



## Creating More Purposeful, Useful, Edible Spaces

Revival Garden Service LLC + Nursery  
 Liberty, NC  
 Design, Install, Maintain, Build:  
 Organic Vegetable Gardens  
 Herb & Medicinal Gardens  
 Orchards \* Edible Landscapes  
 Rain Gardens \* Pollinator Gardens  
 Custom-built Raised beds, Planters, Trellises  
 Licensed Certified Naturally Grown Nursery  
[www.revivalgardens.com](http://www.revivalgardens.com)  
[www.revivalgardens.shop](http://www.revivalgardens.shop)



What do all these plants have in common?  
 Edible, Medicinal, Useful, Pollinator-friendly...  
 not prone to deer browse

Revival Garden Service LLC  
 Liberty, NC  
[www.revivalgardens.com](http://www.revivalgardens.com)

## How often do you see these plants in our front yards?

All NC Piedmont Natives w/ edible & medicinal qualities

- easy to grow, naturally pest & disease resistant, hardy, pollinator-friendly, wildlife habitat and resistant to browse.

Revival Garden Service LLC  
 Liberty, NC  
[www.revivalgardens.com](http://www.revivalgardens.com)  
[www.revivalgardens.shop](http://www.revivalgardens.shop)

## Why Don't We Often See Such Helpful, Beneficial, Easy-to-Grow Plants?

Revival Garden Service LLC  
 Liberty, NC  
[www.revivalgardens.com](http://www.revivalgardens.com)  
[www.revivalgardens.shop](http://www.revivalgardens.shop)

## A visual stroll through 300 years...

England

French Potager Garden

Early American

Jefferson had 250 varieties of 89 species @ Monticello

Typical American Suburb

## Present

manufactured formulaic

Form (conformity) over function.

homogeneous uninspired monoculture

- \* Remove organic matter
- \* plant "easier" Non-native shrubs and flowers
- \* Bugs a danger - pesticides/neonicotinoids
- \* Diet of chemical fertilizers, herbicides

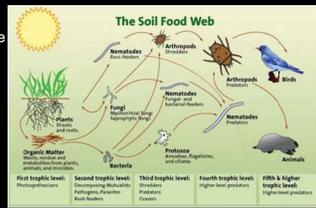
Useless. Non-native. invasive

- \* Garden considered 'backyard' endeavor
- \* Edibles banned in many HOA's
- \* Control over people, nature, self-sufficiency

Revival Garden Service LLC  
 Liberty, NC  
[www.revivalgardens.com](http://www.revivalgardens.com)  
[www.revivalgardens.shop](http://www.revivalgardens.shop)

## The result?

- **Plummeting biodiversity**
  - World Wildlife Foundation notes 73% decline wildlife populations in last 50 years
- **Habitat loss**
  - EPA cites 1,300 animals in US on verge of extinction.
  - Wildlife driven to suburban/urban areas
- **Soil depletion**
  - Little to no humus/organic matter
  - Few, if any, earthworms/insects and ground-dwelling mammals
  - Many yards are construction "fill dirt"
- **Chemical dependency**
  - bugs and diseases adapt anyway!



## But everything looks so nice...

- Largest US crop is Grass.
- EPA notes 1/3 household water use for grass
- Food Insecurity high

## Smartly-planned, Useful Gardens Can

Yield Over 100lbs/year of food per 100 sq ft space!  
\* require less than 20 minutes/week effort



Pic: SharonSable.com



## So Why Don't We Grow Like This?

- Habit?
- Belief it's too challenging
- Convention appears "easier"
- Convention appears "cheaper"
- Myth it only applies to farms, large yards
- Big-box mentality
- Irrational Fear of bugs, weeds, maybe "public opinion"



## Useful Landscape

- Nourishes
- Calms
- Clothes
- Cures/Heals
- Cleanses
- Beautifies
- Encourages Life, Beneficials, + Biodiversity
- Provides Habitat
- Improves the Soil
- Builds Community

flax



soapwort



## Mixed, Useful Plantings

• Beauty meets Function.

