
SHAPE AND FORM:

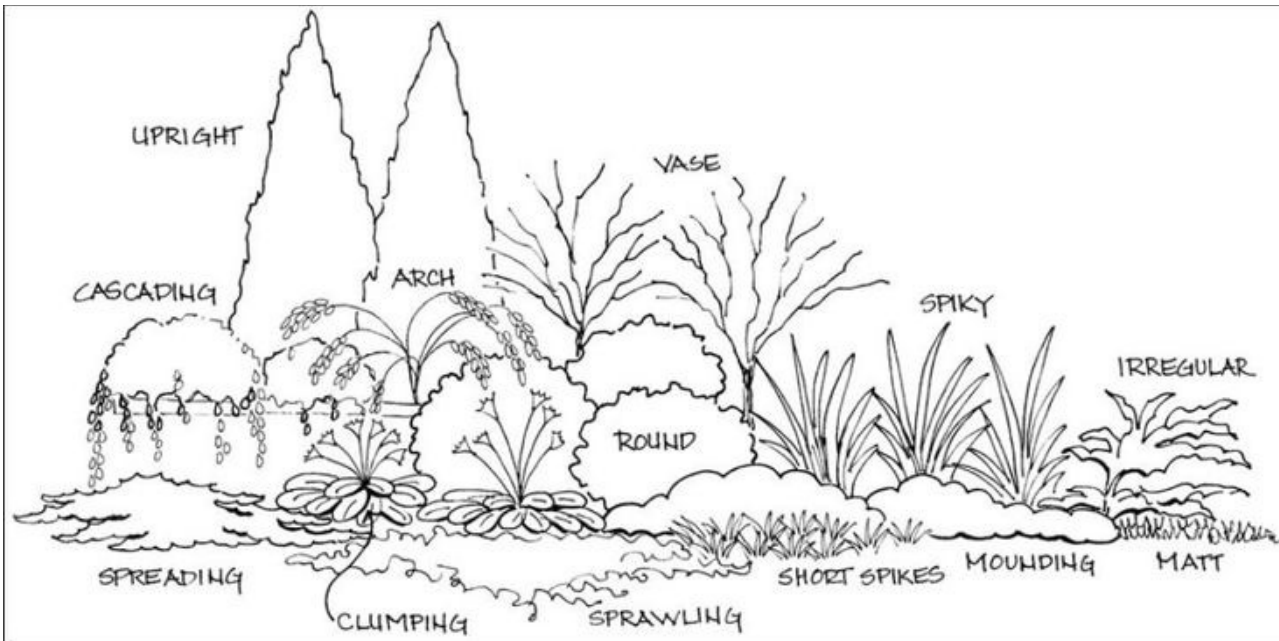
shapes have symbolic meaning, define style

- FORM=3D SHAPE of object, plant mass, silhouette,
- SHAPE=2D is a 2-dimensional visual description of an object. An outline, if you will. Heavy snow makes it easy to see and decide if you like the shapes.
- “Good form is a quintessentially important element of good design. A weeping Japanese maple has an overall shape, both a leafy shape, and a twiggy shape. That maple also has a three dimensional structure-that is its form. The successful placement of that maple in the landscape is dependent upon an understanding of its form. Planting small or young trees require an understanding of a form that is yet to be”. Deborah Silver
- A garden is made up of shapes: ground shape, water shape, tree shape, leaf shape, flower shape, site shape, house shape==cubes, spheres pyramids, cylinders, cones
- forms matter because it prevents a landscape from being too busy or messy
- this is first thing to think about before plants
- the larger pattern of garden is made up of many smaller shapes
- a garden is a roofless box=garret eckbo
- 2D patterns come alive when made 3D by using different heights with filler in between
- #####is the most enduring quality of plant
- used to define space, enclose areas, provide interest
- often determines style of garden
- form is also the negative space between plants
- the landscape itself, both manmade + natural has form
- use to block a view, open sight line, partially mask a view
- need strong contrasting forms for vitality
- grouping plants display their forms
- comes from direction/arrangement of branches, trunks, etc.
- form changes based on viewing angle
- can be left natural, sheared, pruned in topiary, or espalied
- geometric vs organic (doesn't usually work to mix these two)
 - geometric-good near houses, urban gardens
 - organic-good for rolling hills, natural rural spaces
- consider it's function before choosing form
 - tree: shade==round or oval tree,
 - tree screening==columnar or pyramidal form
 - tree:focal point==weeping
 - shrub: screening/buffers== upright, vase, mounded, round
 - shrub:groundcovers== irregular/spreading forms
 - shrubs:focal points==arching, cascading,pyramidal,spiky
 - flowers:screening==nemone pamina, verbena bonariensis and thalictrums.
 - flowers:fillers==calamintha, limonium, perennial geraniums, gillenia trifoliata, hakonechloa grass, heuchera, hosta, saponaria max frei, baby's breath, phlox stolonifera, artemesia, brunnera and lady's mantle.

