with a distinct trunk and is grown mostly for shade, for flowers, foliage and for other economic uses. Moreover, trees serve as wind breaks and shelter belts and help to reduce air pollution and noise pollution.
- b. Eg: *Delonix regia* (Gulmohar)
Peltophorum ferrugineum (Copper pod tree)

3. Shrubs

- a. Shrubs are perennial plants having many woody branches arising from the base of the plant. Flowering as well as foliage shrubs are available.
- b. Flowering shrub Eg: Bougainvillea, *Hibiscus rosasinensis*
- c. Foliage shrubs Eg: *Murraya exotica*
- d. Fragrant flowered shrub: Eg: Jasmine, *Gardenia jasminoides*

4. Herbs

Herbs are plants having non-woody stems and are smaller than shrubs. They provide contrast that makes a landscape lively. There are annuals as well as perennials.

Annual herbs Eg: Cosmos, *Celosia*

Perennial herbs Eg: Chrysanthemum, Gerbera

5. Climbers, creepers, trailers and ramblers

Climbers are plants which possess special structures to climb over a support.

Eg: *Antigonon leptopus* (tendrils), *Ficus repens* (rootlets)

Creepers are unable to climb vertically due to their weak stem and hence creep along the ground.

Eg: *Wedelia trilobata*

Trailers are similar to creepers but do not form roots at nodes.

Eg: *Tradescantia sp.*

Ramblers are plants which fail to climb over but somehow support themselves over the trunk or stem of other plants.

Eg: *Quisqualis indica*

6. Ferns and Selaginellas

7. Cacti and Succulents

8. Bulbous plants

These are plants with underground perennating structures which help them to tide over unfavorable situations.

Eg: Gladiolus, Heliconia

9. Palms and Cycads

Palms are used in any one of the following ways in gardening

- a. As a single specimen in lawn Eg: *Areca triandra*
 - b. For avenue planting Eg: *Roystonea regia*
 - c. As indoor and pot plants Eg: *Chrysalidocarpus lutescens* (Areca palm)
- Cycads are seed plants characterized by stout, woody trunk with crown having large, stiff, pinnate evergreen leaves. They are dioecious and very slow in growth.

10. Bamboos and grasses

Flower beds and borders

Refer to grouping of flowering annuals and herbaceous perennials in beds and borders. Flower beds usually consist of a single species while flower border is continuous with more length than width and containing plants of heterogeneous nature. Flower beds are important components of a formal garden. Borders act as boundary for lawns, merge building with the garden, improves visual quality of the gardens

Flower beds Eg. of plants used – Portulaca Herbaceous

border Eg: Canna, Chrysanthemum

Hedges

Serve the purpose of fencing or screening. Give shelter from strong wind. Help to separate garden components. Shrubs or trees planted at regular intervals to form continuous screen is called hedge.

Characteristics of species selected for hedging

- It should have thick texture and quick growth
- It should withstand frequent trimming
- Should be easy to propagate

- Should be drought hardy

Tall protective hedge Eg: Bougainvillea

Tall ornamental Eg: Hibiscus

Dwarf protective Eg: Opuntia

Dwarf ornamental Eg: Lantana, Acalypha

Edges

Mainly used to demarcate the places allotted for a specific purpose. Lining the borders of beds, lawn, paths etc. with low growing perennials or brick work or stones.

Foliage plants Eg: Alternanthera

Flowering plants Eg: Gerbera, Amaryllis

Rockery

To bring in a limited space the idea of a mountain or alpine garden with plants growing in crevices of rocks. A rockery should simulate the natural rock formation with plants growing on them.

Eg: Opuntia, Agave, Aloe, ferns etc.

Topiary

The art of clipping and shaping (shearing) shrubs and small trees or training the plants into different forms or shapes like animals, birds, arches etc.

Eg: Casuarina, *Murraya exotica*, *Duranta repens*

Trophy

Arranging potted colourful foliage or flowering shrubs and annuals or herbaceous perennials around a tree or any central object (statue or flag post). They are often arranged in tiers.

Carpet beds

Covering an area preferably a bed or series of beds with dense slow growing herbaceous plants according to a set design. Looks better on a slope or a slanting position. Usually a figure or letters are cut.

Ground covers

Refer to any plant which forms a low canopy of foliage or with spreading nature and cover the ground very densely so that weeds cannot grow under them. Used to provide protection from erosion and drought and to improve aesthetic appearance of the landscape.

Upright and spreading habit: Eg: *Alternanthera versicolour*

Trailing type: Eg: *Zebrina pendula*

Green houses

There are commercial foliage and flowering plants which cannot thrive in the open conditions (under direct sun). Such plants are best grown inside green houses where required shade and humidity are provided.