- Teeming with biodiversity
- wildlife habitat
- Better pest suppression
- Water conservation
- Food

• pic: edible, medicinal flowers, native flowers, lemongrass, peppers, sweet potatoes, hibiscus, raspberry

Barb Vespa



Pic shared by Barbara Vespa

## Incorporate Edibles into Formal Spaces

citrus and peach trees, fava beans, edible flowers, medicinal yarrow, clover, kale, buckwheat, strawberries, perennial arugula, sorrel, asst. herbs

REGENERATIVE DESIGN



## Getting Started

- Assess Existing Site(s)
- Consider Your Goals
- Ask Yourself:
  - What do I **use** most?
  - What is most expensive to buy?
- **Sensory Fulfillment** (sound, sight, taste, scent, texture)
- What do I wish to **encourage** (birds, pollinators, community, healthier eating, therapeutic relaxation, etc)?
- Can my garden help **support** current hobbies (soapmaking, natural textile dyeing, stationary/pressed flowers, cooking etc)
- What can I **contribute** inwardly and outwardly?
  - time, energy
  - food donations, community beautification, habitat



## Getting Started

- Map your **current potential**
  - gaps, edges, corners, vertical space
- Assess **future potential** - other plants needing relocation (seasonal) or removal (anytime)
- Features I wish to **accentuate** (trellis, bay window)
- Features I wish to **conceal** (trash bins, heat pumps)
- Be intentional
- Start Small!



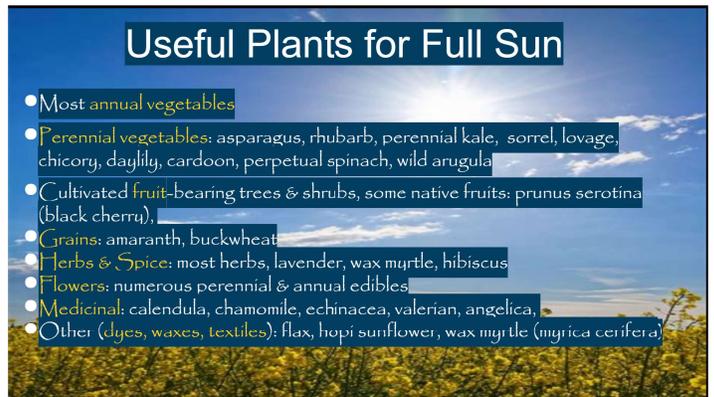
## Practical Design Considerations Useful Landscape

- Light needs
- Soil type + PH + Nutrient needs
- Water Management
- Spacing, Size, Support
- Container and Small Footprint Gardens
- Smarter Plants
- Bloom Timing
- Access



## Useful Plants for Full Sun

- **Most annual vegetables**
- **Perennial vegetables:** asparagus, rhubarb, perennial kale, sorrel, lovage, chicory, daylily, cardoon, perpetual spinach, wild arugula
- Cultivated **fruit-bearing trees & shrubs**, some native fruits: prunus serotina (black cherry), [redacted]
- **Grains:** amaranth, buckwheat
- **Herbs & Spice:** most herbs, lavender, wax myrtle, hibiscus
- **Flowers:** numerous perennial & annual edibles [redacted]
- **Medicinal:** calendula, chamomile, echinacea, valerian, angelica, [redacted]
- **Other (dyes, waxes, textiles):** flax, hopi sunflower, wax myrtle (myrica cerifera)



## Useful Plants for Part Sun/Part Shade

- **Annual Vegetable** greens, most alliums, root crops
- **Perennial Vegetables:** Good King Henry, watercress, walking onions, perpetual spinach, ostrich fern, America hog nut
- **Herbs & Spices:** native spicebush (lindera benzoin), wax myrtle, thyme, pineapple sage, mint, common sage, parsley, dill, fennel, cilantro, shiso
- **Fruit:** Cultivated & native blueberries, native aronia, alpine strawberries, native wintergreen, native persimmon
- **Edible & medicinal flowers:** violet sororia, calendula, varieties of dianthus, wild bergamot, borage, skullcap
- **Other:** soapwort (soap), bloodroot (dye)



## Useful Plants for Shade

- **Veggies/Legumes:** Native Groundnut
- **Fruit & nuts:** native brambles, native paw paw, native elderberry, native passionfruit vine, native serviceberry, native blueberry, native hickory, native aronia, native chickasaw plum, native black walnut, native pecan, certain kiwi varieties
- **Herbs:** sweet woodruff, native wintergreen (gaultheria), partridgeberry (mitchella repens)
- **Edible Flowers:** some dianthus, calendula, nasturtium, violet, American Wisteria
- **Mushrooms**
- **Medicinal:** witch hazel, black cohosh



