



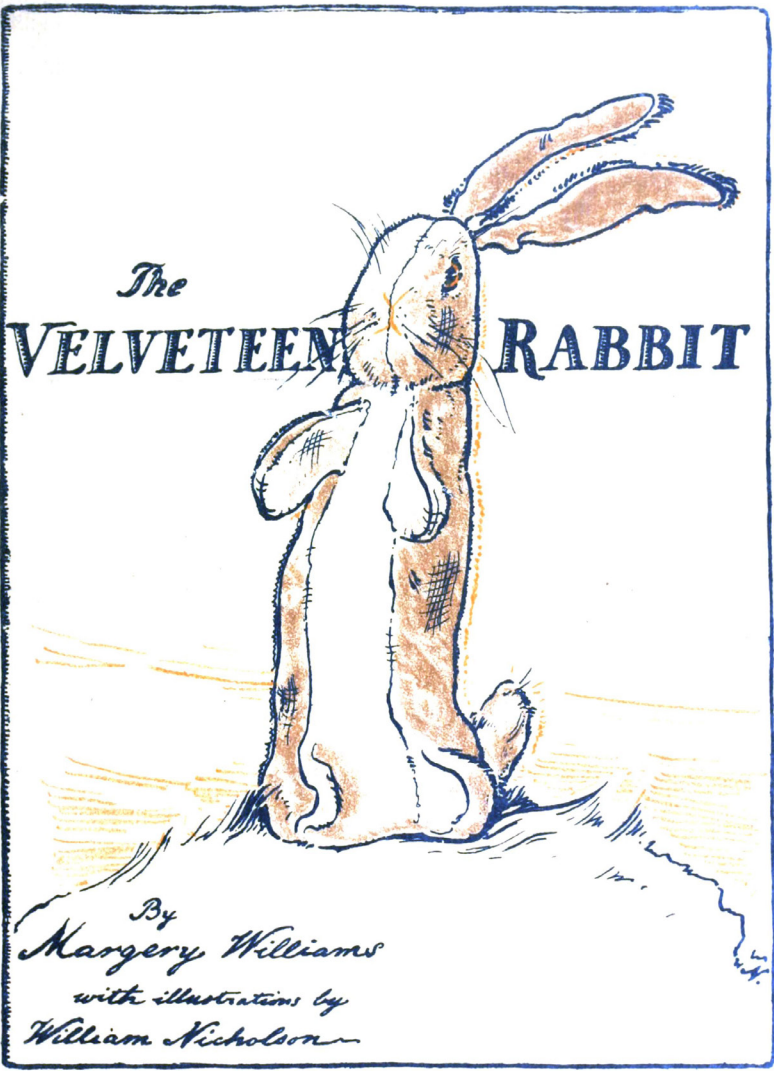
The Velveteen Garden

A Residential Garden Planting Design

BECOMING REAL

“*What is REAL?*” the Rabbit asks the Skin Horse. “Does it mean having things that buzz inside you and a stick-out handle?”

And the Skin Horse says: “Real isn’t how you are made. It’s a thing that happens to you.”



The central philosophy of this garden is drawn from Margery Williams’ story, *The Velveteen Rabbit*. That philosophy is that real beauty is not given at the moment of creation, but earned slowly, through use, love, and the willingness to be worn down into something truer than what you started as.

This is a garden that anticipates change rather than resisting it. Planting moves from **wild at the street** where nature sets the terms, to **composed and structured near the house**, where human life takes over, to **adaptive and open-ended at the back**, where the family itself decides what comes next.

The garden grows with the people who inhabit it, until both the garden and the family have become more real than either was before. Three material choices anchor this philosophy. Untreated hardwood weathers from raw timber into silver-gray softening under hands and feet the way a toy softens under a child’s love. The Western Redbud sheds its blossoms and leaves each winter, baring gnarled branches to the world. And the native buckwheats hold on through summer heat and autumn wind, trading their soft spring velvet for a rugged copper permanence, not dying, but becoming more themselves.

