



Designing Your Garden

Before you consider the plants you'd like to add to your garden, you will first need to determine the conditions of your space. Consider the following:



**Is your garden soil ready for planting?
Here are three quick tips to prepare your soil:**

- 1. Remove large rocks and debris to make space for plants.**
- 2. Loosen the soil to help plant roots grow.**
- 3. Add organic matter such as compost to give plants plenty of nutrients.**

Want to learn more about your soil?
URI Master Gardeners volunteers conduct free soil pH testing as a service to Rhode Island residents March through October.
[Learn more here!](#)



Lighting

Does your space get a lot of sun, or lots of shade cover from trees?



Drainage

Does rainwater run away from your yard, or does it form temporary pools after a rainstorm?



Long-term Maintenance

Once plants grow in, what will the landscape look like? Will it require a quick cleanup every spring, or more regular maintenance throughout the year?



Invasive Plants

Do you need to remove any plants before you add new ones? Removing invasive plants makes space for native plants to thrive.

Feeling overwhelmed?

The RWPZ horticultural team have some tips:

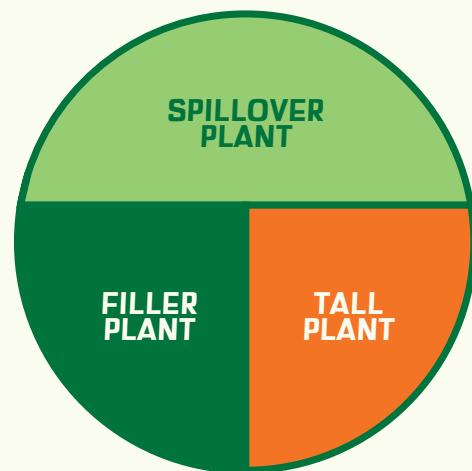
- **Start small. You can always add more plants later on.**
- **Be informal. A garden allowed to grow wild will be easier to maintain.**
- **Keep it simple. A small mix of plants will look neater than a wide variety.**
- **Every plant counts. Adding just one native plant to your garden makes a big difference.**



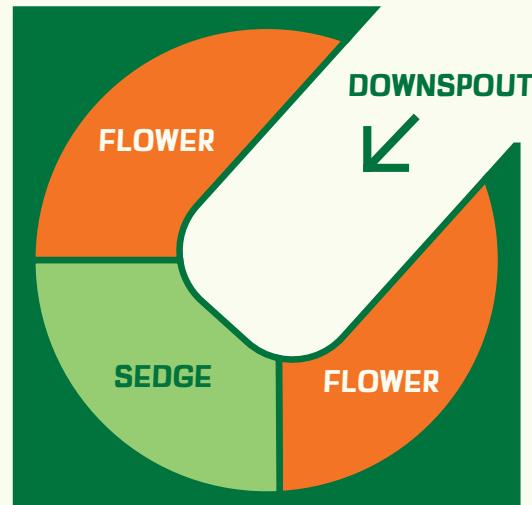
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Some starter garden designs RWPZ horticulturalists recommend:

Container Garden



Downspout Garden

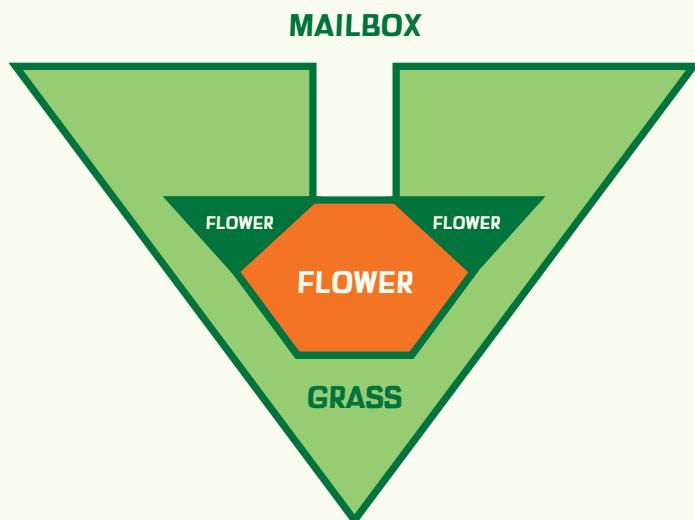




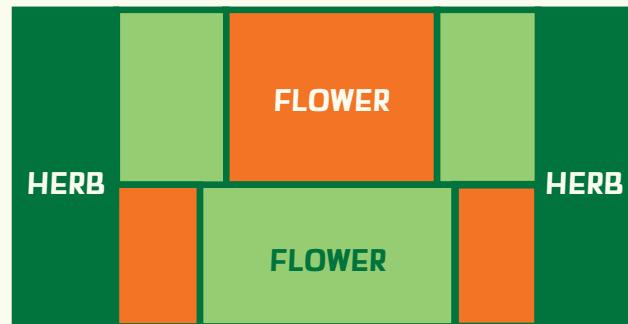
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Some starter garden designs RWPZ horticulturalists recommend:

Mailbox Garden



Window Planter Box

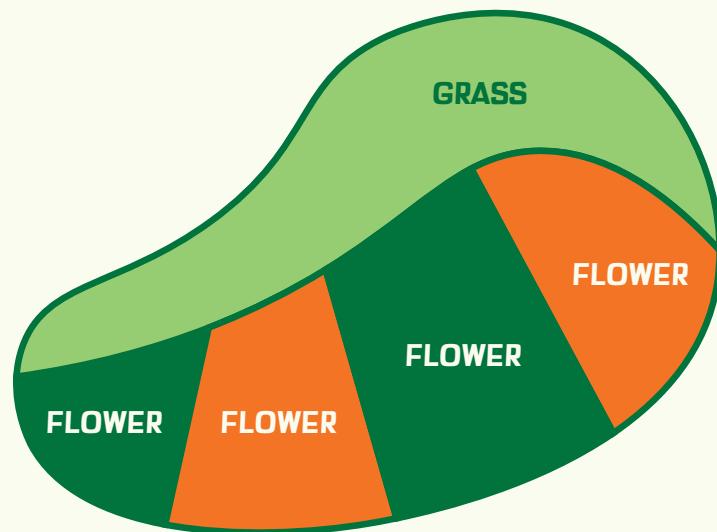




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Planter Bed



For more information on ways to design your garden, we recommend:

- Blank Park Zoo
- Native Plants for the Small Yard by Kate Brandes
- wildones.org
- Xerces Society