



# BUILDING HOMES AND HABITATS: A RESOURCE GUIDE

PARTNERING ECOLOGICALLY-SUSTAINABLE LANDSCAPING WITH SOCIAL HOUSING



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# A Message From the Wild Garden Party

Dear Reader:

Between January 2004 and December 2005, the Wild Garden Party and Habitat for Humanity Victoria (HFHV) collaborated to create ecologically sound home-based landscapes at a subdivision in Sidney, British Columbia, a project called Homes and Habitats. These homes were built with and for families in need. While the Wild Garden Party is concerned primarily with conservation issues, HFHV focuses on social needs. The collaboration of our two organizations represents an awareness that social, economic and environmental issues cannot be dealt with in isolation, as they are all interconnected. The Homes and Habitats project is a unique, innovative venture that addresses these issues concurrently.

The Homes and Habitats project, through landscaping the homes, encouraged self-reliance and promoted ecologically friendly principles. The project had three primary goals:

- a) to design and create a low-maintenance, water-wise, organic garden in a residential neighborhood that benefits a family, augments wildlife habitat, produces food, and recycles organic waste;
- b) to provide education to the family, volunteers and other participants on the methods and benefits of creating such a garden; and,
- c) to create a resource guide by which we could share lessons learned so that similar gardens will be created in the future.

The Wild Garden Party was well equipped to take on this project in 2004. As a collaborative venture, we had an excellent reputation formed by successful past projects, a wealth of knowledge and experience, and the cooperation of Habitat for Humanity Victoria.

Over the next two years, the Homes and Habitats project succeeded in landscaping four homes at the site. Along the way, the project offered many opportunities for education, outreach and building new partnerships.

This project could never have been completed without the support of our funders, donors, collaborators, the homeowners and our volunteers. A very special thanks go out to them for their vision and dedication.

This resource guide is serves as a how-to manual about the project. It is the hope of the Wild Garden Party that it will be helpful to those landscaping Habitat for Humanity sites, as well as other subdivisions, schoolyards, and private properties. It describes the principles of the project, planning methods, accomplishments and lessons learned. It is our hope that this framework will serve as inspiration to other groups to collaborate with both likely and unlikely partners to accomplish projects that could never be accomplished by a single group for the betterment of environment as a whole.

We wish you the best of luck in all your collaborative ventures.

*The Wild Garden Party*



**The Homes and Habitats project promoted ecologically-sustainable landscaping principles, such as:**

- Native plants to provide food and habitat for wildlife and to promote biodiversity.
- Household food production using chemical-free methods.
- Compost for waste reduction and soil amendment.
- Water conservation features.

# 1

## Part 1: Project Overview



### Goals and Objectives

#### Objective #1

- **Collaborate with HFHV, the homeowners, volunteers and specialists.**

Collaboration was integral to the project and was used whenever possible. Resources and expertise were pooled during design, implementation and education.

#### Objective #2

- **Create a garden at the home of a low-income family, through involvement of HFHV, the homeowner and volunteers. The garden should feature elements of ecologically sustainable landscaping.**

The Homes and Habitats project provided both low-maintenance, food producing landscapes, and habitat for native plants and wildlife. This was accomplished by providing infrastructure, such as raised beds and compost bins; landscaping with perennial food-producing plants, such as fruit trees and raspberry canes; and incorporating native, drought tolerant plants, which provide habitat.

#### Objective #3

- **Create a resource guide for future garden construction.**

The guide includes the knowledge and experiences of all the Wild Garden Party members.

### Overview of Project Stages

Phase one took place in 2004, and involved approaching the homeowners and developing site plans based on their needs. Questionnaires were sent out, and the coordinator then followed up by visiting each family. From this information drawings were made of existing structures and the layout of new garden beds and features.

When work began it was obvious that three of the yards would have to be leveled to create more gardening space and provide better landscaping options. Habitat for Humanity Victoria and the Wild Garden Party cooperated on building retaining walls that increased the usable space.

With the retaining walls built, work began on planting the hedgerows between the houses. Plants and supplies were purchased, donated and salvaged to create not only hedgerows, but also two large demonstration beds. Herb gardens, raised beds, and fruit trees were also added. To overcome the poor soil on the site, all the beds were mulched heavily. Ground cover plants were also used to prevent erosion.

Phase two took place in 2005 and involved the continued design and creation of landscapes at the remainder of the homes then under construction. Phase Two also included the production of this resource guide describing the principles and methods used to create the garden. It will be made available to local landscapers and the 59 Habitat for Humanity affiliates across Canada. The Wild Garden Party will also make the guide available on its web site, for use by landscapers, homeowners, and community groups.

## The Participants

### Habitat for Humanity Victoria [www.habitatvictoria.com](http://www.habitatvictoria.com)

Habitat for Humanity Victoria is one of 59 Canadian affiliates of Habitat for Humanity Canada. Habitat for Humanity Canada has built more than 500 homes since 1985. Habitat for Humanity Victoria, Canada, and International are all dedicated to the elimination of poverty housing by building simple affordable homes in partnership with families in need. Homeowners contribute 500 hours of “sweat equity” to the construction of their own homes, and then repay a long-term, no-interest mortgage. Mortgage costs are kept low by the use of volunteer labour and by the donation of funds and building materials. Habitat for Humanity Victoria is currently interested in creating landscapes for homeowners that reflect respect for the surrounding ecosystem and incorporate features that are practical and useful to the homeowner. They have committed to working with the Wild Garden Party to achieve these goals.

### The Wild Garden Party [www.wildgardenparty.org](http://www.wildgardenparty.org)

The Wild Garden Party belongs to no single agency- it is a collaboration of like-minded groups and individuals working on issues of ecologically sound landscape practices in the Capital Region of British Columbia, which includes Greater Victoria and the Southern Gulf Islands. Membership is fluid and organizations give time in varying amounts. What is consistent is that the organizations together achieve goals that none could accomplish separately. Projects that this group focuses on address issues of how we care for our region’s landscapes. We promote the conservation of wildlife habitat, organic gardening and landscaping, home and local food production, thoughtful use of our water resources, composting, and the inclusion of native plants in our landscapes. We draw inspiration and knowledge from one another to encourage individuals to care for their home places.

#### Who is the Wild Garden Party?

The Wild Garden Party represents a natural partnership of a variety of groups:

**City Green** is a non- profit initiative that empowers people and organizations to enhance their health, save money and reduce their environmental impact.

Web: [www.citygreen.ca](http://www.citygreen.ca) Phone: (250) 381-9995

**Greater Victoria Compost Education Centre** encourages composting and conservation. You can call the hotline, take workshops on organic gardening, buy composting equipment and visit the display garden and composting area.

Web: [www.compost.bc.ca](http://www.compost.bc.ca) Phone: (250) 386-9676

**Habitat Acquisition Trust (HAT)** is the regional land trust working to enhance the protection and stewardship of regionally significant lands on southern Vancouver Island and the southern Gulf Islands by preserving habitats, promoting land and water stewardship, and building community support for conservation.

Web: [www.hat.bc.ca](http://www.hat.bc.ca) Phone: (250) 995-2428

**Lifecycles Project Society** is dedicated to cultivating awareness and initiating action around food, health and urban sustainability. This is achieved through youth-driven programs that build youth capacity in agri-food businesses, through garden training projects, entrepreneurship programs and community gardens.

Web: [www.lifecyclesproject.ca](http://www.lifecyclesproject.ca) Phone: (250) 383-5800

**The Native Plant Study Group**, a sub group of the Victoria Horticulture Society, is dedicated to studying the native plants of British Columbia and promoting their use and conservation.

Phone: (250) 595-5820

**The Native Plant Society of British Columbia** brings together people from throughout the province who enjoy, study, and work with native plants and habitats.

Web: [www.npsbc.org](http://www.npsbc.org) E-mail: [information@npsbc.org](mailto:information@npsbc.org)

**Naturescape British Columbia** is a voluntary land stewardship program dedicated to helping people care for wildlife habitat at home.

Web: [www.hctf.ca/nature.htm](http://www.hctf.ca/nature.htm) Phone: (250) 387-9769

**Victoria Natural History Society:** since 1944 the Victoria Natural History Society has provided an opportunity for those interested in the natural world to come together to share their ideas and experiences. Since 1944, the Society's mandate is to stimulate an active interest in natural history, to study and protect flora and fauna and their habitats, and to work with other societies and like bodies having interests in common with the Society.

Web: [www.vicnhs.bc.ca](http://www.vicnhs.bc.ca) Phone: (250) 479-2054

### **Past Wild Garden Party Projects**

#### **Wild Garden Party Garden Tour**

In May 2004, nearly 300 people toured through 14 wonderfully wild gardens. The tour showcased gardens that incorporate native plants, water conservation, food production, organic methods and composting, creating beautiful, healthy havens for humans and wildlife alike.

#### **The Urban Wild Garden Party: A Celebration of Native Plants**

This event on September 27, 2003 at the Royal BC Museum highlighted the benefits of gardening with native plants. It gave residents a chance to listen to storytellers, learn from native plant experts, tour the Native Plant Gardens, and to purchase native plants from local growers. Wild Garden Party members were on hand to offer information on ecologically friendly landscaping.



#### **A Demonstration Garden at the 2002 Victoria Flower and Garden Show**

On July 7, 2002, after eight months of meetings, ten community groups came together at Royal Roads to transform a dry 35' x 100' grassy site into a lush, water-wise, organic garden in just four days. Under the dappled shade of a large maple emerged a composite of native plants, organic vegetables, fruit trees and herbs, a compost center, greenhouse, and a rustic conceptual house. All of these were tied together by a chip trail, a dry streambed and numerous native and water-wise plants including herbaceous perennials and shrubs. The display won the People's Choice award.

## The Funders

This project would not have been possible without the generous help of our funders and many donors. It is with the deepest gratitude that we recognize their contributions to this project.

## Funding

Victoria Foundation (in partnership with J.W. McConnell Family Foundation)  
[www.victoriafoundation.bc.ca](http://www.victoriafoundation.bc.ca)

Vancity Community Partnership Fund  
[www.vancity.com/MyCommunity/AboutUs/WhoWeAre/Subsidiaries/VancityCommunityFoundation/](http://www.vancity.com/MyCommunity/AboutUs/WhoWeAre/Subsidiaries/VancityCommunityFoundation/)

Capital Regional District, Water Division  
[www.crd.bc.ca/water/](http://www.crd.bc.ca/water/)

University of Victoria, Service Learning Internship Program  
[mycoop.coop.uvic.ca/assets/pdf/slip\\_grant.pdf](http://mycoop.coop.uvic.ca/assets/pdf/slip_grant.pdf)

## Donations

A. Hofman  
Copley Bros. Construction  
CRD Water Division  
Do-It Center  
Erwin Industries  
Garden Path Nursery  
Habitat for Humanity  
Integrity Sales  
L&E Sawmills  
Michigan Street Community Garden  
Oak Bay Parks  
Peninsula Landscaping  
Thousand Summers  
Trio Gravel Mart



## What is Ecologically-Sustainable Landscaping?

Ecologically-sustainable landscaping is the design and maintenance of cultivated landscapes, such as home gardens, in harmony with the natural systems that occur there. This results in a reduced need for the input of resources, such as water, and creates landscapes that are both beautiful and resilient.

### Elements of Ecologically-sustainable Landscaping

#### 1. Plant with Native Plants

**Native plant:** any plant species that existed here prior to European settlement.

Across North America, native plant species are threatened by habitat loss from urban, suburban and industrial development. Fortunately, gardeners can help. By planting native species in your garden you can contribute to the long-term survival of these plants and the creatures that depend on them. When native plants are incorporated into human settlement they create green corridors between and parks and wild areas.

**Never take native plants from the wild—only buy from a reputable nursery**

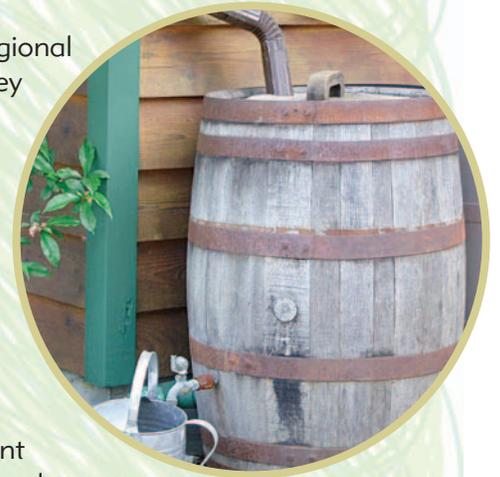
#### 2. Conserve Water

**Using native plants:** native plants are adapted to our regional weather. Once established in an appropriate location they will require little supplemental water.

**Applying Mulch:** using leaves, bark, compost, or any other kind of organic material on your beds helps to reduce evaporation and keeps the roots of your plants cool and moist. Mulch ensures that you do not have to water as often.