The garden does not promise to look the same year after year. It promises something better: that it will look more like itself.



TREES THAT SHED
The Western Redbud mirrors the vulnerability required to become real. For much of the year, it’s cloaked in pink-magenta blossoms and heart-shaped green leaves. But then reality sets in during the winter when it sheds its clothes and exposes silvery-gray, gnarled branches. Like the Rabbit, who had to lose his made in a factory beauty to gain a real spirit, the Redbud proves that true beauty is not about a permanent perfection, but the courage to show your bare, weathered skeleton to the world.

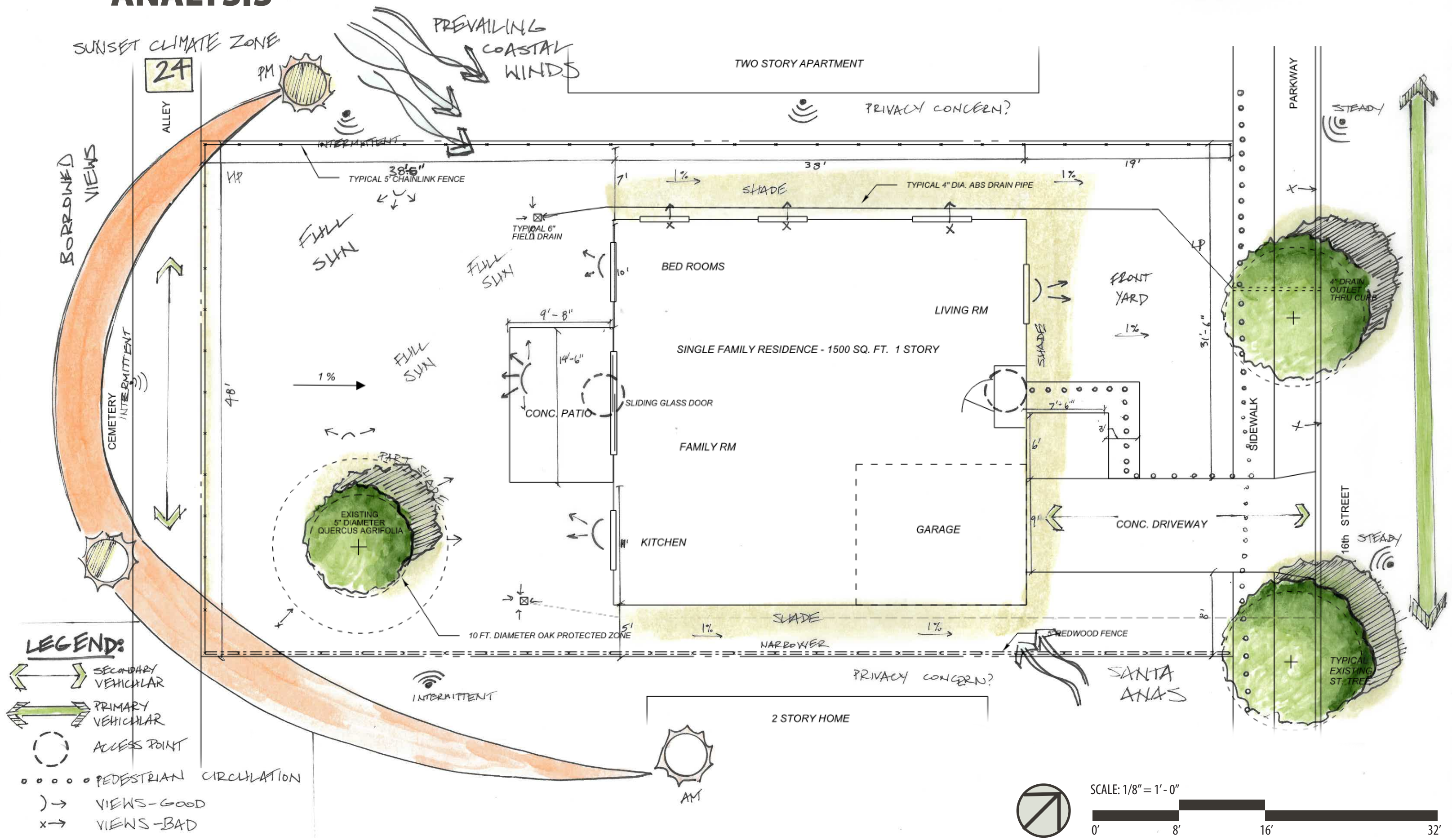


SEASONAL COLORS THAT HOLD ON
Buckwheats represent the final stage of the Rabbit’s journey. In spring, they wear a “velveteen” youthful wooly, silver-green foliage and delicate white lace. But as the summer heat and autumn winds arrive, that cover fades away. They dry out into a rustic copper color, and their fragile blossoms hardening into permanent seed pods. Instead of dying, they trade their soft exterior for an authentic, rugged permanence that feeds the birds and anchors the landscape long after the spring.



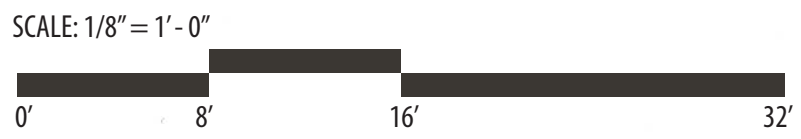
UNTREATED HARDWOOD MATERIALS
The tree stump represents a physical sacrifice. Just as the Velveteen Rabbit lost his sleek velvet coat and button eyes over the years by being loved, the stump has shed its bark, its height, and its original identity as a tree. It has been stripped down by the elements over time now showing cracks, but its graininess softens into a smooth, welcoming seat.