- grasses:screens==panicum prairie fire, deschampsia, molina skyracer, and calamagrostis brachytricha.
- groundcovers: solid low cover large area==matting,spreading,sprawling
- groundcovers:small masses/containers==clumps, short spikes

• types of forms:

- TREES: vase, weeping, oval/rounded, broad, columnar, pyramidal
- SHRUBS: upright, vase, arching, irregular,cascading, spiky, rounded, mounding
- GROUNDCOVERS:clumping,matting,spawling,short spikes,spreading
 - tend to look best in masses bc small, little impact individually

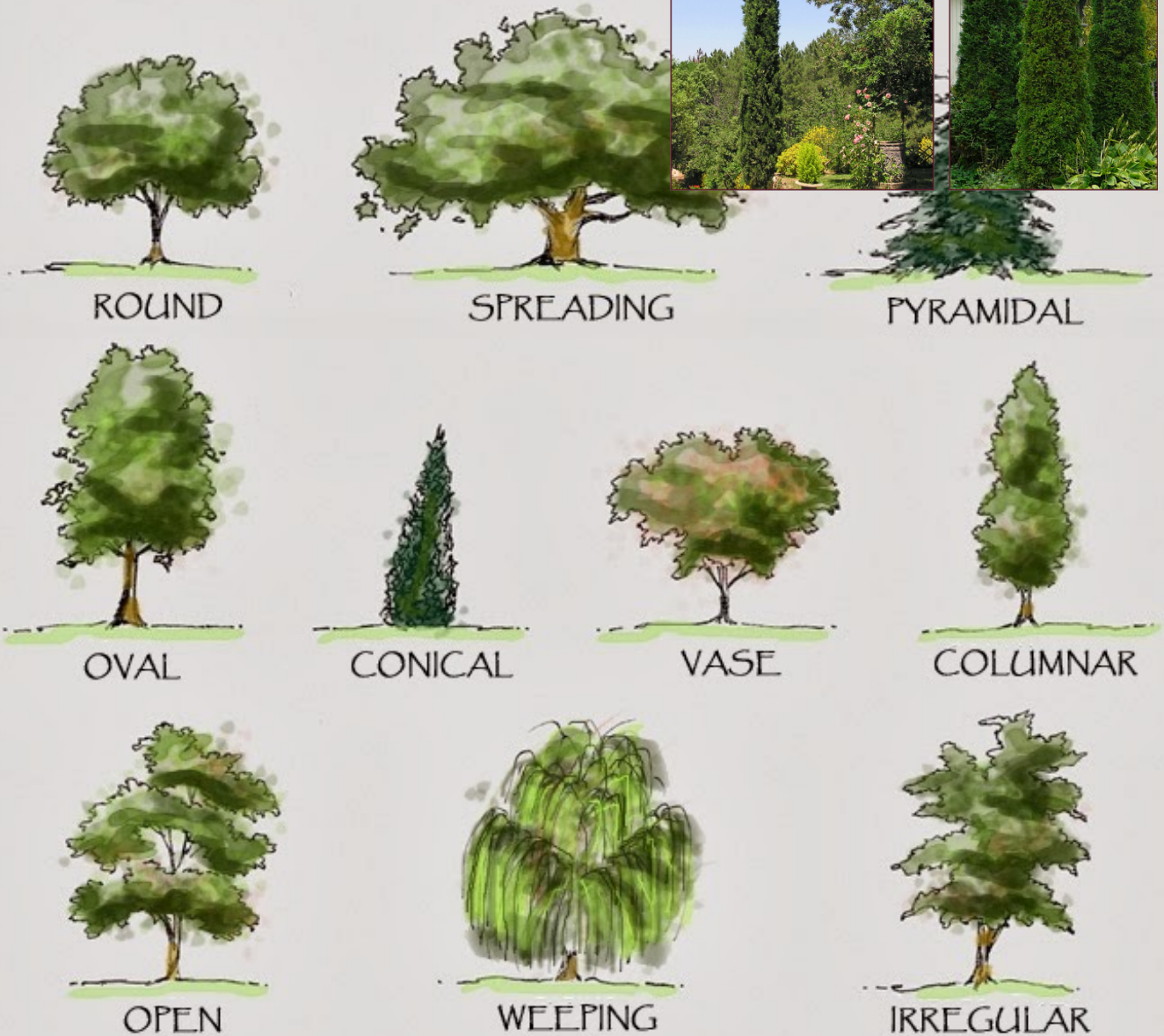


Rules on combining forms:

1. chose form to fit space-vertically/horizontally
2. chose form to fit function
3. consider adjacent plant forms—look for contrast
4. repeat forms in landscape for unity, but change color (ex. hostas)
5. too many complex forms=chaos, too many simple forms=boring
6. chose 1-2 striking forms focal pt—let rest be neutral
7. avoid over trimmed forms
8. emphasize forms with simple color scheme

A good design should be evident in every season. In all kinds of weather. I do believe that good design is all about what is there when there is nothing there to see. deborah silver

TREE FORMS



- COLUMNAR—FASTIGIATE—SPIKES—SPIRES—VERTICALS

- Trees draws the eyes upward, ! point
- connect heaven and earth
- add lift to garden
- tend to dominate, so balance w greater #horizontal forms to link vertical forms together
- helps reinforce specific lines
- tall + narrow, little taper
- Adds stability (weight) and security
- could put on either side of entrance to frame it, (not in front of doors)

- large spikes great for focal point or at corner to interrupt/decrease sight line visibility
- makes small space feel bigger
- good where tallness needed, but width space tight
- adds height to garden
- good contrast with mounds and globes
- spiky plants pair with soft, billowing, fine texture
- or choose companions with similar colors, textures, shape—sedums
- agaves, cactus, etc provide exotic feel to space
- better clustered in 3's than alone
- don't overuse
- mass small spiky plants for greater effect or plant in clumps, carrying design round yard
- let large spikes stand alone (large agave)
- loose and airy or dense and commanding, are wonderful punctuation marks in a display.
- They break up monotony, standing out from the crowd even as they keep the eye moving.
- Plants with upright leaves that look a bit like sword blades make great 'exclamation marks' at the start and, or end of a border, And as centrepieces in a bed
- Use small, spiky plants to introduce variety
- Ones to try include yucca and phormium