Eg: Anthurium

Arches and Pergolas

Arches in a garden near the entrance or over the path used to train climbers or ramblers. The height of the arch should be 2.5 m so that the hanging branches do not obstruct the access. Width should not be less than 1 m. Arches are usually made of wooden poles or galvanized iron wire netting supported by GI pipes.

A series of arches connected together is known as pergola and these are constructed over pathways.

Trellis

Trellises are usually formed with wooden poles or using GI pipes. These are covered with beautiful flowering or foliage climbers for separating one component of garden from the other or for screening purpose.

Drives, roads, walks, paths, steps and stepping stones

These are important features of a garden to connect one part of garden to the other part easily.

The drive (main road) should be laid out in such a way that it passes through the major areas of the garden and the rest of the things should be connected with walks, paths and stepping stones. The drives should be made on as strong foundation preferably of concrete which is long lasting and which allows passage of vehicle. Width of road or drive should be 3-5m. Gravel drive and concrete drive are mainly used in the garden. Walks and paths should be at least 60 cm wide. Preferably between 90 and 120cm.

Generally used types of paths are gravel paths, brick path, stone paving and grass paths. Path links the main feature of a garden and provides access to different parts of garden. A path with graceful and gentle curves will look much better than a straight one.

Steps are the means by which different levels of the garden can be connected. Stepping stones should be easy to walk on and their tops should be reasonably flat. Steps may be of brick, stone, tile, wood, concrete, grass or combinations of two or three of these.

Specialized gardens

Some areas of a garden, when devoted for laying out specialized types of gardens with one particular group of plants, form and attractive feature in a

design. Examples of specialized gardens are: Herb garden, Rose garden, Bog garden, Sunken garden, Topiary garden, Kitchen garden, and Paved garden.

Non-living components (Garden Adornments)

Many adornments /enrichments are provided in a garden to make it look more ornamental. Selection and positioning of enrichment items should add charm and quality to the landscape.

Fountains

Fountains break the monotony of the garden and add pleasing sound inside the garden. It can be used as a focal point also. Musical fountains are gaining popularity nowadays.

Statues, towers and wells

Statues of animate/inanimate objects can be used. Made of bronze or stone or copper or concrete. Statues can be placed in the midst of a running stream of water, along the border of a big lawn, at the cross section of two roads, at the end of a road or near the doorway of the house.

Towers and sculptures are sometimes placed at the edge of water so that they form reflections in the water.

Wells are indicative of the life of a garden, since they are supposed to supply water. The well may be octagonal, circular or square and is approached by a long flight of steps.

Garden seats

Should be comfortable, durable, aesthetic and should not look out of place.

Can be made of wood, iron, concrete, fibre or plastic.

Ornamental stones

Ornamental stones add beauty to the gardens. Stones of various colours and designs can be placed near lily pools / along streams /waterfalls. It improves the look of the area to a great extent.

Tubs, vases and urns

These are useful for plant display. Made of timber, concrete, terracotta, brass or curved out of stone. These can be fixed permanently in a place or sometimes it can be movable also.

Bird bath

A large bowl-shaped container fixed over a pillar of about 1m height. Water is stored in the bowl for the birds to come and drink/bath. It should be placed in a quiet place to attract birds.

Floral clocks

Refers to large clocks operated by electricity, having large arms to show second, minute and hour. The dial is made by carpet bedding or flower bed. Machinery of the clock is concealed in underground chamber. If flowering annuals are used, they should be replaced every season.

Eg: Alternanthera, Iresine

Sundials

Used in a garden to know the time. It should be positioned in a place where shadow from a tree or building does not fall for a long duration.

Lanterns

Carved out of stone and should be low and decorative. Metal lanterns can also be used.

Plant stands

Made of mild steel rods molded in different fashion with various sized rings attached to hold pots with plants. Used in roof garden, indoor garden and vertical garden.

Band stand

A place meant exclusively for the band to stand and play. Usually, they are in a lawn or under a group of trees so that the people can sit, relax and enjoy the music played.

Gazebo

A pavilion structure from which the glimpse of the whole garden could be viewed is referred to as gazebo.

Bridges

Necessary item in a garden to cross a stream. Size, shape and material of bridge depends upon the type of water barrier. Made of wood, stone or concrete.

Kiosk

Usually a structure in the form of an ornamental shed. The main purpose is to provide shelter for sitting and taking rest. Usually made of brick floor, wooden frame and decorative tiled roof. Placement dimension and design should be in harmony with the garden features.