ANALYSIS

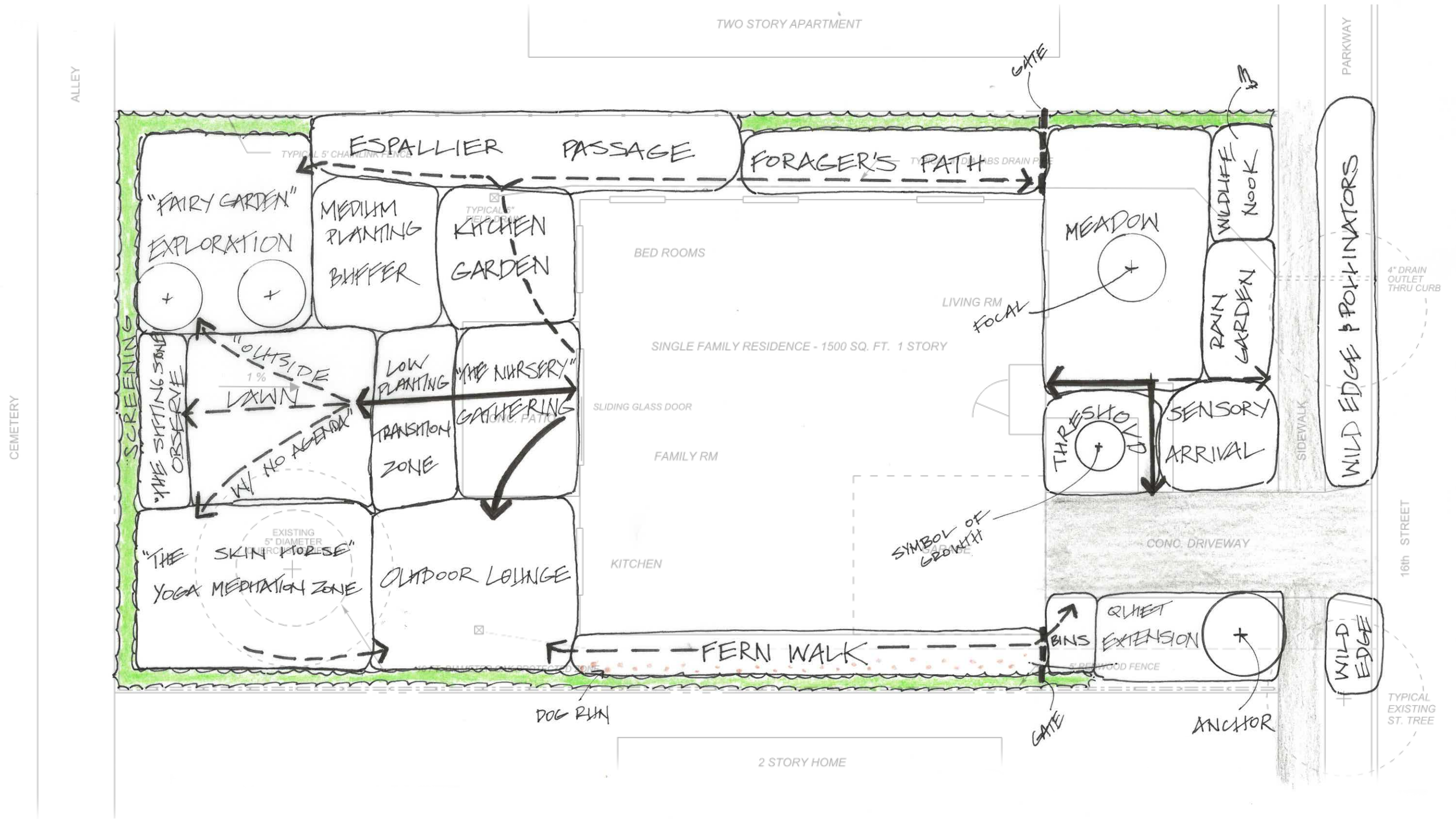


LEGEND:

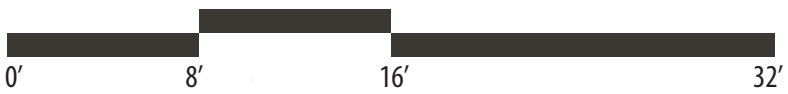
- Secondary Vehicular
- Primary Vehicular
- Access Point
- Pedestrian Circulation