- TREES: arborvitae, cypress
- SHRUBS: cactus, yuccas, agaves, prickly pear cactus, new zealand flax, variegated spanish dagger, century plant
- GROWDCOVERS:
- FLOWERS: look best in clumps
 - hollyhocks, penstemons, foxgloves, salvias, verbenas, veronica hastata, veronica, fireweed, baptisia, o, lythrums, agastache, cimicifugas, aconitum, agastache, liatris, persicaria, salvia, veronica, perovskia, digitalis, baptisia, lupins, delphiniums, penstemon, lavender, nepeta, and veronicastrum, red hot poker, flat sea hollies, Snapdragon, larkspur, and salvia, angelonia, Delphiniums, Foxgloves, Hollyhocks. Tall Bearded Iris, Lupins, Campanula Persicifolia, Alliums, Foxtail Lilies, Liatris,, Snakeroot (Actaea racemosa) and many taller Veronicas, like "Purpleicious".
- GRASSES: karl foerster, feather reed grass

GOOD PAIRINGS SPIKY PLANTS:

- spanish dagger/burgandy ground cover
- prickly pear cactus and ornamental grass
- new zealand flax, autumn sedum, short ornamental grass, ajuga
- sea hollies,
- hesperaloes



- **FLATHEADS---TIERS---UMBRELS**

- occurs at all levels of garden
- upturned bowl shape
- counter balance energy of spires
- have soft,gentle look-lend look of gentle naturalism
- yarrows, dogwoods, mature cedars, japanese maples, sedums, queen annes lace, fennel, joe pye weed, spiraea japonica, lace cap hydrangeas,
- TREES:
- SHRUBS:
- GROWDCOVERS:
- FLOWERS:achillea, amsonia, asclepias, euphorbia, eupatorium, vernonia and sedums.
- GRASSES:



- FLAT MAT—HORIZONTAL—SPREADING:

- comfortable to look at
- flat mounding, wider than tall forms
- makes space feel wider
- useful for underplantings
- neutral
- great for transitioning from 1 area to another,
 - lawn to mixed border
 - veggie beds to ground
- eyes naturally drawn to looking at things this way
- create a carpet in your flowerbeds, not only covering open ground or making a “skirt” at the base of taller plants but also generally spilling over and softening the edges
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- TREES:
- SHRUBS:
- GROWDCOVERS:
- FLOWERS: Fan flower, sweet alyssum, million bells, and portulaca, Periwinkle, Creeping Thyme, Sedum Acre, Hens and Chicks, Ajuga, Sweet Woodruff, Phlox Subulata, and Aubretia.
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- GRASSES:
- mounding/spreading shrubs looks best in mass

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- GRAFTED STANDARDS—TOPIARY:

- a stick with a ball on top
- great as linear plantings to emphasize a line
- can be used in pairs to frame something if not too squat/heavy
- can lend asian feel
- limit to only one in landscape
- TREES: globe spruce
- SHRUBS: dwarf korean lilac,
- GROUNDCOVERS:
- FLOWERS:
- GRASSES:



- PYRAMIDAL—XMAS TREE SHAPE—CONICAL:

- use sparingly
- evergreen tree shape, wider at bottom, tapering at top
- gives solidarity, stability, weight, structure, definition
- greatest value in winter when everything else bare
- useful for repeating triangular shapes in buildings, mountains, etc.
- comes in both tall to short sizes
- limit evergreens to no more than 50% plant material
- visually very grounding to design
- can group if foliage to ground
- draws eyes up
- great for formal areas
- TREES: pinus mugo, Arborvitae (Thuja) and Dwarf Alberta Spruce (Picea Glauca).
- SHRUBS:
- GROUNDCOVERS:
- FLOWERS:
- GRASSES:



- ROUNDS—MOUNDS—GLOBES—BUTTONS—DOMES:

- round, spherical shapes +/- flattened top
 - This is a huge category, just make sure you don't choose all plants for your garden from this group.
- mark where ground starts
- defined points, concentrated clusters of tight flowers
- most common plant form
- give definition, stability to mixed border, most common plant shape, series round forms creates undulating rhythm, provide good contrast
- acts as anchors, nondirectional, not sending eye up or down
- eyes glide over them
- stand out straight against soft plumes, or veils of fine stems
- great for winter interest
- mostly neutral and soft, so punctuate with other shapes, also
- large round can be used as anchor
- can be used single or groups of 3, etc
- great next to columinar features, spikes, fountain shapes
- often seen in Japanese and formal gardens
- mounds-softer and lower, good at ends of beds
- boxwood, barberry shrubs, alliums,
 - TREES:japanese maple
 - SHRUBS: barberry, globe cedar, cotoneaster, boxwood, spiraea
 - GROWDCOVERS: sweet grass, hosts
 - FLOWERS: bee balm, alliums, scabiosa, globe thistle, astrantia, allium, echinops, eryngium, knautia, monarda, sanguisorba, phlomis, stachys hummelo, and trifolium rubens. plantain lilies Johnson's Blue, Rozanne, and other Geraniums, Lavender, Euphorbia Polychroma, Hostas (not all, some have a fountain shape, like "Praying Hands") Lady's Mantle, Chrysanthemum, Autumn Joy Sedum, Pulmonaria, Matricaria, Dwarf Asters, Dianthus, Fleabane, Gaillardia and Candytuft.
- GRASSES:



- VASE SHAPE—BELL SHAPED—FOUNTAIN—ARCHING:

- usually trees, provide comfortable “people space” beneath canopy
- situate in back so they can shoot up like fireworks
- inverted pyramids
- very graceful, elegant
- prized for sculptural form, intensify effect by placing forward in bed or against contrasting upright form of many conifers/fastigate shrubs/trees
- narrow vases-don't overuse, draws eyes upward
- rounded vases-workhorse of garden
- vases planted together--make a canopy
- works both single or in groups
- works well with pyramid shapes
- found in all plant types-flowers, shrubs, trees, etc.
- good for creating shade
- grow upward, than arch out, curve down, often to ground
- draws eyes up then down
- graceful and soft
- use freely in plantings, but put stiffer forms near for more emphasis
- espec effective used in lines of border, etc
- put near weeping forms for repetition
- most herbaceous perennials, woody shrubs are fountains
 - TREES: ornamental crabapple
 - SHRUBS:bridal wreath spirea,
 - GROUNDCOVERS: sedges
 - FLOWERS:, Tulips, campanula, balloon flower, daylilies, oriental and Asiatic lilies., Daylilies, Ornamental Grasses,, Crocosmia, Peonies, Bleeding Heart, (Dicentra) Some Hostas, (ie “Sagae” “Krossa Regal” “Green Fountain”)
 - GRASSES:grasses, (Miscanthus sinensis) ‘Morning Light’ferns



- **PLUMES:**

- soft form, between spires and umbrels
- act to connect shapes of spires and umbrels upper reaches of borders
- vague fluffy character effective in masses
- wave nicely in wind
- brings stronger forms/shapes together
- FLOWERS: astilbe, aruncus, thalictrum, red valerian, phlox, filipendula, lychnis, geum triflorum and persicaria polymorpha.



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- **WEEPERS:**

- Leads eyes up, then down
- often what is under weeper becomes focal point
- limit to only 1 or 2 in landscape
- adds weight to scene
- lovely specimen plant
- comes in both small large sizes
- don't put them near each other
- often best alone, but not in expansive yard
- nice accent to a fountain
- good on top or near top of slope
- prized for sculptural form
- luxuriance, serenity, elegance, grace
- usually need to be trained to weep
 - TREES: willows, weeping blue cedar, weeping birch, weeping cherry
 - SHRUBS: contoneaster
 - GROUNDCOVERS:
 - FLOWERS: fuchsias
 - GRASSES:



- **DAISY SHAPED:**

- remind of sun, usually found in sun
- usually flower from midsummer onwards
- more concentrated versions of umbrellas
- after flowering, petals fall off leaving, great winter interest button
 - FLOWERS: echinacea, gaillardia, inula, aster, helenium, coreopsis, rudbeckia, dianthus, heliopsis and, of course, shasta daisies.