

Natural Looking Landscape to Enhance your Native Plants

Al Kyte 2016

In 1972 this garden was 90 per cent grass, sloping in front and flat in back. My vision for this landscape has evolved into a rolling, rocky, foothill look such as might have been seen by the first people to arrive at this location. I believe that any beauty in such a garden comes partly from the plants and partly from **what we do between the plants**. I believe that any between-the-plant features we add should combine beauty with naturalness, and, when possible, benefit wildlife as well. These features can also help accomplish practical garden needs such as holding back or slowing down runoff or creating niches that protect the plants from the clay below or the hot sun above.

Specific Features

Holding back or slowing down the flow of water

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| 1. A retaining "drywall" | Good natural retaining wall in steep ground |
| 2. Staggered rock "natural" retainer | An even more natural retaining barrier |
| 3. Depressions or Lakes as retainers | Allows time for water to sink into the ground |
| 4. Slowing runoff by meandering, alternating changes in direction...
-in pathway/streams (side cutting)
-in actual stream flow | Even leaf debris slows flow
Consider rate of flow on rock particle size
Creates ideal areas for birds to bathe |
| 5. Additional Slowing techniques
-changing flow direction of entire stream
-adding filling basins
-rock deflectors | Catches more runoff when parallel to slope
Another way to slow the runoff
Avoid random placement of rocks |
| 6. Down-cutting Contrast (steep country)
-plunge pools in stream
-canyon gorge | Filling basins
Variety in steeper slope |

Elevating the Landscape - Raising the landscape with rock and or soil 1) creates drama, 2) lifts plant roots above the clay, 3) provides niches for plants, 4) and protects them from the sun.

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| 1. Dirt mounds - Provide a "hill" look. | They provide dust-bath areas for birds, and soft landing areas for climbing children. |
| 2. Rocky mounds add drama. | They also resist erosion and provide steep protection against the sun for the plants. |

Artifacts-Evidence of Past human activity in natural rock or wood

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| 1. Remnant Wall | An art form in itself |
| 2. Western fences, wood pile | Use natural materials |
| 3. Old pump stand, TeePee play area | Also ranch artifacts |
| 4. Wooden steps, stick barriers, benches | Easy to overdue the number of artifacts |