**Installing micro-irrigation:** micro-irrigation provides a small flow of water directly to your plants. This kind of efficient irrigation means you don't waste water.

**Water Catchment:** rain barrels and other water catchment systems redirect rain water from the storm drain to the garden. Rain water is clean and naturally the right temperature and pH for plants.



#### 3. Keep your garden free of chemicals

Caring for your landscape does not need to involve chemical pesticides and fertilizers. In fact, these chemicals can have a damaging impact on water quality, the soil, your plants and other living creatures in your garden. Always think of prevention first. Problems will be minimized if you keep your soil healthy by adding compost, choosing the right plants for the right place, and planting to attract beneficial insects and insect-eating birds. If you do use a control, such as insecticidal soap or horticultural oil, be sure to follow the instructions and use only as little as necessary.

#### 4. Compost

Composting reduces the amount of garbage destined for the landfill and, as an excellent source of nutrients, provides ideal mulch for your garden - and composting is easy to do! The first thing you need is something to contain your compost materials. You can build your own backyard compost bin or you can buy a commercial composter. Ensure that the bin has holes no greater than 1/4" to prevent pests from entering. Once the bin is in place, create a layer of twigs on the bottom so that air can circulate through the pile. If rodents are a problem in your area, ensure that you have a wire mesh base instead. Then add, in equal parts, nitrogen-rich materials (such as vegetable scraps, newly mowed grass, or newly fallen leaves) and carbon-rich materials (such as dried leaves, and dried grass). Poke holes in your compost occasionally or turn it to help with the decay process.

**To avoid problems, do not compost any animal products in your bin. Also avoid weed seeds and large twigs.**

#### 5. Produce Organic Food

We can increase our food self-sufficiency by including food-producing plants in our landscapes. Food self-sufficiency not only decreases our food bill, it also provides us with fresh, organic produce and reduces the fossil fuel used to transport our food. Fruit trees and vine fruits such as hardy kiwis can be beautiful, provide privacy and shade, and produce food. Many other perennial food plants can also be incorporated into the landscape: strawberries, rhubarb, raspberries, herbs, and edible flowers, for example. Both perennial food plants and annual vegetables require rich soil and full sun. They should be placed in the landscape first to ensure they receive enough sun to flourish, and receive adequate soil amendments. Try to utilize food plants that produce at varying times of year to avoid a glut of produce. Also, mixing plant types and incorporating umbel type flowers will attract beneficial insects and mitigate pests.

#### 6. Provide Habitat

We can all enhance our enjoyment of gardening by incorporating plants and features that provide food and shelter for wildlife. Blend trees, shrubs, vines, and wildflowers for diversity. Even a small area, thoughtfully planted, can help wildlife. Significant components in the diet of many of our native animals, native plants are particularly valuable if you wish to attract more birds, butterflies and bees to your yard. Plant cover is important for providing a place where wildlife can take shelter, escape from danger and raise their young. Water, another key ingredient in attracting many species of birds and insects, is often difficult to find in urban areas. You can help by providing water in ponds, birdbaths, shallow dishes, or even in rock hollows.

**Habitat = Food + Shelter + Water**

# 2

## Part 2: Getting off the Ground

### Finding Inspiration

#### The Collaboration

Like many good endeavours, this project arose from a brainstorming session around a picnic table on a sunny day when the Wild Garden Party was discussing the possibilities for another project. When the Victoria Foundation advertised that they were funding environmental partnership projects that showcased collaboration between environmental organizations, we were very keen to participate.

The opportunity to create a project with some permanence greatly appealed to all the members. As well, we had an idea to bring in a non-traditional partner into our collaboration. One member had heard about the Habitat for Humanity Victoria project in Sidney and suggested we explore their interest in participating. Habitat for Humanity Victoria indicated their interest and a new partnership was born.

#### The Ecological Need

The threats to the rare and unique ecosystems of our region and their rich biological diversity created a tremendous need for this project. Greater Victoria contains significant marine and forest habitats and species that cannot be found elsewhere, including the Garry oak ecosystem, one of the three most endangered ecosystems in Canada. There are approximately 130 threatened and endangered species in our region, some of which are found nowhere else on the planet. Agricultural, residential, and industrial development has reduced these ecosystems to a remnant of their former range. Of the remaining fragments, only 1-5% is in near-natural condition and these regions are under constant pressure of urban development.

The human population of the region has grown by over 25% over the last ten years and is predicted to grow by another 33% by 2026.<sup>1</sup> Increased stress on habitats has resulted in a growing need for environmental stewardship and the protection of local biological diversity. Because of the unusually high percentage of privately owned land in the Capital Regional District, and unrelenting development pressure, the promotion of voluntary land stewardship in our community is a vital and cost-effective method of protecting our natural resources.

#### Creating a Legacy

As part of our commitment to educating the public, the Wild Garden Party has engaged in a number of activities to demonstrate how livable and beautiful an ecologically sensitive landscape can be. The opportunity to create permanent landscapes that act as an ongoing showcase has great appeal because it provides opportunity for education, and for habitat creation.

The most important way in which this project strengthened the community was by setting a precedent for the ecologically-sound gardening of a subdivision.

This project builds community resources by providing knowledge, through the resource guide and hands-on volunteer opportunities, that can be used for future landscaping projects.

Volunteers who participated in the project became ambassadors of the Wild Garden Party and sustainable landscaping, sharing their acquired knowledge and skills with friends and family who seek to create similar gardens. The lasting beauty and simplicity of maintaining a sustainable landscape acts as an inspiration for neighbours to do the same.



### Finding the Necessary Capacities, Skills, and Knowledge

When the Wild Garden Party took on the Homes and Habitats project it had a track record of successful

<sup>1</sup> CRD Parks "Parkland Acquisition Fund Fact Sheet #1", October 1999.

projects, and a collective of groups that met the projects needs. Not only did members have a wide range of skills and expertise, the past collaborations allowed for a free exchange of ideas, and participation ‘off the clock.’

While the groups overlapped in the skills they had to offer, they focused on areas of the project that fit well with their interests and aptitudes. In this way the Greater Victoria Compost Education Centre led administrative tasks, while Habitat Acquisition Trust led the site design. As individuals, the group members also offered their carpentry, botany, and landscaping skills.

Certain capacities, skills, and knowledge are critical to the success of a natural landscape garden project. You will need both **concrete gardening abilities, knowledge, and soft skills.**

Since native plants are central to this type of landscaping, you will want to work with someone with a **solid knowledge of native plants for your area.** There is probably a native plant for every purpose and every location, but you will have to find it. Secondly, you will want to include someone who can help with **site design.** This is important not only for providing a solid plan to follow, but also for creating a visual representation of your plan to show homeowners, funders, and volunteers. You probably have group members with soft landscaping skills, pruning, weeding, etc, but you also need participants with **hard landscaping skills,** such as mulching, grading, etc.

While landscaping is the primary function of this type of project, you will need other skills for it to run smoothly. The most important of these are **communication skills.** From forming an agreement to sending thank you cards, you will constantly be representing your project to the community. You will need to have group members comfortable with many forms of communication:

- Public speaking
- Giving instructions and delegating
- Business communication in person, by phone, fax, and email
- Media and outreach
- Facilitating meetings and work parties

Two other skills are important to the success of your project: **fundraising** and **recruiting volunteers.** It’s a good idea to have an individual or group with experience available for advice and support. If you are doing these things for the first time you will want someone to consult. **Case studies** and **manuals** can be both inspiring and informative. **Community groups** in your area may have such documents, and many more are available on-line. Even if the project is markedly different than yours, sections on recruiting volunteers or fundraising may still apply. Also, much has been written about community building projects. If you are new to this type of project, you will feel more confident and prepared if you do some research.

It is important to note that no one person or group needs to embody all these skills. What is important is recognizing where your group’s skills are lacking and finding help. Also, the people who provide these skills do not have to be permanent group members; they might lead one portion of the project, like hard landscaping, and offer a service, like a volunteer database, or simply be available to consult.

**Find out at the beginning of the project where you are likely to need help,** and approach groups you would like to collaborate with. Regardless of the level of contribution, make sure there is a clear understanding of what everyone is contributing.

## Approaching Habitat for Humanity Victoria

In starting a natural landscaping project, the Wild Garden Party hoped to reach a new audience, collaborate with new partners, and make a difference in the loss of native plant and wild life habitat associated



All the groups landscaping and coordination skills, and their local knowledge, was used to create beds such as this one.

Approach groups that share your project’s goal and fill a need in the group. Consider different types of organizations, and what they have to offer:

**Government initiatives:** expertise, educational material, funding

**Hobby groups:** expertise, volunteers

**Trade groups:** skills, consultation, tools

**Community organizations:** administration, volunteers, educational material, workshops, advice, newsletters, office space

**Businesses:** skills, supplies

with urban sprawl. The group recognized that all these goals could be achieved by working with Habitat for Humanity Victoria (HFHV).

The first step in making this desired collaboration a reality was getting background information on HFHV. The group then appointed a primary liaison, who called HFHV, and got more information on the local chapter and their current project. When they felt confident in their position, the group sent a two page summary of their project proposal to HFHV, and met with a representative. The proposal was well received, and both parties agreed the project would be a fruitful marriage of social and environmental sustainability. Having secured the cooperation of HFHV, the Wild Garden Party then proceeded to seek funding.

Whenever you are approaching a group or business to establish a partnership it is advisable to **research** its background first. It ensures you are approaching the right people and that you are knowledgeable on their organization. Once you have your background information you can **cold call** in order to get more specific information.

It is equally important that you are comfortable in your understanding of your own group and project. Develop a **succinct description of your group, your goals, your project and your proposal**. You can use these to ask to **make a presentation to the board of directors** or other governing body. Your presentation should include a description of natural landscaping and its benefits. Also, a presentation is an opportunity to hear concerns and negotiate the terms of the project. Try to get the support of the full board, so that you can rely on them later on. Finally, if both sides agree to the project, **appoint a liaison** for each group to ensure communication through fundraising, delays and staff changes.

## Forming an Agreement

It is important to establish agreements between participating groups before beginning the project. This ensures everyone agrees on the basic proposal, and understands their role. It is preferable to solidify your agreement before approaching funders. It is much easier to create a funding proposal to match an agreement than to create an agreement to match a funding proposal.

The agreement between the Wild Garden Party and Habitat for Humanity Victoria was informal. For their part Habitat for Humanity Victoria would share their resources, such as tools and volunteers, and support the Wild Garden Party to the best of their ability. It was understood that HFHV would still carry out the landscaping which they normally supplied, and the Wild Garden Party's work would be beyond that. In accordance with their principals, the Wild Garden Party would design and install an ecologically sustainable landscape. As well as expertise, the group contributed funding, volunteers, connections, and hard work.

Having formed an agreement with Habitat for Humanity Victoria, and secured funding, the Wild Garden Party approached the homeowners to find out their level of interest, prior knowledge, and willingness to participate. The group wrote a letter in conjunction with

HFHV that was sent to the homeowners that outlined the goals of the Homes and Habitats Project. To follow up on the initial letter, the group next drafted a survey that would find out what sort of landscaping the homeowners would be interested in. The response to the surveys was immediate and overwhelmingly positive.

### Characteristics of a good agreement

- Communicates vision and intention
- Establishes goals
- Defines and delegates responsibilities
- Appoints contacts
- Outlines potential costs and those responsible

### LANDOWNER CONTACT ADVICE

Habitat Acquisition Trust offers advice and guidance to groups interested in landowner contact as part of its mandate to promote the preservation of the natural environment through education. Information about Habitat Acquisition Trust's Good Neighbours project can be obtained by visiting the website at <http://www.hat.bc.ca/projects/neighbours.htm>. The Landowner Contact Guide is available online in PDF format at <http://www.wildlifetree.org/Docs/Monitor/contact.pdf>.

The surveys were quickly followed up by in person meetings. Habitat Acquisition Trust was chosen to lead the meetings as it runs a landowners contact program. This was the first opportunity to explain how an ecologically sustainable style of landscaping offers more possibilities and benefits, not less. Finally, the meetings established the coordinator as the primary contact person for the homeowners.

During these initial meetings, it is important to explain your past experience and your resources so that the homeowners are confident in your abilities. ***Make sure that homeowners understand the type of landscaping involved, and the types of plants and designs you want to use.*** It is a good idea to ***bring photos*** that illustrate finished gardens of a similar design so that homeowners can begin to visualize what this may look like in their own yard.

***An effective agreement with homeowners will establish and maintain 1.) an appropriate communication system; 2.) participation guidelines, and 3.) the education needs and methods.*** You should be clear on how much work your group will undertake, and how much the homeowners will be expected to participate before agreeing to the project. Taking these steps will lay the groundwork for the long-term sustainability of the project.



Habitat for Humanity provided 'hard landscaping....  
...and the Wild Garden Party added ecologically-sustainable garden beds.