## Soil Requirements for Planting



Tanger Rain Garden,  
Greensboro, NC

- Sandy, clay, loam
- Subdivision soil
- Drainage
- Consider native environment and replicate.
- Group like-plantings
- Integrate certified composts and leaf mulches for natives



## PH



- Map ph needs prior to planting + group
- **Low** ph (under 5): blueberries, perennial strawberries, native flowers, aronia, some roses,
- **Medium Acid/Alkaline** (6-7ph): most veggies, strawberries, brambles, fruit trees/shrubs
- **High** ph (7+): asparagus



## Nutrient-Planning Zones

The most amenable nutrient to everything is compost.  
'spot fertilize' as needed by zone/crop

**Taller, High Nutrients:** tomatoes, dwarf fruit trees, trellised squash, corn etc

Mid-size, moderate nutrients:  
colorful chard, many flowers,  
peppers, fruiting shrubs

**Shorter, Low/no Nutrients:** native flowers, herbs, root crops, edible groundcovers, perennial strawberry, lavenders



## Group by Water Requirements

- **Low**
- **Moderate**
- **High**
- **Regulate water w/ compost, natural mulch, living mulches.**
- **Drip tape under mulch**
- **In our climate, smartly-designed ground landscapes require little, if any, irrigation.**

## Spacing Considerations for Dynamic Landscapes

- **Allelopathy** : black walnut, forsythia, rhododendron, magnolia
- **Ventilation**
- **Natural Plant spread**
- **Disease/Pest Pressure**
- **Root Competition** elderberry, groundnut
- **Crop Rotation**
- **Propagation**
- **Access for Harvest**



## Spacing (horizontal)



- Integration in Existing Vegetation
- Understory plantings & Edging: lettuce, spinach, herbs, creeping edibles (sweet woodruff), vining plants, lower shrubs (wintergreen)
- Pocket plantings



## Spacing (vertical)



Strawberries, tomatoes, sage, nasturtium, beans, asparagus




Barb Vespa



Revival Garden Service LLC  
Liberty, NC  
www.revivalgardens.com  
www.revivalgardens.shop

## Consider Support Aesthetic

- Plan ahead!
- Trellises
- Stakes
- Wire, espalier
- Artistic/rustic/inviting/formal
- Seasonal focal point





Revival Garden Service LLC  
Liberty, NC  
www.revivalgardens.com  
www.revivalgardens.shop

## Incorporate Edibles into Smaller Spaces

- Hanging baskets of herbs, edible flowers
- dwarf cultivars
- Espalier
- Vertical gardening
- Garden walls
- Arches
- Edible, perennial groundcovers







Revival Garden Service LLC  
Liberty, NC  
www.revivalgardens.com  
www.revivalgardens.shop

## Water Considerations Container Gardens

- self-watering pots
- Ollas, water spikes (homemade, store-bought)
- Bury pots
- Drip irrigation (not on a timer!)
- Water early morning, deeply, and only when needed. Test soil first!
- Water soil, not foliage
- Organic mulch (chopped leaves, compost, untreated grass clippings), consider 2nd slower-breakdown layer of mulch (wood chips, pine straw) and/or long-term mulch (stone, seashells)
- Living mulch
- Vertical Gardening - Hang baskets over ground planters, Wall planters.
- Scout and find cooler microclimates
- DO NOT place gravel in the bottom for drainage opt for burlap, shredded leaves, or nothing






Revival Garden Service LLC  
Liberty, NC  
www.revivalgardens.com  
www.revivalgardens.shop

## Container Gardening Tips

- **Pots:**
- Stone, light-colored glazed ceramic pots, cedar over plastic (leaching), terracota, fiber pots, metal
- Deeper and wider is better than short & narrow
- **Soil mixes :**
- Light and airy
- Vermiculite (water retention/release) over perlite (drainage). Blend the 2
- Coconut coir over peat
- Organic matter: rice hulls, compost, earthworm castings, leaf mold
- Make your own mix
- **Plantings**
- Select shorter maturities
- Mix plantings in a container: tomatoes w/ understories of greens
- heat-tolerant, drought-tolerant varieties (Moroccan lettuce, African greens)
- **Placament**
- Avoid concrete/pavement
- Consider solid Wood, mulch, bare earth



Revival Garden Service LLC  
Liberty, NC  
www.revivalgardens.com  
www.revivalgardens.shop

## Container Gardening Tips

- Fertilizing
- Compost
- Worm castings
- Slow release granular organic fertilizers at half rate more often
- Liquid fertilize only 1x a week.



