



## Sample DIY Site Consultation

March 2024

### GOALS

Removing the aging shrubbery will update the landscape to complement the architecture of the house with a contemporary palette of native plants. Adding green infrastructure will help catch and infiltrate stormwater runoff. Redefining the planting areas will create outdoor social spaces and direct movement through the landscape. A kitchen garden in the front yard will add food production

### PROJECT RECOMMENDATIONS

-Order a routine soil analysis for Home Grounds and Gardening from [UMass soil lab](#) or similar testing resource of your choice to test lead content in proposed garden area. Lead levels will dictate what/if crops can be safely grown. Even when using raised beds, high lead levels could require additional modifications to grow certain foods safely.

-Continue to remove the shrubs, by ripping them out if possible. Removing the stumps below the surface of the soil will make it easier to work in the space. Most local landscapers can give you a quote for removal or if you have access to a truck and a chain it can be a DIY job. Call [DigSafe](#) to have any underground utilities marked before pulling out shrubbery.

-Assuming lead levels are within safe limits, prepare the area for a veggie garden. Rake soil smooth and sheet mulch to desired size with cardboard to suppress grass, weeds and ivy. From a design perspective, filling most of the front yard with a kitchen garden would be attractive and radical. Using the front wall of the house as a guide, I would leave the existing shrubs and grass near the dogwood and start the kitchen garden by running a straight line from the corner of the house to the driveway, and extend all the way to the wall by the front door. 3-4 raised beds flanking the side door, a beneficial pollinator border garden running along the driveway edge, an in-ground area for perennial herbs, and small fruit like blueberries or strawberries would all work well, offering both produce and visual appeal



-Use woodchips to mulch the paths



-Install a [rain barrel](#) at the downspout by the wall for watering.

-Install [window well covers](#) over basement windows to help prevent leaks.

-Wood raised beds are affordable and easy to build with common power tools. They have a life of about 3-5 years. We like metal VegoGarden beds for their ease of assembly, modularity, lifespan and value.

-Aerating the lawn and preventing compaction will help it slow and infiltrate runoff from the road. Installing a garden at the lowest part of the lawn at the curve of the driveway in front of the house will increase biodiversity, add a layer of privacy from the street and help slow and absorb any water sheeting off the lawn toward your home. Observation of runoff during rain events of various severity will help you assess the amount of runoff to determine if a full [raingarden](#) is necessary or if a wide garden bed will allow for enough infiltration.

-While the shrubs in front of your bedroom window offer privacy, their arrangement and maintenance over the years has not left them in great condition. Removing them and replacing them with quicker growing native shrubs properly spaced will improve the overall character of the landscape.

Plant recommendations: Ninebark 'Coppertina' or 'Diablo', *Physocarpus opulifolius*, viburnum *V. trilobum* or *V. dentatum*, elderberry *Sambucus nigra*, inkberry *Ilex glabra*. A flowering perennial groundcover like coreopsis 'Moonlight' or bee balm *Monarda didyma* or *fistulosa* will help reduce the need for mulch over time.

-Scoping your buried downspout infrastructure will help determine which have failed. Making sure roof runoff is directed away from the foundation will help keep your



basement dry. As extreme weather events become more frequent, creating an intentional landscape to slow and absorb water becomes more critical than ever. A series of properly sized dry creeks and rain gardens can be an attractive and functional way to move and infiltrate water into your landscape. Directing downspouts to [well-designed green infrastructure infiltration](#) points can create areas of interest and biodiversity and utilize a problematic resource.



-Creating an outdoor room around the backdoor will make a nice place to gather. Grass can remain the surface or a patio could be installed, but any stone work is best done before planting. Define the perimeter of the space by connecting the existing bed by the house and the evergreen tree with a wide curving bed. Sheet mulch over or dig up the grass. Remove the burning bush and replace with a shade tolerant native shrub and plant the new bed with a lush variety of woodland understory plants

Plant recommendations: 'Annabelle' hydrangea, *H. arborescens*; virginia sweetspire *Itea virginica*; red osier dogwood, *Cornus sericea*; christmas fern, *Polystichum acrostichoides*; columbine, *Aquilegia canadensis*; tiarella, *T. cordifolia*; blue wood aster, *Symphotrichum cordifolium*; solomon seal, *Polygonatum biflorum*; wild ginger, *Asarum canadense*.

-Connect this new seating area to the lower tier with a natural stone staircase. Find a local mason who specializes in natural stone. To DIY this you can obtain a temporary hoisting license from a local rental facility to be able to rent a skid steer or bobcat, and order materials from a local stone supplier like [Powell Stone and Gravel](#). Be sure you understand how to properly prepare a base for sturdy and long lasting stone work.

-For design symmetry, plan to replace the existing stairs with the same materials or eliminate them.

-Remove the five euonymus on the sloped bed, allow creeping juniper to continue to spread and add native groundcover like tiarella, hayscented fern and cranesbill geranium. The goal is to encourage desirable plants to fill in the entire slope over time so weeds are suppressed and maintenance inputs are reduced.



-Use permaculture principles to [guild](#) under the fruit trees to support their health and productivity.

-Create a visual barrier from the neighbor's rental property that will not interfere with infrastructure access to the backyard with a perennial bed. Sheet mulch at least a four foot swath along the property line and plant with a variety of larger scale perennials and grasses. These plants have a shrublike presence but are not woody and will not obstruct construction vehicles if necessary.

Plant recommendations: tall coneflower, *Rudbeckia grandiflora*; bee balm, *Monarda didyma* or *fistulosa*; anise hyssop, *Agastache foeniculum*; penstemon, *P. digitalis*; baptisia, *B. australis*; amsonia, *A. spp*; mountain mint, *Pycnanthemum spp*; little bluestem, *Schizachyrium scoparium*.

Enjoy these recommendations. We hope they support and inspire your gardening efforts. If you'd like further design work or help bringing any of these ideas to life we offer design packages starting at \$750 for plans, plant and bulk material details and full installation quotes. Please reach out to us with any questions regarding the information herein or if you would like to work together in the future.

## OUR PRACTICES

Our rates reflect our decades of experience, both through formal education and certificates, as well as practical experience as managers and designers at reputable companies. Our rates also reflect our commitment to paying living wages commensurate with experience, as well as offering benefits such as (but not limited to) paid sick leave, holiday pay, and continuing education, which are not the industry standard.

Hedgewitch Horticulture is a women-owned and operated business established in 2021. It is the culmination of 20+ years of combined experience in farming, fine gardening, edible gardening, permaculture-based gardening, and herbalist practices. The owners Abby Wolf and Emily Gold are working to disrupt an industry that historically contributes immensely to climate change, ecological harm, and exploitation of labor. Hedgewitch Horticulture prides itself on fair pay + working practices, dedicates a percentage of all profits to indigenous led and black led non-profits, and does not use any pesticides, herbicides, or other harmful additives in our work. We are Accredited Organic Land Care Professionals through the Northeast Organic Farmers Association as well as Massachusetts Certified Horticulturists.

We believe that gardens provide sanctuary to people, plants, and animals, and we are co-creators with nature working to build a space that you love, adore, and want to work and



play in. We work within the boundaries of a mutually respectful relationship between client and company, which are: to always use respectful and kind communication practices, be radically transparent about process and costs, and put our best foot forward each day. We can't wait to work with you, and thank you for your trust.