## Delegating Responsibility

Because the Wild Garden Party brings together groups with related but distinct focuses, certain tasks fell logically with each organization. During the planning stages, groups with relevant expertise would offer to take on tasks that appealed to them. Even though certain groups or individuals might lead tasks, everyone lent knowledge, time, and advice. For example, Habitat Acquisition Trust was instrumental in drawing up the site plan, but all the groups collaborated on what the design should include.

Some areas were formally assigned, such as the Greater Victoria Compost Education Centre taking on administration, while others areas were informal, like Habitat for Humanity Victoria coordinators making barbecue lunches for volunteers. This reflects the difference in whether a task was central to the start of the project, or a need that arose from the daily workings of the project.

Early on, the Wild Garden Party decided to hire a coordinator. All the groups had substantial knowledge, volunteers, equipment, and contacts, but someone had to bring it all together. The coordinator was the contact person, not only internally, but also for the homeowners, volunteers, donors, and media. The coordinator also planned work parties including the volunteers, equipment, and supplies they require. Because the coordinator took on this work, the rest of the group could focus on the tasks that required their area of expertise.

### LESSONS LEARNED

As staff turnover can occur, ensure procedures are in place to pass along the necessary project info to new staff members/volunteers. This keeps the project on track and ensures that nothing falls through the cracks. Keeping good notes is important to such transition: providing a means of tracking the projects progress, donations, funders, volunteers etc. A coordinator's journal can be very helpful; especially one that is divided into sections, such as contact information, donation records, work schedules, etc.

***Delegating responsibility*** is important in starting a project for several reasons: it makes you look at what work needs to be done and what skills you already have, it gauges the commitment of group members, and it avoids conflicts and oversights. If responsibilities for the central aspects of the project are decided,

### Clearly define responsibility for core aspects of the project:

- Fundraising
- Site design
- Hard landscaping
- Volunteer recruitment
- Soliciting donations
- Media and outreach

you will have more time and energy to face challenges.

*The responsibility for core aspects should be decided early on*, even if what is decided is that all members will cooperate. Delegating these tasks should be based on member's expertise and time commitment.

Along the way, *smaller tasks* will also have to be delegated: drafting letters, shopping for lunches, picking up supplies, bringing tools. *Find out early who has time to take on these extra tasks*, and always ask far enough in advance to come up with a back up plan if they are not able to.

## Finding Funding

Funds for the Homes and Habitats project were raised through fundraising activities, grants, cash donations, and in-kind donations.

Before they took on the Homes and Habitats project, the Wild Garden Party hosted a tour of gardens in the Greater Victoria area that featured natural landscaping. As always, the groups donated their time, utilized volunteers, and sought in-kind donations. As a result, the project ran a profit, and these funds were used for Wild Garden Party projects, including the Homes and Habitats project.



The bulk of the project was supported through grants. The Greater Victoria Compost Education Centre led the application process, researching the eligibility requirements and meeting with funders to discuss applications. The preparation and submission of grant applications was shared between groups, depending on history with particular funders, eligibility for particular grants, and available staff time and expertise.

While funding for large expenses like wages, honoraria, printing, and educational materials were provided through grants, funds for supplies were augmented by donations. The coordinator lead the soliciting of donations, and the group itself provided in kind donations such as professional advice, recruiting volunteers, promoting the project, and providing office space and general supplies. Some of the many donations were plants, soil, mulch, lumber, planters, and rain barrels.

### LESSONS LEARNED

During fundraising, the collaborative nature of the Wild Garden Party was sometimes a complicating factor. Because the individual member groups undertake fundraising of their own, the group member was sometimes perceived as asking for funds twice from one funder. Conversely, sometimes only one member would be recognized for the effort of the whole group.

It is clearly very important to create community awareness of your collaboration and to clearly explain the nature of the collaboration to funders. While it is valuable to delegate tasks to certain members, make sure you present a consistent message, and stress the collaborative nature of your project.

There are three main approaches to finding funding: fundraising, grants, and donations. Most projects will use a combination of all three. It will be hard to get grants without having some funds, but harder to raise all the money yourself. Likewise, donations are invaluable to landscaping projects, but cannot sustain them. The best approach is to tailor your technique for each part of the project.

### Fundraising and Grants

*Fundraising is best done before the project starts*, so that it does not compete with the project for time, energy, and volunteers. These funds are useful for showing the viability of the project during grant applications, buying supplies that are not donated, and as a contingency fund.

## Life Cycles 'Harvesting Abundance' includes excellent advice on securing grants:

You can significantly increase your chances of securing money if you set up in-person meetings with potential funders to discuss the project and its possibilities. Through informal conversations the funder may discover things about the project that might not find their way into a grant application.

Meeting with funders before writing a proposal also gives you an opportunity to receive the funder's advice on how to shape your idea to best fit the funder's criteria. Always finish writing applications well before the deadline and have the funder review your initial draft. *Never send in a cold application.*

### LESSONS LEARNED

When fundraising, try and ensure there are sufficient funds to hire a coordinator for the duration of the project. Also, you should set aside money for "professional services." Many of the Wild Garden Party members worked "off the side of their desk"-often on their own time- because funding did not cover time the members contributed to the project. The work of group members is valuable, and should be treated accordingly.

## Donations

Unlike fundraising and grants, donations target specific supplies. Decide which items you would like to have donated, and **target specific businesses** in that field. You will usually have the most success if you ask for the company's prime product, since it is the one that they want to promote. Most businesses require a formal letter of request, and this is a good opportunity to outline the project's benefits and how you will recognize your donors. Always **find out whom to address the letter**, and try to meet with them. In person conversations bring out details that a letter sometimes omits and it is a chance to ask questions. If you are unable to get donations, approach a business you know well and ask for the wholesale price. If you decide to ask for **wholesale price**, remember that you may have to wait for special order, and plan far enough ahead.

Almost anything can be donated, but plants, soil and mulch, lumber, rain barrels, planters, and bird feeders are good targets. If you have the ability to adequately recognize your funders, **consider partnering with a nursery or landscape supply company**. This added exposure may well appeal to local companies, and securing supplies will free up your time.

## Budgeting

### What is a Budget?

The budget serves as a blueprint for how the project's funds will be spent. The proposed budget needs to give an **accurate assessment of all cost items and cost amounts** that correspond with the activities described in your proposal. Budget information about activities planned and personnel who will serve on the project provides reviewers with an in-depth picture of how the project will be structured and managed. If the project is funded, the budget will become the **financial plan used by the funding agency to provide support**.

### Items considered for developing the Homes and Habitats budget:

- How will the project be staffed? How many hours per week will a paid coordinator work and at what cost?
- What tasks can volunteers do and how many volunteer hours are needed?
- Will the project need to hire any outside contractors and at what cost?
- What types of native plants (quantity and costs) are needed?
- What infrastructure materials (quantity and costs) are needed?
- What landscaping supplies are needed?
- What other educational or office supplies may be needed in order to perform the work of the project?
- What travel for staff, volunteers and transportation of materials is needed?
- How will the project be promoted (i.e.: pamphlet production, signs, website, etc) and what are the associated communication costs?
- What administrative and facilities charges (overhead) are allowed? (this varies depending on the type of grant)
- Can any part of the above be provided as an "in-kind" donation?

## How to Begin your Budget

You will need to describe your budget in detail, line item by line item. Make sure that you have done your homework to *find out costs of items in your region*. It is important to balance your budget as accurately as possible so that you are not underestimating (which shows you don't understand the realistic costs of your project) or have overestimated (which shows you are trying to get more than you really need). *The project needs to be feasible within the budget presented*. If major cost areas are omitted or underestimated, the project, as proposed, will not be considered feasible.

## Cash Versus In-kind Funds

*Most budgets are required to show both cash and in-kind funds*. All items that require the exchange of money are regarded as cash. Any items that do not involve the transfer of money are classified as in-kind, including such items as equipment or facility use, a professional service, or an in-kind donation of materials such as plants.

## Budget Breakdown

In an effort to estimate approximately how much direct input and costs were put into each garden, we have provided the following breakdown. Please keep in mind that your own breakdown will vary according to your own circumstances (i.e.: in-kind support, size and site design of yard, volunteer input, coordinator, etc). Not included in this breakdown are the in-direct additional costs incurred through administration, office supplies, communications and educational materials.

ITEM	CASH	IN-KIND
Project Coordinator (830 hrs)	\$11,620	
Volunteers on-site (816 hrs)		\$8,976
Professional Support – site design, etc (100hrs)		\$2,000
Travel (to site for staff and volunteers and transportation of materials)	\$815	
Plants	\$1285	\$400
Landscaping & Infrastructure Materials (fencing, cement, mulch, soil, sand, raised beds, composters, rainwater catchment systems, edging, etc)	\$2042	\$781
Total	\$15,762	\$12,157

Approximate cost per site \$6,979

## Communication

Such an undertaking provides opportunities for getting your message out around a particular “public interest” story. Make sure to *let your media contacts know what you are doing* and inform them of the days you plan on having work parties so that they can come out and see for themselves what is going on. As well, it is important to keep each of the organizations membership tied into the process. This can be completed through *existing newsletters and email* with regular updates about the progress.

Our funding proposals identified certain communications opportunities but about halfway through the project we found a communications student who was willing to create our communication plan as their term project, at no charge to us. This helped to solidify ways to get our message out to media.

The Homes and Habitats projects engaged in the following communications strategies:

- Utilized existing group contacts and communication channels, i.e. newsletters, outreach, signage, websites
- Approached local media
- Took opportunities as they arose

*Keep the following in mind:*

- Create a communications plan early.
- Plan to communicate with internal (the organizations) and external stakeholders (funders and media).
- Determine with each individual homeowner if they want remain anonymous or be profiled.
- Designate a media contact person.
- Combine with volunteer recruitment and soliciting donations.
- Target local media, other organizations, schools, and volunteer groups.
- Designate someone to keep track of earned media exposure.



The Wild Garden Party's Parade Float

### History of Homes and Habitat Communications

- Site signage at the Sidney subdivision.
- Site signage at the Greater Victoria Compost Education Center.
- Habitat for Humanity Victoria website.
- Wild Garden Party member newsletters.
- CBC radio.
- 'The Daily' on Shaw Cable.
- Article in the Peninsula News review.
- Presentations to Native Plant Study Group, Victoria City Council, the "Connecting for Conservation" conference, the International Society for Pacific North West Arboriculture Annual Conference, and Victoria Foundation's donor recognition event.
- Float in the Victoria Day Parade.
- Signage and advertising at the Wild Garden Party's Wild Garden Tour



# 3

## Part 3: Planning

### Planning with the Homeowner

Make sure to *include homeowners* in the planning and decision making. Not only is this empowering, it sets the stage for them to be meaningful project participants and carry on with the results long after the project has finished. Ensure that the landscape is *designed according to the amount of participation and inputs agreed upon* by the homeowner. Work with them to create *goals and a timeline* that is practical for all involved.

### The Survey: Making the Initial Contact

All the Wild Garden Party members agree: the survey was an ideal format for piquing the interest of the homeowners and gathering initial information. The surveys introduced concepts, directly engaged the homeowners and guided the development of the site plans according to each family's needs. This process demonstrated the benefits of ecologically sustainable landscaping. The yards would not only provide for the needs of the homeowners, but would be easy to maintain and aesthetically pleasing.

A survey should *outline the different components you would like to include*, ask for general information about the family, their land use needs, and their prior knowledge. It is important not to intimidate or discourage anyone, so keep the language *non-technical*. If you are introducing a concept that may be unfamiliar, include a brief definition. *The survey should ask direct questions, and ask for specific information.* See Appendix 2 for a sample survey.



Volunteers and homeowners worked together, sharing knowledge and creating a sense of accomplishment and community.

### Establishing Communication

As described under 'Forming an Agreement', the Wild Garden Party followed up the initial survey with in person meetings. As well as the first opportunity for the two sides to meet, it was here that the coordinator was established as the main contact person. It was determined that the best means of communication was through email.

Establishing regular, open communication is integral to involving the homeowner. Part of your initial contact should be finding out what *method of communication* they prefer and when they are available. Find out if they prefer phone, email, or in person communication, when and where they want to be contacted. Once you have this information you must establish a *forum for communication*. Designate a *contact person*, and have this person give regular

updates on the projects progress and up coming work. This forum, whether it is by phone or email, is also an opportunity to advertise upcoming community events and workshops that are relevant to the project. This regular exchange will keep the group feeling cohesive.

### Researching Options for the Landscape

Between them, the Wild Garden Party members have many years experience in landscaping and natural history. Thus, research was best accomplished by getting everyone together and brainstorming. Where there were gaps in the group's knowledge research was delegated.

