

BRING A GARDEN TOGETHER WITH STRUCTURE

Lots of billowing plants and beautiful color... sounds like a gorgeous garden, right? Well, yes and no. The garden in the top photo was making its owner crazy. Sure, there were plenty of flowers and color, but the whole thing just looked way too busy. It needed some structure!

What does it mean when a garden needs “structure”? Basically it needs big, bulky items that contrast with and provide a backdrop for the finer, looser textures of many of the plants. Structure can come in the form of shrubs, hard-scaping, big containers or a mixture of all three.

This garden actually had the beginnings of structure. A brick sidewalk divided the area in front of the house into quadrants. But creeping thyme and catmint had sprawled over the edges, blurring the lines. There were different plants in each of the quadrants, with no defined plan, which also distracted from the clean lines of the bed shapes. And lots of fine-textured plants without defined shapes just added to the messy look.

So we identified the problems and a possible solution...but how do you actually put that into a garden? Here's our vision for the garden. □

— Stephanie Polsley Bruner



PHOTOS: Courtesy of Mary Reavely

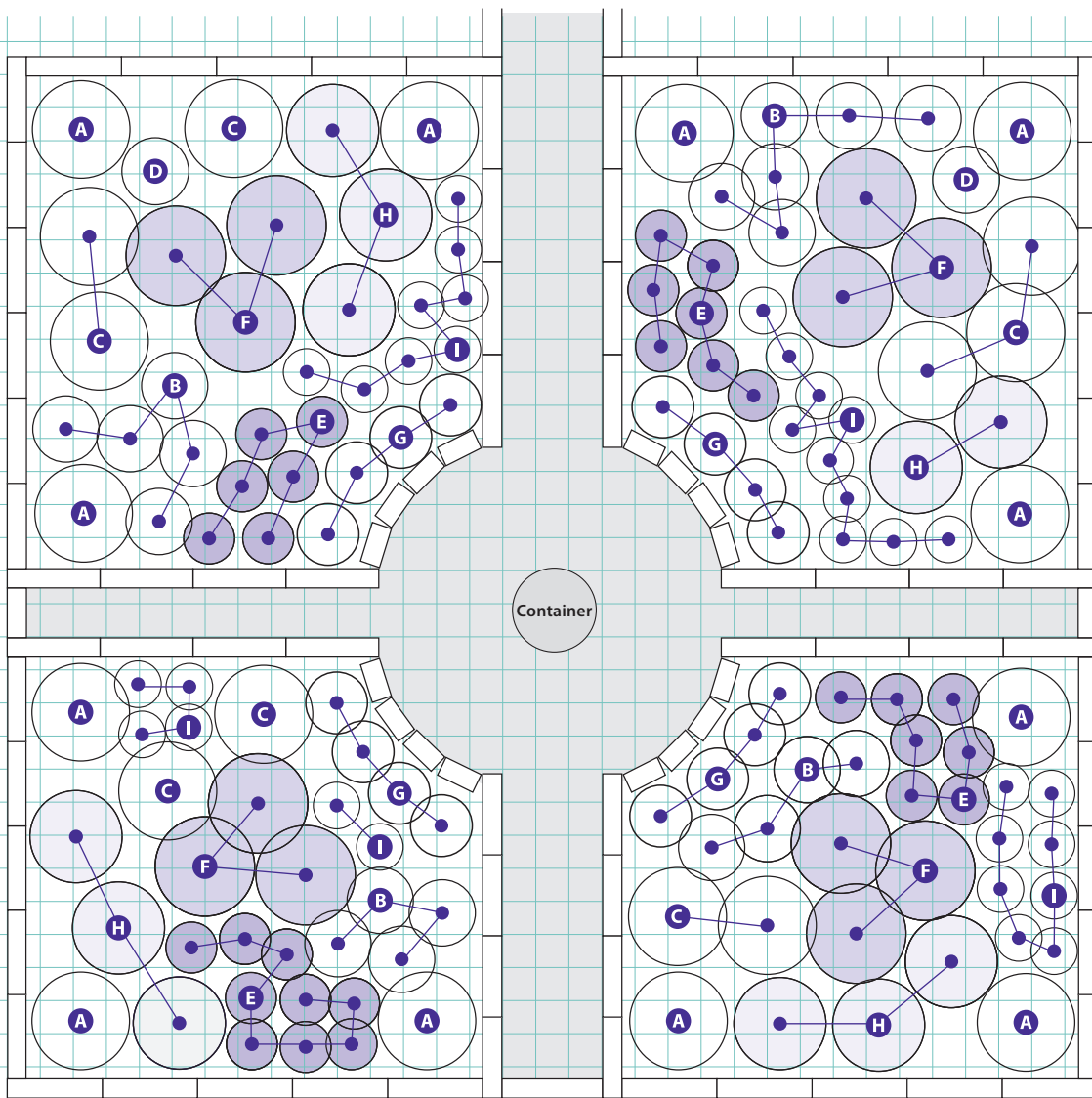


Start with the shrubs

A boxwood hedge around each quadrant would have been a great formal look, but the owner was worried about the maintenance needed to keep it looking great. So instead, each quadrant is anchored by a boxwood at the outer corners and barberries along the short inside semicircle. The tight branching patterns of these plants offer great contrast to lighter, fluffier perennials. A group of maiden grasses in the center of each quadrant also adds height and bulk, but without a stiff or formal feeling. They'll look great all winter long, too!

Group plants for more impact