Revival Garden Service LLC  
Liberty, NC  
www.revivalgardens.com  
www.revivalgardens.shop



## Select Smarter Plants



- Local Heirlooms
- Native plants & grasses
- Global Plants from similar climate
- Easy-to-grow varieties (zinnia, chard, basil, etc)

These are:

Bred to thrive, resist disease, yield strongly, many are drought tolerant

\*Note on nursery stock\*



Varieties Recommended for Containers – [revivalgardens.shop](http://revivalgardens.shop)  
Locally Grown by Revival Gardens Nursery

- **Tomatoes** – Tom Thumb, Patio, Cherokee Short-vine, Black Sea Man, Marglobe VF, celebrity, Roma Virginia Select, Napoli Plum, Hungarian-Italian Paste, Banana Cream, Sun Gold
- **Okra** – Cajun Jewel (4')
- **Beans** – All pole beans (with support) and bush beans. Varieties from India especially drought tolerant.
- **Winter Squash** – Butterbush, Table Queen Bush
- **Summer Squash** – Astia Zucchini
- **Other** – Peanuts, Potatoes, All Greens (especially heat-tolerant ones like Hawaiian, Thai lettuces)
- **Watermelon** – Early Moonbeam and Sugar Baby have dwarf vines under 4'
- **Cucumber** – Spacemaster (short vines, full size fruit)



## Sensory Design



What's wrong with this picture?

## Color Timing

It blooms all at once (Summer)

Plan

- 1) Evergreen foundations (rosemary, junipers etc)
- 2) Perennials
- 3) Consider Seasonal Color changes
- 4) perennial texture. Bark, branches, needles
- 5) Vary maturities w/ annuals
- 6) Fill Space w/ useful annuals



## Spring Color

Colorful year-round, useful growing in NC Piedmont



Phlox nivalis native



Baptisia native



Viola sororia native, edible



Red Clover soil builder, pollinator attractor



Serviceberry native, edible



## Summer Color

Calendula, edible, medicinal



Anise hyssop, edible flowers, leaves



Asclepias tuberosa, native habitat, pollinator



Wisteria frutescens, native, edible flowers



Amaranth edible flowers, grains Pic: Barb Vespa



## Fall Color



Juniper berry, native, edible



Nasturtium phoenix edible



Solidago odora native, edible



Pineapple sage, edible



American persimmon native, edible



Revival Garden Service LLC  
Liberty, NC  
[www.revivalgardens.com](http://www.revivalgardens.com)  
[www.revivalgardens.shop](http://www.revivalgardens.shop)

## Winter Color



Wintergreen, edible



viola, edible



Fava bean, edible



Hawthorn berry, native, edible



Revival Garden Service LLC  
Liberty, NC  
[www.revivalgardens.com](http://www.revivalgardens.com)  
[www.revivalgardens.shop](http://www.revivalgardens.shop)

## Access



Storage. googleapis.com

Pretty but...  
How do you pick/use most of this?  
It Also Matures Simultaneously

- 4'-5' reach
- Group harvest windows
- Harvest frequency
- Variable maturities
- Plan Dedicated + Temp Paths



Revival Garden Service LLC  
Liberty, NC  
[www.revivalgardens.com](http://www.revivalgardens.com)  
[www.revivalgardens.shop](http://www.revivalgardens.shop)

## Incorporate Edibles into Mixed Plantings



- Similar PH levels & soil types
- Cultivation + compost
- spacing
- Differing PH? Consider vining edibles

Barb Vespa design



Revival Garden Service LLC  
Liberty, NC  
[www.revivalgardens.com](http://www.revivalgardens.com)  
[www.revivalgardens.shop](http://www.revivalgardens.shop)

## Thank You for Your Time Any Questions?

**Barb Vespa**  
(912) 321-2359  
[www.revivalgardens.com](http://www.revivalgardens.com)  
[www.revivalgardens.shop](http://www.revivalgardens.shop)

Design, Install, Maintain, Build  
Organic Vegetable & Herb Gardens  
Orchards, Medicinals  
Edible Landscapes  
Rain Gardens  
Pollinator Gardens

Licensed Nursery  
Southern Heirlooms, Exotics, Edible  
Flowers, Medicinals

**We Build Trellises, Raised  
Beds, Custom Planters**