When faced with leveling the steeply graded sites, much research was needed to find a solution to the sloping problem. The coordinator used the group's leads to find out what low tech options were available and try to find good instructions. Eventually a simple retaining wall was designed using a base of large rocks and wire. This had the benefit of requiring few new materials, creating growing surface, and providing habitat for snakes. While the Internet, books, and magazines were used, personal experiences were the most valuable source of knowledge and inspiration.

If you do not have a background in landscaping, you will need to do significant research. *Local natural history groups, horticultural societies, demonstration gardens, and community groups will be invaluable,*

*as they will allow you to speak directly with someone.* These groups were created because people felt passionate about nature and gardening, so do not be afraid to ask them for help. Find out a little bit about the group, and then try to meet with someone in charge to discuss your project. Depending on the group, they may be able to help with site planning, plant selection, and landscaping. In addition, they may be able to help with volunteer recruitment. Finally, they may be able to recommend books and resources for your area, or have resources for you to use. Because plants and growing conditions differ in each region, this **local advice is very important.**



A retaining wall was used to grade this lot.

If you are new to site design, you will want to formulate a general plan first, and then research your options for meeting the site requirements. Each site is different, with its own set of characteristics and challenges. You will not find one design that suits your site perfectly, more likely you will **blend several designs.** Make sure you understand the purpose of a technique, as well as the process and materials. **Generally, you should look for options that are simple to install, utilize common materials, provide multiple benefits, and have been used successfully in your area.** Here again, demonstration gardens can be helpful, since they offer an example of appropriate landscaping for your area.

No amount of research can substitute for experience. If you have to do research, find out what **gardening and landscape workshops** are offered in your area. Non profit organizations, recreation centers, schools, and government agencies often teach workshops on relevant subjects. These groups are trying to reach as many people as possible so the workshops are usually cheap, convenient, and practical.

*See Appendices 1a, 1b and 1c for suggested readings, relevant organizations, and useful web sites.*

## Creating a Site Plan

From the surveys and the meetings, the Wild Garden Party learned the unique needs of each family, and the sorts of plants and designs would be practical and appealing for them. This information was used in generating the site plan, which was then brought back to the homeowners. Seeing the site plan was a major milestone for the homeowners. While the group could visualize the finished site, the plan made the project a reality for the homeowners. Each family was given a copy of their site plan, and encouraged to take notes on it, and refer back as the project progressed. Each family was also given a copy of *Native Plants for the Coastal Garden*, to help them learn about the plants being used to landscape their properties.

The site designs for the Homes and Habitats project were delegated to the Habitat Acquisition Trust, one of the Wild Garden Party Members. Habitat Acquisition Trust was chosen for its experience in ecologically sustainable land practices, experience working with homeowners, and availability. The site plan went through several general stages: brainstorming, mapping existing features, determining site characteristics, outlining garden beds, and plant selection. Once a rough draft was complete it was brought back to the Wild Garden Party for review. When the final copy of the site plan was finished it was sent to Habitat for Humanity Victoria and the homeowners. Both these groups were impressed with the designs, which increased the enthusiasm for the project. The site plan was very helpful in explaining the goals and plans of the group to people with less landscaping experience.

### Terms and Techniques of Ecologically Sustainable Landscaping

#### Hard Landscaping

Terracing  
Berms  
Swales

#### Irrigation

Water conservation measures

- Mulch
- Native plants
- Less Lawn
- Woody Perennials

Rain barrels  
Drip irrigation  
Micro-irrigation  
Swales

#### Native Plants

Trees and shrubs  
Ground cover  
Winter interest  
Wildlife habitat

#### Landscaping Techniques

Hedgerows  
Succession planting  
Forest gardens  
Sheet mulching

## Components of a Successful Site Plan

### Meets the needs of all involved

- Family
- Environment
- Community

### Functional

- Spaces tailored to the family's needs
- Accessible
- Provides wildlife habitat
- Low Maintenance

### Aesthetically appealing

- Year-round interest
- Varied heights, textures, and colours
- Flowers

### Provides for the needs of plants

- Soil amendments
- Adequate sun exposure
- Water retention

The site plan is the first proof of the hard work of landscaping. It compiles all the information that has been gathered and the decision that have been made. The site plan is a **visual aid** when explaining the project, and can be useful in talking with group members, homeowners, volunteers, and funders. You will use the site plan to determine what supplies and equipment you will need how many volunteers to recruit, etc. While a site plan is invaluable, it is not infallible. Accept that you may have made mistakes, or may not have access to the necessary supplies or budget. The site plan will always be a work in progress, so do not get too attached to it.

Site planning includes some fairly **technical aspects**, so make sure you have the necessary expertise. You will need to know **how to read a site map**, how to determine **soil quality, drainage, and exposure**. You will also need to know **the native plants in your area**, and their characteristics and requirements. You may need to work with another group or individual to find this expertise.

See *Appendices 2 and 3 for sample homeowner contact surveys and sample site plans.*

### LESSONS LEARNED

One of the characteristics of collaborations is the abundance of ideas and opinions. This can make consensus building difficult, so determine a means of coming to a common understanding.

## Step 1: Create a Base Map of Existing Features

Before the site planning began, Habitat Acquisition Trust, on behalf of the Wild Garden Party, gathered all existing information on the site, and recorded observed site characteristics. Habitat for Humanity Victoria had created a detailed site map that was instrumental for this purpose. The site plan included the position of buildings, existing trees, and property lines. It also included the location of pipes and cables that landscapers would need to be aware of. This plan was then ground-truthed, ensuring that dimensions and locations represented on paper were accurate.

With artificial features thus recorded, the next step was to determine the natural characteristics of the site. This included aspect, soil type, water retention, and slope. This information would be important in both designing the shape of garden beds, and choosing plants. The Wild Garden Party's past experience in landscaping was very important during this process, because it enabled extrapolation from conditions at the time of observation to year round conditions. That is, how the sun exposure would change with the seasons and which areas were damp year round, and which were damp seasonally. As well as notes, digital pictures were taken of important features. These were labeled with the date, direction, and important features while at the site.

The course taken by the Wild Garden Party is typical of the initial stages of site planning. **You will need a technical site plan, which must be ground-truthed, and will then take detailed notes on the site characteristics.** A site plan is important for two reasons, it accurately locates important features like property lines and underground pipes, and it provides a concrete starting point on which to base plans. **If you do not have a site plan it is advisable to work with a professional.** This will both ensure accuracy, and identify any legal or physical obstacles early.

Regardless of the source of your site plan, it is imperative that it is **ground-truthed**. At the very least, this will give you a better understanding of the distances involved. This is also a chance to see if any additions or changes have been made. You should check the distances and locations indicated on the map, and ensure that your site plan is the most up to date available. Even small changes, like the addition of a fence, or the removal of a tree are important, as they will change the sunlight the yard receives.

As much as you might think you would remember the site details, it is very helpful to **take pictures**. Pictures are more accurate than your mind at recording sun exposure, relative distances, and area. Be sure to label the pictures; the more information the better. The date and time of day will be helpful, as will the direction you were facing. Again, you might think you will remember the details of a picture, but you are better off writing it down. Take pictures of both the general layout, that is a wide-angle shot, and of small details, that is close ups.

### LESSONS LEARNED

When the Wild Garden Party and Habitat for Humanity Victoria agreed to collaborate, a site plan had already been created and approved by the municipality. Thus, features on the site plan had to be included in the Wild Garden Party design. For this reason trees and sheds could not be repositioned to maximize space, exposure, etc. The group also could not replace the ornamental trees in the site plan with fruit bearing trees.

Future projects should be aware of the constraints of existing site plans. Be sure to find out what has been approved by your municipality. If at all possible, become involved in the landscape process before the site plan is approved, so you can have input on the positioning of features.

#### What characteristics are you looking for?

**Exposure:** the amount of sunlight received in terms of strength and hours.

**Soil Type:** the ratio of sand to clay, and the amount of organic material present.

**Drainage:** the ability of water to be absorbed.

**Slope:** the incline of the site.

These characteristics will vary from one area of the site to another, and may also vary from one time of year to another.

You will also need to **take notes on the site characteristics**. This can be done three ways: photos, notes, and colour-coding. It is advisable to combine all three approaches. The photos you take will help jog your memory, and confirm your notes, so take pictures of **sun exposures, soil types, and slope as well as physical features**. Notes are always necessary because they record qualitative aspects, which photos may miss. **Record everything you can about the size, shape, slope, exposure, and soil type of all the different areas of the site**. Finally, make copies of the site plan, and mark the characteristic of each area. Assign colors or symbols to different characteristics and mark their range. For example, mark the areas which are very shady or very sunny. This is also helpful in marking areas that are particularly wet, or have particularly poor soil.

**Characteristics like drainage and exposure are seasonal.** If you do not have a year's worth of experience on the site you should talk to someone who does. You will want to know which areas are sunny and shady in all four seasons, and if there are any areas that have standing water in the wet season. **Soil type** may also require extra research. Dig a hole and find out how deep the topsoil is. If you only have shallow topsoil concealing construction fill, you have a lot of work on your hands. You will need to amend the soil, which generally takes time, energy and money. You will want to know this before you plan your budget and schedule. If you have something other than construction fill, you may want to have your soil tested. Remember to test different areas separately. If your soil is low in nutrients or organic matter, it is better to know before you start the project. All these scenarios can be corrected, but they require planning.

## Step 2: Incorporate New Landscape Design Features

Due to the extensive experience the Wild Garden Party members have in landscaping, site planning went smoothly, and followed a general procedure that is applicable to most situations. What was known was recorded first, and then features were added according to priority, and plants were selected according to site conditions.

**Add Features with Definite Positions First:** One of the reasons it is important to have an accurate site plan is that it can be copied and used as a **base map** to add new designs and features too. This is exactly what Habitat Acquisition Trust did, copying both physical features, such as buildings, and characteristics, such as exposure, on to graph paper. Some features, such as **rain barrels and fences**, have definite positions, and were added next. **Fruit trees, vegetable beds, and all food producing plants** were the first plants to be added to the design. These plants require a great deal of sunlight, and are easiest to add early on.



*Trees, vines, and cane fruit* are also structural plantings because they create privacy and shade. This dual purpose is part of the reason they are used in ecologically-sustainable landscaping, and part of the reason they are placed first.

**Add Practical Features Next:** At this point there was some structure to the site, and more features were easily added. *Seating areas* were outlined near the house, as were *herb beds and compost bins*. These two features are placed close to the house to maximize use. No one wants to trek to the back fence to pick thyme, or dump kitchen scraps. All of the families had young children, so it was also important to include *open spaces* for them to play in. While room to play catch in is important, remember that the plants, insects, food, and wildlife are all interesting to children as well. Next, *paths* were added connecting all the features: driveways, gates, entrances, compost bins, vegetable gardens and play spaces. Paths are important to the ecologically sustainable landscape because they reduce lawn and discourage walking on garden beds as well as add an architectural element.

**Fill Empty Spaces with Garden Beds:** All the spaces on the site plan that had not been filled in yet were now declared to be garden beds. While the site design was almost done, the hardest part was still to come. Choosing and placing plants is a balance between the site characteristics, the site design, and the needs of the family.

**Look for Plants with Multiple Benefits:** As with placing structural features, it is best to start with functional plantings and then add decorative features. In this way, plants were first placed that *provided privacy, created ground cover, and added wildlife habitat*. Dense hedges along the fences provided all three for the Homes and Habitats project. Next, plants were added that would *create year-round interest, diversity, and balance between evergreen and deciduous*. Some plants, such as ground covers and shade loving plants, found natural homes in the spaces between plantings. It was also important to *consider young children and pets*. For example, place hardy plants at the edge of garden beds and do not use any poisonous plants.

*See Appendix 4 for a list of plants used in the Homes and Habitats project.*

### Garden Design for Wildlife Habitat

Wildlife has certain needs you must fulfill before they will make a home in your yard:

**Water:** from a fountain, a birdbath with rocks for landing, a stream, or a pond.

**Food:** in the form of nectar, seeds, berries, insects, etc.

**Cover:** dense plantings in which to hide, travel, nest.

### Companion Planting

Companion planting is the juxtaposition of plants that benefit one another. It is most commonly used for food producing plants, which are important to people and higher maintenance than most plants. Companion planting can provide nutrients, water retention, and pollination. To use one plant to provide nutrients for another, place a shallow-rooted plant beside a deep-rooted one. The latter will pull nutrients from deep in the soil, and then drop them along with its leaves. If a plant is susceptible to drying out, plant a ground cover that will create shade and minimize evaporation.

Most importantly, plant flowers near food-producing plants, where they will attract pollinating insects and insure pollination. Umbel-type flowers, such as yarrow, and any member of the daisy family will attract many beneficial insects. Just make sure the flowers are in bloom at the same time as the food producing plant.



## Part 4: Landscaping

### Necessary Coordination Skills

During the Homes and Habitats Project, landscape coordination came in two varieties: general people skills from the coordinator and expertise from the other group members.

