

# Top 10 Principles: LID Landscape Design

## 1 Unity/Simplicity

In an LID practice it is essential to create an appealing planting design through unity and simplicity. This can be done best by repetition and consistency rather than through constant change. The landscape needs to convey that all pieces of the planting design fit together as a whole. Repeating groups of plants or elements of character (such as height, size, texture and colour) help create a sense of unity in the landscape.



## 2 Repetition/Rhythm

Repetition is key to creating unity. It is important, however, not to overuse repetition to the point of monotony. For example, a landscape design that uses various species grouped repeatedly through a site helps create unity and interest. In contrast, a design using only two or three species may be monotonous.



## 3 Grouping/Massing

Planting single units of different species creates a disjointed and un-natural setting in an LID landscape design. It is better to place plants in various-sized groupings to create a mass with greater visual appeal. One way to create groupings is to start with a larger species, then add a seasonal grouping, evergreen species, and finally a dormant seasonal grouping. It is important to remember distinctiveness throughout the entire design, including height, form and colour.



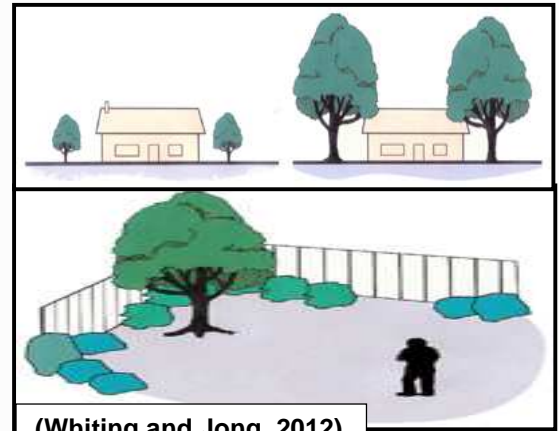
## 4 Balance

Balance in landscape design can be either symmetrical or asymmetrical. A symmetrical design exactly duplicates itself along an axis. Many LID practices, however, are informal in nature and tend to promote an asymmetrical approach to landscape design. This is achieved through irregular placement of plant groups along an imaginary axis so the resulting mass is balanced.



## 5 Scale/Proportion

Scale and proportion simply refer to the size of an element in a landscape in relation to other elements and to the site. While there are no hard rules for this principle, scale and proportion are important considerations throughout design. For example, a large tree placed in a stormwater planter would be out of scale in such a planter, while individual ornamental flower species would be insignificant in a bioretention cell. Some plant materials may require management (thinning or pruning for example), over time, to maintain their scale and proportion in the overall design.



(Whiting and Jong, 2012)

## 6 Colour

Colour animates landscape design. It changes through seasons. Flowers, fruit, leaves or bark contribute to colour variation. Designers should understand details of the life cycle of all plants in their landscape design. Basic colour theory dictates that warm colours (red, orange, yellow) will be prominent in any view, while cool colours (green, blue, violet) will recede. Colour can be used to develop unity, repetition and balance in a landscape design, and to direct the eye to a single focal point if desired.



(Whiting and Jong, 2012)

## 7 Texture

A designer should consider textures within planting materials. A design can achieve an appealing aesthetic by contrasting fine textured vegetation (grasses, for example) with coarser textured species (such as rocks and sculptures). LID design solutions should consider the distance from which the practice will be viewed. Vegetation textures should be grouped or massed accordingly when applying texture to the design.



## 8 Line

Straight lines represent formal organizing elements with a design and imply a sense of direction and movement. Curved, organic lines promote a more 'natural' aesthetic. In either case, clean, contrived shapes have greater visual interest than weak shapes of indistinct edges





## 9 Form

Form describes the natural shape of an individual plant. Forms include weeping, globular, spreading, or columnar. Plant form should be considered both individually and as related to composition within the whole design.



## 10 Emphasis

Emphasis involves giving greater importance to certain elements in the garden, or dominance and subordination of elements throughout the design. The human mind naturally looks for emphasis in life. The human eye is drawn toward circular formations which are often used to create emphasis. Our minds naturally recognize curved paths and circular segments as being part of a full circle whether they are complete or not. The deepest point of the curve is a natural place for a focal point.

