



EDIBLE LANDSCAPING IN YOUR FRONT YARD

by Ron Richter

Harris County Master Gardener

Have you ever thought about the amount of time and resources it takes to sustain your grass and landscape in your front yard? The cost of cutting your grass, watering and fertilizing can add up quickly and is not very functional use of space.

Also it is really not something I look forward to doing in my spare time. This can all change if you consider reducing the amount of grass in your front yard and integrating herb's, vegetables fruit trees and edible flowers into your landscape.

One of the things I hear from people interested in implementing Edible Landscaping is that their HOA will object. But before we take on the HOA there are some subtle things you can do that are underneath the radar.

Evaluate the spaces you currently have and replace with edibles that add color, texture and diversity to your landscape that have the same light, soil and watering needs. Herbs, eatable flowers, berries, root plants, fruit trees and many vegetables can be added to your landscape and actually bring beauty to your yard. An example of this can be found in Westbury where Franny Oxford's house pictured above was awarded Yard of the Month.

Franny has three small raised-bed vegetable gardens at one end of her corner lot. She also tucks edibles and herbs into the traditionally-landscaped long beds in her front yard.


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L to r: Long beans on trellis between two raised beds. Blueberries at the front door. Cucumber blossom on trellis between raised beds near the street.



Franny's side lot, left, not only offers a free library who anyone who wants a good book, it also hosts a fig tree, sweet potato, eucalyptus, lemon balm, parsley, thyme, milkweed, oak leaf geranium. Center: cucumber on trellis, carrots gone to seed, dill, cowpeas and tomatillo. Right: cucumbers on a support pole for a shade cloth on the back patio, along with butterfly bush, lemongrass, milkweed, and mint. (Franny Oxford photos)

Front yard edibles in Franny's long beds are primarily sweet potato, daikon radish, blueberries, artichokes, okra, mint, four kinds of basil, three kinds of tulsi. Other helpful plants included are burgundy cotton, bergamot, boneset (comfrey) astragalus, licorice, feverfew, valarian, vetiver, echinacia, and shiso. She also has eggplant, senna, and citronella.

What I have is lemon grass. Rue, lavender, bee balm, catmint, pineapple verbena, and Mexican mint marigold. I am looking at putting beans and sweet potato's as ground covering around my trees.

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More attractive edibles with beautiful foliage and/or flowers, above l to r: sweet potato, tulsii (holy basil), okra, daikon radish and, below, artichoke, wild bergamont & blueberries



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