The primary responsibility for organizing work fell to the coordinator, who acted as a central source of information. It was the coordinator who was supposed to know where the tools were, what work had to be done, who knew how to do the work, what time it was, where the sunscreen was, etc. The second part of the coordinator's role was making sure everyone was included. This meant not only finding work for everyone, but also finding work that was appropriate for everyone's abilities. This aspect of the job also involved answering general questions, engaging the homeowners, introducing volunteers, and making sure that people who needed a break took one. None of this was complicated, but having one person in charge allowed the people with more technical skills and knowledge to be where they were needed most.

While the coordinator was overseeing activities, the rest of the group provided *coordination of individual tasks*. It was the group members who knew the needs of the plants, and where to plant them, so it was the group members who directed planting. Without the group members it is unlikely the site would have developed along the site plan, but without the coordinator the group members would not have had the time to carry out the site plan.

Regardless of whether or not your project has a designated coordinator, you will need some *basic coordination skills* during landscaping:

- Oversight on the implementation of the plan
- Oversight of landscaping
- Volunteer coordination on-site
- Homeowner outreach

Especially in the case of *volunteer coordination*, it is advisable to delegate these responsibilities. *Homeowner outreach*, too, is easier if someone is dedicated as the liaison. It is important not to force these tasks on people, but to allow people who are comfortable in their abilities to provide direction. If you foresee problems in these areas, consider approaching another organization to join your group, one that has these skills.

### Landscaping with the Homeowner

#### Education: Laying the Ground Work

In order to explain the principles behind natural landscaping, and to make sure all the homeowners had access to basic information, the group put together an information package. The second part of homeowner education occurred through hands-on learning at the work parties. Homeowners were encouraged to participate and ask questions. It was in this way that the names and characteristics of the native plants used were introduced. This was also where ideas like mulching, hedgerows, and berms were introduced. While the coordinator fielded questions between work parties via email and phone, it was usually at work parties that questions came out. This process also encouraged the homeowners to cooperate and share their new knowledge.

While the bulk of the learning will happen in the garden, you may want to establish a *base of knowledge* in areas such as composting, vegetable gardening, and pruning. Find out how much the homeowners know, and help them fill in the gaps. Remember that everyone learns differently: some people will appreciate being sent useful web links by email, and some people will prefer to be lent a book. Think outside your group, and

#### Contents of Wild Garden Party Information Packages

- Wild Garden Party Introduction
- Healthy Backyard Fruit Tree
- Native Plants for the Home Garden
- Invasive Plants of Greater Victoria
- Here's the Dirt! A Guide to Home Composting
- Bee Gardens: Create Habitat in Your Backyard
- Naturescape BC Kit - Creating Wildlife Habitat
- Why Garden With Native Plants
- Crop Rotation Groups for Year-round Veggie Production
- Winter Veggie Gardening
- Soil and Organic Gardening: Some Basics

*recommend workshops and community groups in the area.* Other non profit organizations may be willing to help with education, either coming to work parties, or waiving admission at workshops. Most gardeners learn from talking to other gardeners, and that is what you are trying to encourage. You will not be around forever, so make sure the homeowners have resources beyond you and your group.

## Participation



The homeowners in the Homes and Habitats project participated in many ways.

Their input was used to guide the design process, they participated in work parties, salvaged plants and mulch materials, looked after potted plants, and added features of their own. No two families participated in the same way, but all asked questions and modified their yards to reflect their needs and desires. Allowing flexibility and changes ensured that the homeowners played a direct role in planning and creating a space that was emotionally and functionally theirs.

There may not always be work going on, but you can always find ways to encourage participation. Homeowners can attend workshops, build nest boxes, or gather mulch material long before work begins. ***Provide a variety of options for participation that consider level of experience, physical ability, and time constraints.***

Finally, make sure you ***create activities for children***, who will want to be involved, and can bring enthusiasm.

## Necessary Landscaping Skills

The groups involved in the Wild Garden Party all have a landscaping or land management background. All the group members were comfortable and experienced in landscaping. Some were better at carpentry than others, and some had more native plant knowledge than others, but all had experience working with volunteers. The coordinator sent out work schedules and goals for each work party, and group members with relevant experience showed up for appropriate work parties.

**Though projects differ, some skills are universally useful:**

- Mulching
- Digging
- Transplanting
- Path building
- Strong backs
- Basic carpentry skills (i.e. for building raised beds and retaining walls)

Leveling the sites was one area the Wild Garden Party did need help with hard skills.

Fortunately Habitat for Humanity Victoria offered to help; they had access to both the necessary knowledge and strong backs. On days when heavy lifting was going to be the main task, volunteers were always warned, so that those who agreed to help knew what to expect. In general, so long as people worked in small groups no one felt they were working above their ability. Small groups were important because they provided adequate instruction and feedback.

You will need to have people in your project with ***basic landscaping skills***. Few of these skills are complicated, but someone has to be confident enough to instruct and direct the rest of the group. It is also important that there is someone who has both these skills and

***interpersonal skills***; homeowners and volunteers will want to come away with an understanding of the work they did.

Along with hard skills, you will need to ***understand natural landscaping principals***. This includes topics such as the characteristics of wild life habitat, native plants, and healthy soil. You will need to understand the properties of both the site and the plants you are using. This knowledge is necessary to ensure that plants go in the right spot, and that soil amendments are best utilized.

## Equipment

One of the many strengths of the Wild Garden Party, and any good collaboration, is the ability to share access to equipment. Both as organizations or as individuals, members had tools they could lend, and because the group was close knit there was a high comfort level with bringing personal tools to work parties. It fell to the project coordinator to organize tools, but all the group members lent tools and helped transport them to the site.

Habitat for Humanity Victoria was extremely important in this aspect of the project because they had many tools at the site for their construction and hard landscaping work. They also had an existing building on the site that was used to store equipment. Thus there was always a selection of basic tools, but there was also high traffic through the storage areas, so personal tools usually had to be taken home between work parties.

## Basic Requirements

When working with a large group you may need a lot of equipment. **Having a work plan will help you know what tools you need to bring on what days.** Find out at least two weeks in advance what equipment group members are willing to lend, and if they can **transport** it to the site. If you can get access to a truck or van, one person may be able to transport most of the tools. Group members, volunteers, car share programs, or rental companies are other sources of vehicles.

Consider how many people will be working on similar tasks at the same time, and **ensure that there are tools for everyone.** If two tasks require the same tool, you may want to stagger them so you have fewer tools to lug around. Try to have gloves and trowels for as many people as possible, but you can ask volunteers to bring them if they have them.

## Special Needs

When tackling a more technical aspect of the site design, you may need more specialized equipment. If you are building raised beds, putting in paths, or installing rain barrels you will need specific tools. Because the equipment is specific, **try to have whoever is leading the task take charge of equipment:** they are more likely to know how many screws you need, what kind of cement to buy, etc. At the very least have them make up the list of supplies. You are more likely to bring the wrong screwdriver than to forget the lumber, so think of all the little things you might need. Items like rulers, pencils, measuring tapes, and sandpaper do not take up much room, and it is always nice to have extras.

## Organizing Supplies

During the Homes and Habitats project, it was primarily the job of the coordinator to organize supplies. Lists of supplies were generated with the whole group, and responsibility was delegated to various individuals, but oversight was the responsibility of the coordinator. Because Habitat for Humanity Victoria had maintained the existing building on the site, there was access to a kitchen, bathroom, and tools, but there were still a plethora of supplies to account for.

Supplies for the Homes and Habitats project were generally organized around the work plan. For example, lumber had to be found before vegetable starts because the raised beds had to be built before the plants could go in. Ease of storage was also a factor, since lumber could easily be stored while soliciting donations of plants. Another example of work dictating supplies was planting. Planting had to be done either before or after the heat of summer, so any plants that were not ready by the end of June could not be obtained until September.

One of the biggest challenges of the organization supplies for the Homes and Habitats project was delivery. The site was half an hour out of town, and many people car pooled or took the bus, so there was not a lot of ability to transport supplies the day of the work party. Large items like lumber, rain barrels, and large purchases of plants had to be brought to the site in advance, which often meant multiple trips during the week. This was particularly a problem for plants, which had to be watered. Some supplies were delivered by the supplier, but often someone had to be there to receive the supplies. If a delivery was made the day before a work party, going to the site took time away from grocery shopping and organizing other supplies.

Another challenge was deciding how long to wait for donations. If a business was slow to respond, or said no, a decision had to be made between delaying work and paying for the item. For this reason it



Cardboard, compost, leaf mulch, and wood chip were all used as soil amendments.

was always best to plan many activities for each work party, so if one item fell through, there was still work to do. By the end of the project the group agreed it would have been better to confirm key donations even before recruiting volunteers, so that work could proceed more smoothly.

*A list of the supplies* you will need can be very useful. For one thing it means you do not have to keep the information in your head. The list should be thorough and **include the date(s) you will need each item and who will provide them**. Also include tools, food, dishes, and anything else you need to bring to the site. This list can help you see what supplies you have, decide which group members are responsible for which supplies, decide which items you want to try and get donated, and help you plan your time.

### Soliciting donations:

- Delegate the responsibility for specific supplies, especially if someone has a prior contact.
- Do not expect to hear back right away: two weeks is a good policy for initial contact, follow up, and confirmation.
- Either approach several businesses at once, or allow enough time to regroup if you are turned down.
- Make sure you have arrangements to store supplies until you need them.
- Confirm with people who are bringing supplies or tools.

**Consider confirming donations, placing orders, and doing all shopping, before having a blitz of landscaping.**

When acquiring plants, especially native plants, it is advisable to **use local suppliers and plants cultivated from local stock**. Both of these things ensure that the plants you use will be adapted to local conditions, i.e. rain fall, seasonality, etc. A local grower will be more knowledgeable about the site requirements of different plants, and which variety is right for you.

You can also get plants for free with a little bit of effort. Some municipalities offer **native plant salvage programs**, which you can join, or cooperate with. Such programs remove plants from areas under development, such as road ways and housing developments. You will probably have to complete an orientation, and you will need some plant identification knowledge or books, but salvaging is an inexpensive way of getting native plants.

If you have a little bit of time, **you can also start many plants from cuttings**. This is a simple undertaking, and makes a great project for new gardeners and children. Many ground covers, fast growing shrubs, and herbs can be propagated this way. Different plants require different techniques, but supplies are as simple as sharp scissors, a sunny window, a spray bottle, and rich, loose soil. Similarly, you could **start your own wild flowers from seed**.

**Try these web sites for tips on taking cuttings:**

NDSU Extension Service Royal Horticultural Society  
<http://www.ext.nodak.edu/county/cass/horticulture/indoor/start.htm>

Royal Horticultural Society  
[http://www.rhs.org.uk/advice/profiles0800/propagating\\_tender.asp](http://www.rhs.org.uk/advice/profiles0800/propagating_tender.asp)



**Some supplies can be found for free if you know where to look, and are willing to be creative.**

**Plants:** municipal salvage programs, divisions from community or demonstration gardens

**Lumber:** salvaged from demolitions or renovations, mill ends.

**Fencing:** prunings and windfalls, scrap material

**Woody Debris:** municipalities and parks departments

**Rocks:** blasting, urbanite

**Paving Material:** broken dishes, salvaged brick, broken paving stones from businesses

## Recruiting Volunteers

All the Wild Garden Party members have contact lists of members and volunteers, so requests for volunteers went out to a large number of people. However, when large groups were needed, collaborating with a business or community group was usually the most successful approach. Not only was this the most sure-fire way to get a large group to show up, they usually showed up at the same time, and were well organized.

Regardless of how they became involved, two demographics were particularly important: members of other volunteer groups and students. Volunteers were recruited in various ways, but they often fell into one of those two categories. Habitat for Humanity Victoria was also a major contributor of volunteers. Not only do they have a database of volunteers that the group could use, they work with businesses, clubs, and sports teams who donate volunteer hours.

Recruiting volunteers is a good way to tap into skills and expertise. By targeting specific groups you can add to the capacity of your project. *Sports teams and military personnel* sometimes do volunteer work, and can be invaluable during physically demanding tasks.

Often demonstration gardens utilize volunteers, and may have a newsletter, web site, or bulletin board you can use to *find volunteers with a horticulture background*. If you need help with carpentry, try approaching *trades groups or schools*; trainees have valuable skills and appreciate experience.

Most communities have many forums for recruiting general volunteers, if you know where to look. Call around and find out what services people offer:

**Newspapers** sometimes offer free listings under ‘Volunteers Wanted’ or ‘Community calendar.’

**Community groups** such as the Lions Club are designed to help with community building projects.

**Post-secondary schools** can be an excellent source of volunteers. Approach the chairs of relevant departments, and ask about school papers and bulletin boards.

Volunteer banks list groups and projects seeking volunteers. Make sure they are updated regularly.

