

How Do I Get Started? A Step-by-Step Guide

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First Step: Assess Your Space

If you are a new homeowner, live with your site and learn how it works. **Where** is it sunny or shady? **When** is it sunny or shady? Are there areas that are particularly **soggy** or particularly **dry**?

If you are redoing the landscape of a home you've lived in for awhile, **pay attention to the same details** in your yard.

Second Step: Determine How You Will Use Your Yard

Before moving any further, think about how you use your yard, as that will dictate the kind of design you will want to use. Do you like to **entertain** on your patio? Then you will need a place for a table and chairs. Do you have **young kids** who need a play area? Then you may want to create a small patch of grass and use less thirsty plants around it. Do you like to **watch birds**? If so, you will need to create a wildlife habitat to attract them.

Third Step: Consider maintenance

How much time will you **realistically** want to spend **working on your garden**? Can you afford to **hire gardeners** who will look after these plants with care and attention?

Fourth Step: Design

Now for the fun part!

Take apart the aesthetic of **gardens you like**. Say you like **tropical** landscapes. What characteristics to tropical plants have? You usually find plants with **big, broad leaves**, jewel-tone colors, **deep greens**, and the garden has an **enclosed feel** (lots of plants living close together—just like in the tropics). The good news is you can achieve that look and feel with **drought-tolerant plants!**