Filling in around the boxwoods and grasses with roses and perennials was the fun part. Don't spot plants here and there — instead, plant big clumps of one kind of plant. You'll get more visual impact and the whole garden will look a little tidier and more planned.



Scale: 1 square = 1 square ft.

THE GARDEN'S PALETTE

Code	Plant Name	No. to Plant	Type	Blooms	Height/ Width	Cold/Heat Zones	Comments
A	Boxwood <i>Buxus</i> 'Green Gem'	12	Shrub	NA	2-4 ft./ 2-4 ft.	4-9/9-1	Evergreen; protect from drying winter wind; needs little pruning to maintain a tidy shape
B	Japanese anemone <i>Anemone x hybrida</i> 'Honorine Jobert'	19	Perennial	White; late summer to early fall	36-48 in./ 18-24 in.	4-9/9-1	Needs consistent moisture in full sun to avoid scorched foliage; prefers well-drained soil in winter
C	Rose <i>Rosa</i> 'Nearly Wild'	10	Shrub	Pink; early summer to fall	2-3 ft./ 2-3 ft.	4-9/9-1	Mild rose fragrance; single flowers; disease-resistant
D	Lawson falsecypress <i>Chamaecyparis lawsoniana</i> 'Blue Surprise'	2	Dwarf conifer	NA	6 ft./ 2 ft.	5-8/8-1	Evergreen silver-blue needles; dense, upright habit; slow-growing; disease-resistant
E	Daylily <i>Hemerocallis</i> 'Happy Returns'	29	Perennial	Yellow; early summer to fall	12-18 in./ 12-18 in.	3-9/9-1	Cut spent flower stalks to promote rebloom
F	Maiden grass <i>Miscanthus sinensis</i> 'Morning Light'	12	Perennial grass	Tan to silver plumes; late summer	4-6 ft./ 3-5 ft.	5-9/9-1	Plumes open red-tan in late summer, fade to silver; cut back to 6 in. in early spring
G	Barberry <i>Berberis thunbergii</i> Sunjoy® Gold Beret ('Talago')	16	Shrub	Tiny yellow; spring	6-12 in./ 12-18 in.	4-8/8-1	Compact yellow-gold foliage turns red-orange in fall
H	Shasta daisy <i>Leucanthemum x superbum</i> 'Becky'	11	Perennial	White; mid- to late summer	3-4 ft./ 2-3 ft.	5-9/9-1	Divide every three to four years to maintain vigor; deadhead flower stalks below foliage level for tidy plants
I	Salvia <i>Salvia nemorosa</i> 'Caradonna'	32	Perennial	Purple; early to midsummer	18-20 in./ 12-18 in.	4-9/9-1	Dark stems; flush of blooms in early summer, sporadic rebloom