If you are doing *outreach and media* for your project, it is a prime opportunity to recruit volunteers. Make sure you have a clear explanation of your project and its goals, as well as contact numbers and information of upcoming volunteer opportunities.

Once you have interested volunteers, make an email list, and *keep people updated*. Volunteers want to be involved in a dynamic, active project and email updates keep people interested. Make sure there is content to your emails, such as upcoming activities and learning opportunities that will make volunteers want to read them. Finally, these emails are a way to create continuity. *There may be delays and off-seasons in your project, and consistent email updates can help ensure that volunteers are still around when you want to start work again*. Volunteers should feel like a part of the group, and deserve to be kept informed.

## Holding Work Parties

The Homes and Habitats site is about half an hour outside Victoria, so most people showed up a little bleary eyed the mornings of the work parties. At first it would look like all any one wanted to do was drink coffee and chat, but it never took long for people to start asking what needed doing. With four yards to work on, small groups would form, and pockets of activity would start to buzz. Because people worked in small groups there was lots of opportunity for people to get to know each other, and for new volunteers to learn from the “old hats”.

Around noon, people would need a break and everyone would sit down to lunch. For most of the project



This project could not have been successful without its enthusiastic volunteers.

## What We Did

- Reduced turf
- Used native plants
- Built hedgerows for wildlife habitat
- Planted demonstration gardens
- Incorporated food producing perennials
- Built nine raised beds
- Created herb gardens at each house
- Provided a rain barrel and compost bin for each house
- Mulched all beds

each month and each work party. This will help you arrange for appropriate volunteers, supplies and equipment.

*Try to decide on a work plan as early as possible*, it will probably change, but a general plan keeps everyone on the same page. The group will need to see the plan the early and in detail to allow them to help organize supplies, equipment, and volunteers. **Homeowners should know what work is going to be done, in what order, and in what time frame so that they are integrally involved.** It is also important to let the homeowner know the work schedule so they are available to participate. If you are working on a house that is still under construction, it is especially important to stay in contact with homeowners and keep them updated on the work schedule. Volunteers can be sent the work schedule in email updates. It can be general, to allow for changes, but should note days that will be physically demanding or of particularly interest.

It is usually practical to split into **small groups**. This allows people to choose tasks that suit their interest, knowledge and physical ability. Always have a few odd jobs in mind, so that people do not end up waiting around. Volunteers are there because they want to work, and would usually rather rake than sit around waiting.

## Work Parties should take into account:

- **Seasons:** you can not plant in the heat of summer, or recruit volunteers during the rainy season.
- **Exams:** if your volunteers are mainly students.
- **Work weeks:** decide whether you want to work on weekdays, weekends, or both.
- **Long weekends:** you may choose to work, but many people go out of town.
- **Introductions, breaks, clean-up, and general yard work:** these activities eat up time.
- **Homeowner education:** plan to have someone available to answer questions and offer advice.

Habitat for Humanity Victoria was still doing construction, and they invited the Wild Garden Party workers to join in their daily barbecue. The group often ate lunch on the lawn, in sight of the fruits of their labour. The best work parties were the ones with a lot to do: they were hard work, but there was a sense of accomplishment at the end of the day. There was something about a pile of mulch to spread, or a sea of plants to put in the ground that brought out the best in everyone.

Many of the volunteers and homeowners were new to gardening, so there was often a great deal of education incorporated into work parties. People asked a lot of questions, and the group members tried to take the time to explain what they were doing. Most importantly everyone got dirty, met new people, and learned a little bit more about natural landscaping.

***It is easier to organize a few big work parties than lots of small ones, so plan to do quite a bit at each one.*** You can always finish a project later, but it is disappointing to run out of work to do. Make a general work schedule with goals for

If at all possible, ***provide food for your volunteers:*** they are more likely to stay longer and work harder if they know there is a hot lunch waiting for them. Keep meals simple, barbecues are usually a hit, and have lots of drinks and snacks on hand.

Anywhere from a few to many of your volunteers may be taking the bus: ***consider setting up a car pool*** to help them out. This not only encourages them to show up, it means everyone arrives and starts work at the same time.

Finally, when planning how many people you would like at work parties, ***add one extra.*** Someone will end up greeting volunteers, making lunch, finding tools, answering questions, etc.



## Part 5: Follow up

### Thanking Volunteers

The Wild Garden Party tried to make its volunteers feel like the integral part of the project that they were. Email updates were sent out regularly, not only to keep volunteers involved, but also as a means of recognizing the participation of volunteers in previous work parties.

At work parties volunteers were always supplied with lunch, as well as drinks and snacks. Not only did providing lunch recognize the hard work of volunteers, a shared lunch was an opportunity for people to get to know one another. Volunteers and group members typically had similar backgrounds, and lunch often became a time for asking questions and networking. By the end of the work party, everyone was tired, dirty, and sweaty. It was obvious how much the volunteers had contributed, but it never went unsaid. This was reinforced not only in e-mails, but also in newsletters and other coverage of the project.

All the volunteers that could be reached were invited to the Greater Victoria Compost Education Centre's year-end volunteer appreciation dinner. The Homes and Habitats volunteer pool was small, so, rather than having only a few people attend, it was decided to include them in a larger event than could have been held just for the Homes and Habitats project. This also created an opportunity for them to meet other volunteers.

If you have ever volunteered you know how nice it is to have your hard work acknowledged. **Thank volunteers in person at work parties**, and recognize them in email updates. Sending out **thank you cards** is also a nice touch, especially if your project is long running, or you have a core group of volunteers. It is nice to have a **volunteer event** once the project is complete. This could be a potluck, pizza dinner, bowling night, even a hike. Decide on a date as soon as possible, and accept that everyone may not be able to make it. Making volunteers feel good about their involvement is very important: it encourages them to continue volunteering, recognizes the value of their contribution, and creates new connections and friendships.



It was a great feeling when all these plants were in the ground: it made the hard work worth while.

### Recognizing Funders and Donors

For the Homes and Habitats project, work parties themselves were a chance to recognize donors. Small businesses do not always get a lot of exposure, and having volunteers and homeowners work with their product was excellent exposure. The Wild Garden Party tries to use high quality, sustainable products, and so people were generally happy to talk about the products we used. For example, there are not a lot of native plant nurseries, so planting days were excellent exposure for our suppliers.

The partnership with Habitat for Humanity Victoria (HFHV) was instrumental not only in securing donations, but also in recognizing donors. HFHV has signage on its site and a section on its web site specifically to recognize sponsors, and the Wild Garden Party shared this space.

Finally, the resource guide provides recognition for Homes and Habitats funders not only in Greater Victoria, but also across Canada.

Supporting your project should be beneficial for your funders and donors. Be sure to recognize them in all available outlets and at all possible opportunities. **Thank you cards** are always appreciated, but businesses really want public recognition. Have **articles** written in newsletters, and try to get coverage in local media. Mention your funders, and keep track of this coverage. Be sure to tell **volunteers, homeowners, and group members** which businesses have made donations. Donors are trying to build a reputation, and you are a key link in that process. If you are seen to promote those who support you, more people are likely to offer their services.

**An event that can accommodate funders, donors, and volunteers is a great way to cap off the project.** An open house to show off the gardens is perfect. Just remember that such an event requires organization,

money, and time. Also, you will want to have your event when to gardens are looking their best, not in January when the plants are dormant.

## Empowering Home Owners

Because traditional landscaping is more prevalent than natural landscaping, it is sometimes perceived as a specialized endeavor. In the Homes and Habitats project, the Wild Garden Party tried to dispel this belief. By empowering homeowners to care for the landscapes they created, the Wild Garden Party hoped to demonstrate that natural landscaping is easy, affordable, and beneficial. To this end they tried to break down perceived barriers of self-confidence, knowledge, and cost through support, infrastructure, and advice.

As the Homes and Habitats project progressed, the homeowners came forward with more and more ideas for their properties. At the beginning of the project the homeowners tended to allow the group to



direct work, but by the end of the project they had developed plans to continue work that may well take years to complete. This change resulted partly from living with their properties, but also from having the support of the group. Simply having someone to listening to their plans and desires seemed to motivate them. By answering questions and sharing in their enthusiasm, the group validated the homeowner's ideas and encouraged their creativity.

Part of the reason homeowners were able to expand on their plans for their yards was because so much of the primary infrastructure was in place. This infrastructure made the yards functional, encouraged participation, and allowed for more landscaping. Composters, rain barrels, and raised beds encourage sustainable landscaping practices, and freed homeowners from these start-up costs. Plant infrastructure was equally important, because it creates privacy, beauty,

Raised beds represent a tangible impact for the homeowners: food.

and function. The group also tried to demonstrate alternate ways to finance landscape efforts. By using cardboard to mulch, salvaging log ends, and encouraging plant sharing, the Homes and Habitats project demonstrated that landscaping can be low cost. Similarly, composting and pesticide free gardening eliminates the cost of chemical inputs. By minimizing project costs, the group also showed homeowners how to save money by using natural landscaping.

No matter how much infrastructure is provided, knowledge is the most important aspect of empowerment. Questions were always welcome, at work parties and otherwise, and answers included explanations, not just yes or no. Sharing of knowledge occurred not only between the group and homeowners, but also between the group and volunteers, volunteers and homeowners, and homeowners and homeowners. The focus of homeowner education tended to be finding ways to fulfill the needs of the yard. The most common needs are nutrients, water, and pest control, all of which natural landscaping provide. The group encouraged simple techniques:

- Using leaves, grass clippings, and compost instead of fertilizers
- Encouraging diversity and habitat instead of pesticides
- Using mulch and native plants to reduce watering needs

By the end of the project all of these techniques were being used, and homeowners were salvaging plants and sharing mulch material.

Empowering homeowners ensures the continuation and success of your project. When you are finished landscaping, homeowners should share in your sense of accomplishment, and feel capable of maintaining their new yards. In order to achieve this you must consistently ***include homeowners and offer them opportunities to learn***. Furthermore, it is important that the yards reflect their needs and result from their efforts. If the homeowners are not involved, the site does not reflect their needs, and they have learned little, they will not only lack the ability to maintain the yards, they will lack the will. ***Empowering the homeowners should be central to the planning, supplying, and delivery of the project.***

The homeowners will be central to the site planning, but also include them in planning for supplies. This shows them the value of the garden they are receiving, and helps you by sharing the workload. If you are doing plant salvaging, involving the homeowners introduces them to a free source of plants, and teaches them about native plants in their area. Other

types of ***salvaging*** also offer education and cost savings: propagating plants, recycling malt barrels as rain barrels, building paths and fences out of recycled materials, and gathering mulch material.

No matter how much you try, you can not teach homeowners everything they will need to know. Accept this and encourage them to join local community groups, or take garden workshops. Finally, either set up a forum for ***follow-up*** and future questions, or develop a relationship between homeowners and a local group that offers a hotline for gardeners.



# 6

## Part 6: Conclusion

*When going out to the site I almost invariably see some of the 14 children who live there playing outside. They all have questions, and they all want to know what we are doing next and why. Perhaps the biggest success of this project is that these kids will grow up surrounded by native plants, eating food they helped produce, and observing insects and animals pass through their yards.*

Natalie Cushing, Project Coordinator

In starting the Homes and Habitats project, the Wild Garden Party hoped to make a lasting, positive impact on the community. As a champion of ecologically sustainable landscaping, the group wanted to make a tangible contribution to health of the region and demonstrate the benefits of this form of gardening. As an underlying theme, the group also wanted to show how collaborations, such as the Wild Garden Party, could create something that was bigger than the sum of its parts. These goals have clearly been reached, as witnessed by visiting the site or talking with the homeowners, volunteers, and coordinators.

With the gardens less than two years old, the benefits can already be seen. There are now many worms, beneficial insects, butterflies, and native birds in the gardens. The gardens are also producing food, such as herbs, strawberries, and vegetables. Since these gardens are all organic, they are improving the health of the community by reducing consumption of water, pesticides, and chemical fertilizers. The beautiful gardens not only create corridors for wildlife, and improve water retention, they inspire neighbors and visitors.

The human impact of the project is also considerable. The homeowners are also about the regions native plants, gaining food security, and sharing their new knowledge. This learning is not limited to the homeowners; it is shared by the volunteers. Finally, both of the project's coordinators benefited immensely for the project. As students, they received invaluable experience in fundraising, volunteer recruitment, coordination, research, landscaping, and more.

The learning aspect of the project is very important, as these lessons will help guide future projects. Perhaps the biggest lesson learned through Homes and Habitat was the importance of momentum. Having to repeatedly re-energize and re-start a project is hard work. It is better to establish a regular forum for communication, meetings, research, planning, and work that is consistent through all seasons. The second lesson learned through Homes and Habitat project was that it is more satisfying to see a project come together over a short period of time. For the Wild Garden Party, the best work parties were the physically demanding ones where the most work was done. It was also draining to spend weeks preparing for one work party, then have to do it all again. Based on this experience, it is highly recommended to organize all the supplies, equipment, volunteers, and expertise for one phase of the project before beginning work.

The landscaping is done now, but the impact of the project on the people involved is just beginning to materialize. Habitat for Humanity Victoria has asked the Wild Garden Party to help them landscape their next site. Many volunteers have made new contacts in the organic gardening community. The homeowners have been salvaging plants, and passing on gardening tips. It is exciting to see the effects of this project spreading and ultimately encouraging more people to adopt sustainable landscaping. Hopefully, this guide will continue that effect, inspiring, encouraging, and educating those who share the goals and visions of the Wild Garden Party.



## Part 7: Appendices

### Appendix 1: Resources

#### Appendix 1A: Local Nurseries that Carry Native Plants

Name	Location	Phone	E-mail/Web
Fraser's Thimble Farms	175 Arbutus Rd Saltspring Island, BC V8K 1A3	250-537-5788	thimble@saltspring.com www.thimblefarms.com
Natural Resource Native Plant Nursery	2466 Roome Rd. Duncan, BC V9L 4L2	250-748-0684	r_oud@shaw.ca www.oud-naturalresource.com/
Russell Nursery	1370 Wain Rd. RR #4 North Saanich	250-656-0384	russellnursery@telus.net
Streamside Native Plants	3222 Grant Road near Courtenay. Call for directions	250-338-7509	Richard@ streamsidenativeplants.com www.streamsidenativeplants.com
Thousand Summers	Call Dean Rebneris at 889 2029 to arrange a visit to nursery	250-727-0229	thousandsummers@shaw.ca
Wildside Nursery open Apr-Oct, Closed Aug	1770 Corrigan Rd Denman Island,	250-335-1379	harr@island.net
Woodgate Native Plant Services	2558 Jackson Valley Rd.	250-748-2558	rwoodgate@shaw.ca

For native plant specialty nurseries on the mainland of British Columbia, please see the **Native Plant Society of BC** web site [www.npsbc.org/Use/use.htm](http://www.npsbc.org/Use/use.htm)

#### Appendix 1B: Suggested Reading

*Native Plants in the Coastal Garden*, April Pettinger and Brenda Costanzo  
*Plants of Coastal British Columbia*, Pojar/MacKinnon  
*Gardening with Native Plants of the Pacific Northwest*, A. Kruckeberg  
*Shrubs & Flowers to Know in British Columbia and Washington*, C.P.Lyons/Bill Merilees  
*Trees and Shrubs of British Columbia*, T.C.Brayshaw  
*Propagation of Pacific Northwest Native Plants*, R. Rose, C.Chachulski and D. Haase  
 Any of Dr. Nancy Turner's Books!  
*Noah's Garden* and *Planting Noah's Garden*, both by Sarah Stein  
*Redesigning the American Lawn*, Borman/Balmori/Geballe  
*Waterwise Gardening*, Thomas Christopher  
*Discovering Wild Plants, Alaska, Western Canada, and the Northwest*, Janice Schofield  
*Landscaping for Wildlife in the Pacific Northwest*, Russell Link  
*The Wild Lawn Handbook*, Stevie Daniels  
*Stalking the Wild Amaranth*, Janet Marinelli  
*Miracle Under the Oaks*, William Stevens  
*Wildflower Magazine*

*The Song of the Dodo*, David Quammen (just because we live on an island!)  
*This Place on Earth*, Alan Thein Durning  
*Living Things We Love to Hate*, Des Kennedy

## Appendix 1C: Useful Web Sites

### **American Community Gardening Association**

(Note publication *Starting a Community Garden*)

<http://www.communitygarden.org/index.php>

### **Evergreen**

(Note Evergreen Native Plant Database)

<http://www.evergreen.ca/en/index.html>

### **Guide for Writing a Funding Proposal**

<http://www.learnerassociates.net/proposal/>

### **Meeting Wizard: your meeting planning center**

<http://www.meetingwizard.org/meetings/chairing-a-meeting.cfm>

### **North American Native Plant Society**

<http://www.nanps.org/publications/frame.shtml>

### **Recruiting and Keeping Volunteers**

<http://www.fiu.edu/~time4chg/Library/recruit.keep.html>

### **Social Marketing**

<http://www.social-marketing.com/media.html>

### **Wild About Gardening**

<http://www.wildaboutgardening.or>

## Appendix 1D: Organizations

Native Plant Study Group; (250) 595-5820

Native Plant Society of BC; (250) 595-5820, [www.npsbc.org](http://www.npsbc.org)

Swan Lake Christmas Hill Nature Sanctuary; (250) 479-0211 [www.swanlake.bc.ca](http://www.swanlake.bc.ca)

Naturescape BC; (250) 356-7111 [www.hctf.ca/nature.htm](http://www.hctf.ca/nature.htm)

City Green's Pesticide Free Naturally! Program; (250) 381-9995 [www.citygreen.ca](http://www.citygreen.ca)

Pacific Northwest Native Wildlife Gardening; [www.tardigrade.org/natives/](http://www.tardigrade.org/natives/)

The BC Stewardship Centre; [www.stewardshipcentre.bc.ca/sc\\_bc/main/index.asp?sProv=bc](http://www.stewardshipcentre.bc.ca/sc_bc/main/index.asp?sProv=bc)

Greater Victoria Compost Education Centre; (250) 386-9676 [www.compost.bc.ca](http://www.compost.bc.ca)

Victoria Natural History Society; (250) 479-2054 [www.vicnhs.bc.ca](http://www.vicnhs.bc.ca)

Habitat Acquisition Trust, (250) 995-2428 [www.hat.bc.ca](http://www.hat.bc.ca)

Goldstream Park Visitor Centre; (250) 478-9414 (Excellent bookstore) [www.goldstreampark.com](http://www.goldstreampark.com)

Conservation Connection Web Information; [www.conservationconnection.bc.ca](http://www.conservationconnection.bc.ca)

Garry Oak Meadow Preservation Society; (250) 475-2024 [www.garryoak.bc.ca](http://www.garryoak.bc.ca)

The Land Conservancy; (250) 479-8053 [www.conservancy.bc.ca](http://www.conservancy.bc.ca)

## Appendix 2: Sample Homeowner Contact Survey

Hi!

The Wild Garden Party is really excited about this special opportunity to work with Habitat for Humanity Families to create gardens for their new homes. Our landscape designers have visited the site and have come up with some initial ideas, but to create a garden that is both useful and personal for you, we would really like to know what you would like to see in your yards. Could you please give us some information about your vision for your yard?

A beautiful landscape can provide fresh food, use native plants, attract birds and butterflies and conserve resources like water. Are these environmental aspects important to your family? Are you interested in learning about these ideas, and helping to bring them to life?

Do you, or members of your family, enjoy gardening?

How much time could you devote to your garden?

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Would you be interested in having the following

A vegetable garden? \_\_\_\_\_

A fruit tree? \_\_\_\_\_

An herb garden? \_\_\_\_\_

Common areas help promote community and reduce crime. Would you be interested in having a common landscaped and garden area? Would you like to help maintain common areas, such as a children's play area?

---

Fencing has been installed between the backyards.

Some options are

- Remove the fence and create a shrub border between backyards
- Plant vines to grow along fences
- Retain fences and plant narrow gardens on each side
- Leave the fences as they are

What are your ideas? Do you have a preference?

---

Rain barrels and rain tanks help reduce the use of water and can be attractive additions to gardens (oak barrels, or tanks covered in grape vines). Are you interested in rain storage features?

---

Your yard should be safe and enjoyable for everyone in your home.

Do you have kids? If so, what ages?

---

Do you have pets? If so, what kinds?

---

Does your family have any special needs that the yard should accommodate?

---

Lawns provide open space and play area, but also require a lot of water and labour. Part of the lawn could be transformed into drought tolerant gardens. Are there areas of lawn that are important to keep?

---

Are there any plants or garden features you would really like to see included in your garden's design?

---

---

Is there any particular part of gardening that you have a special interest in, or that you would like to learn more about? For example organic vegetable garden, native plants, composting.

---

Do you have skills that might help complete the garden?

---

Do we have your permission to contact you by phone?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Number (if answer is yes) \_\_\_\_\_

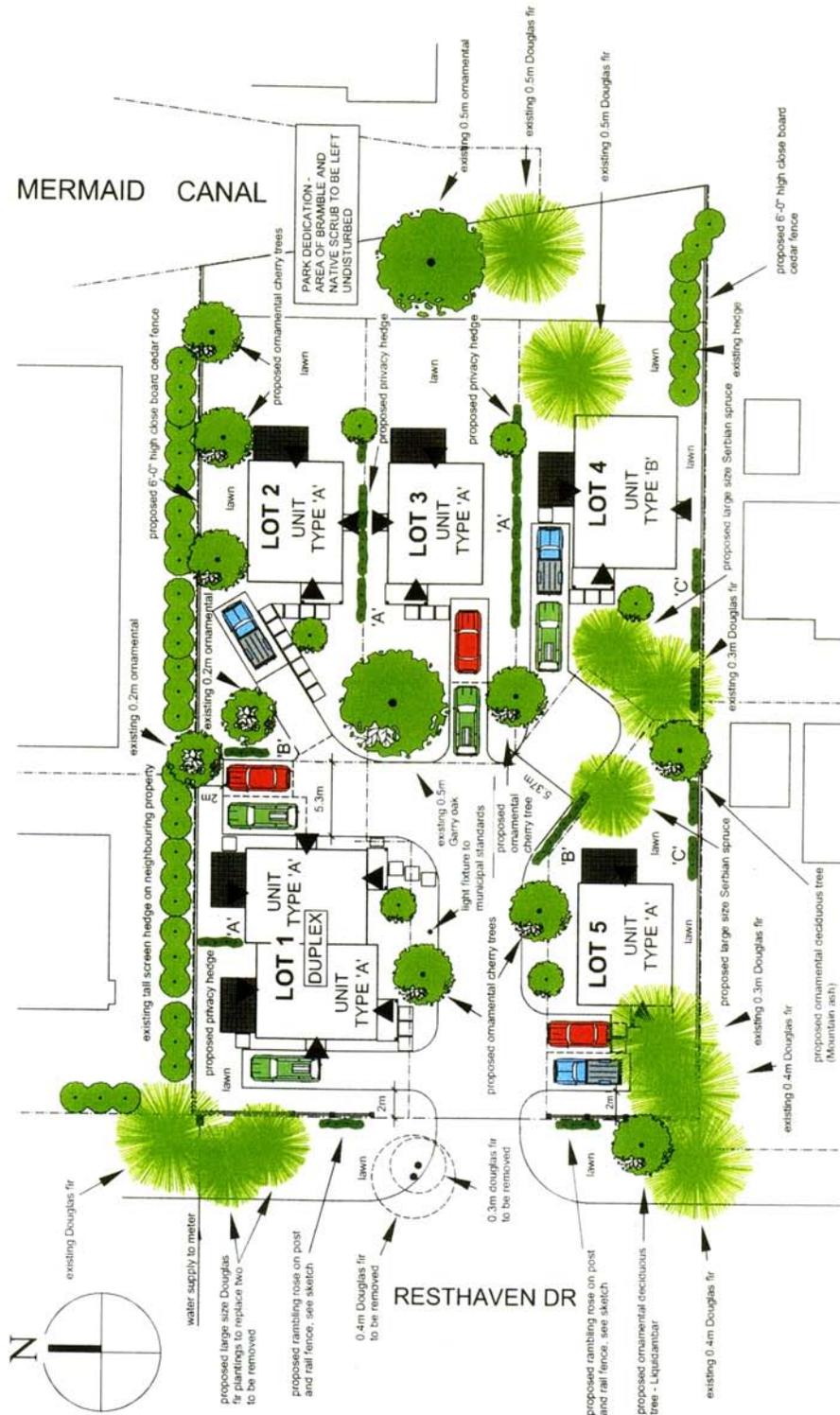
We look forward to meeting you, and beginning work on the gardens this spring. The landscape will be of no cost to you as the garden is created and volunteers will be helping to make this project a success. We can provide you with information on how to care for your garden after the project is through. If you have any questions you can contact me at (insert phone number), or (insert e-mail). Hopefully we can meet in the next few weeks to discuss your vision for the landscape. I look forward to hearing from you.

---

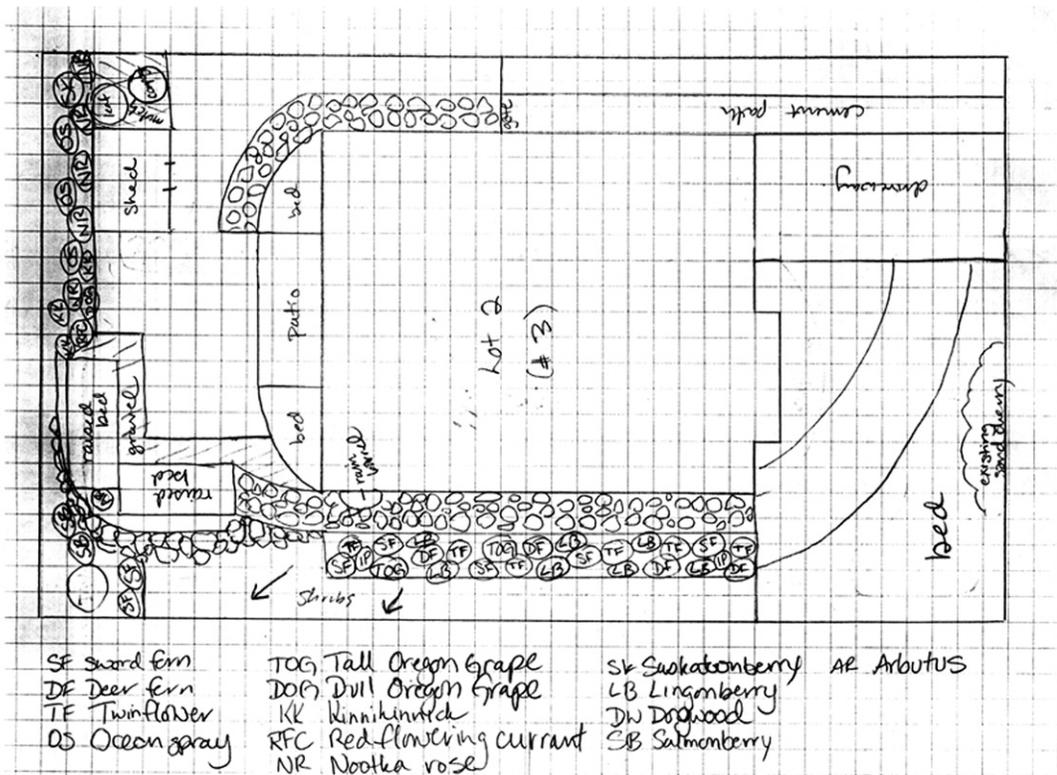
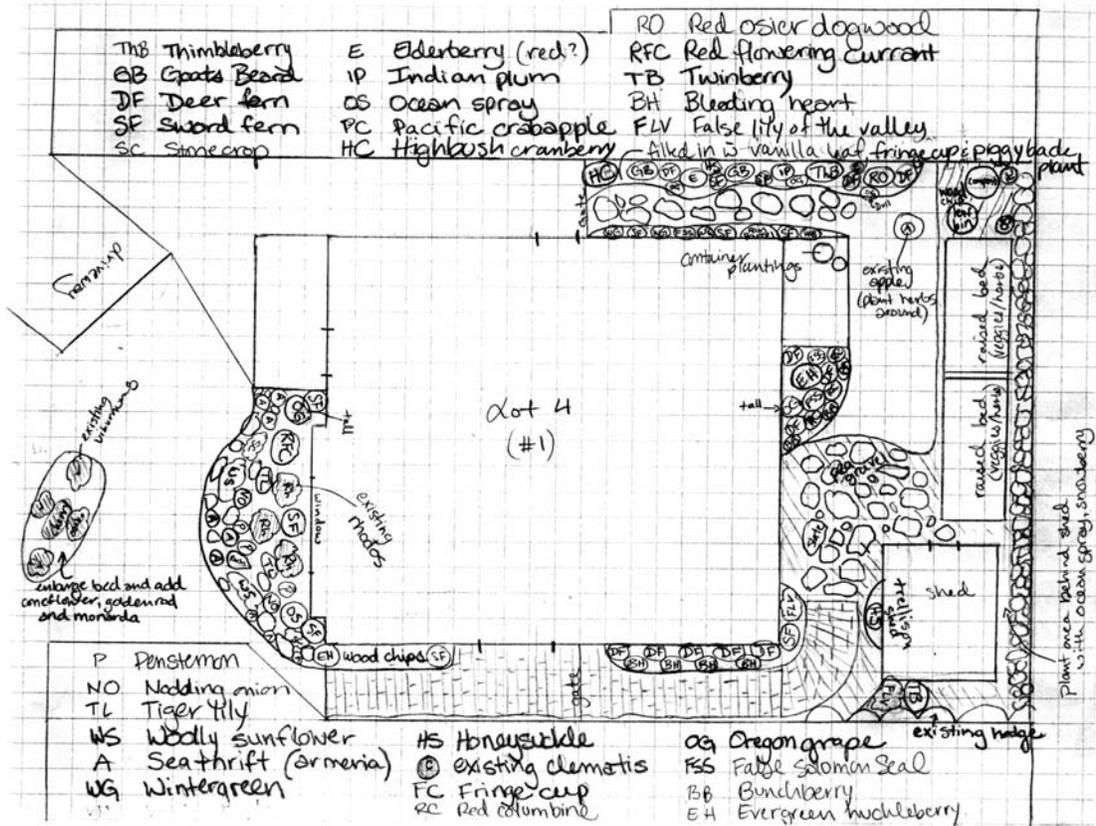
# Appendix 3: Sample Site Plans

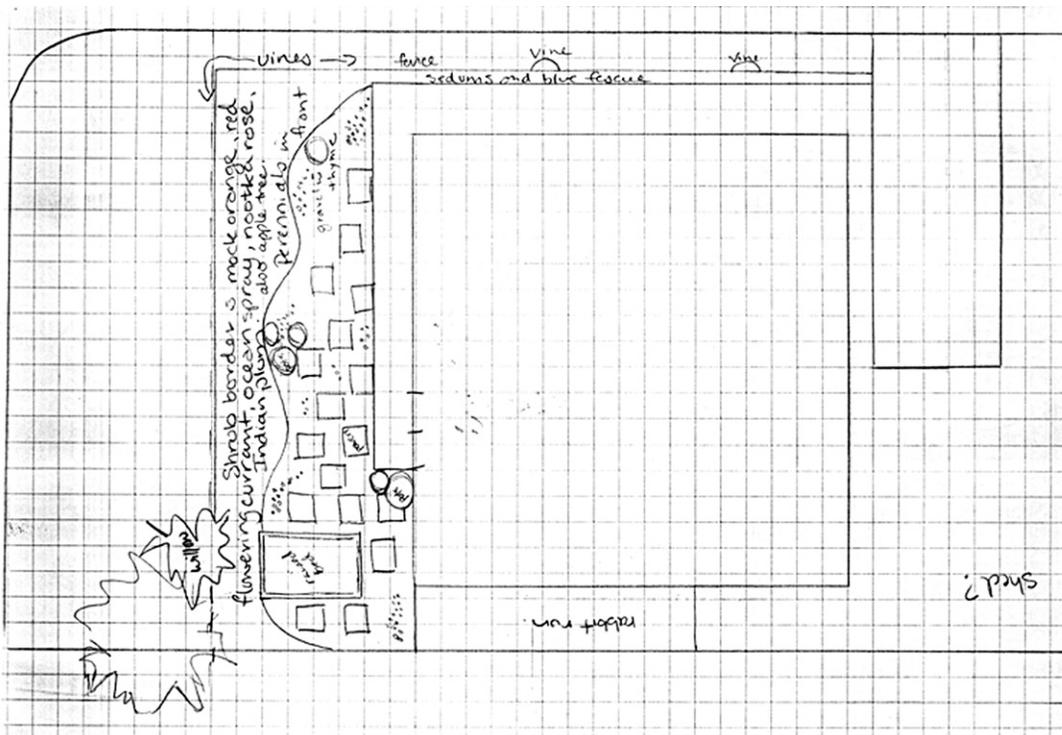
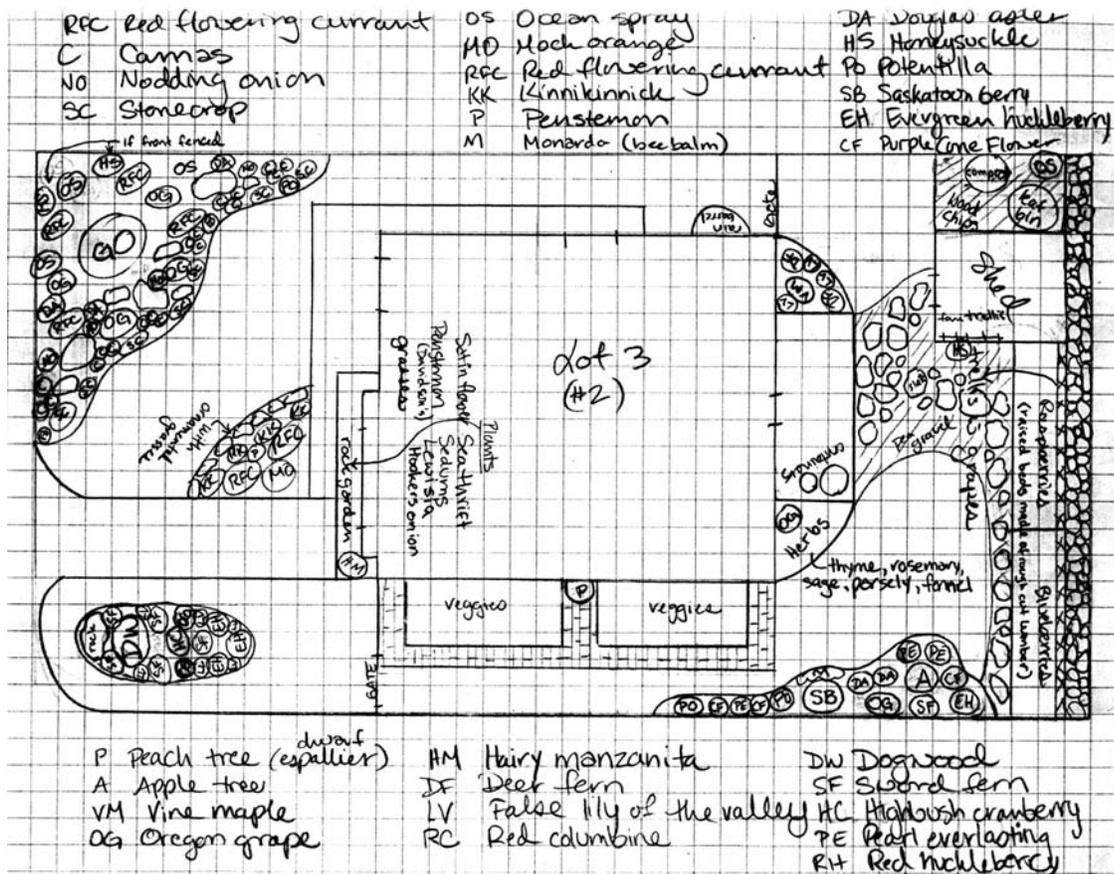
## Appendix 3A: Habitat for Humanity Site Plan

(Before Wild Garden Party Involvement)



## Appendix 3B: Sample Site Designs





## Appendix 4: Plants Used

BLANKET FLOWER  
BLEEDING HEART  
BROAD-LEAVED STONECROP  
CAMAS  
COASTAL STRAWBERRY  
DOUGLAS ASTER  
FENNEL  
FRINGECUP  
GOLDENROD  
HEUCHERA  
HONEYSUCKLE  
LAVENDER  
LUPINE  
NODDING ONION  
OREGON OXALIS  
PARSLEY  
PEARLY EVERLASTING  
PENSTEMON (PURPLE HAZE)  
POTENTILLA  
ROEMER'S FESCUE  
ROSEMARY  
SAGE  
SEA THRIFT  
SPREADING PHLOX  
SWORD FERN  
THYME  
WOOLY SUNFLOWER  
YARROW



APPLE AND PLUM TREES  
BLUEBERRIES  
ELDERBERRY  
EVERGREEN HUCKLEBERRY  
INDIAN PLUM  
KINNIKINNICK  
NINEBARK  
NOOTKA ROSE  
OCEAN SPRAY  
OREGON GRAPE – DULL  
OREGON GRAPE – TALL  
PACIFIC CRAB APPLE  
RED FLOWERING CURRANT  
RED OSIER DOGWOOD  
SASKATOON BERRY  
TWINBERRY



This Resource Guide Provided by:



**Wild Garden Party**

Web site: [wildgardenparty.org](http://wildgardenparty.org)

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For an online PDF version of this document please see our website.

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**The Greater Victoria  
Compost Education Center**



**Naturescape  
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**LifeCycles**



**Habitat Acquisition Trust**



**CityGreen**

**Native Plant Study Group Victoria**

**Native Plant Society of British Columbia**

This resource guide was compiled by:

**Natalie Cushing**

Produced by:

**Linda Beare  
Claudia Copley  
Angela Deering  
Jennifer Eliason  
Lynn Elliott  
Kate Emmings  
Alison Garnett  
John Olafson  
Sonya Sundberg**

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