- Views - Good
- Views - Bad



CONCEPTUAL BUBBLE DIAGRAM



SCALE: 1/8" = 1' - 0"

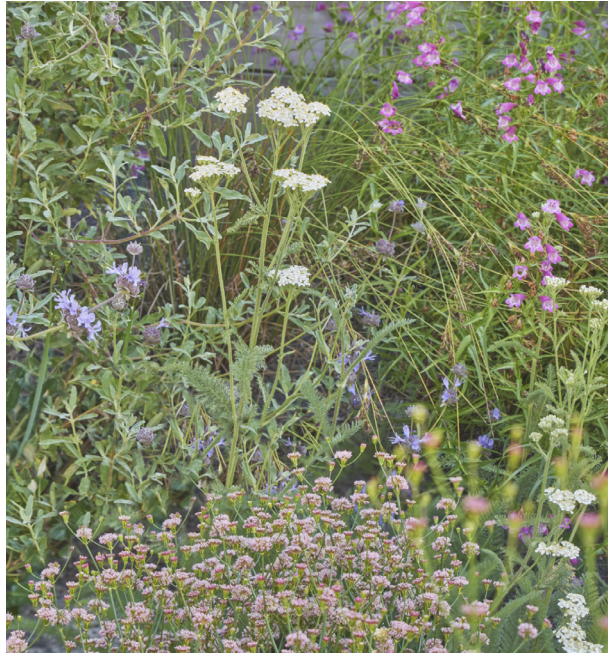


DESIGN

INSPIRATION



The planting transitions from a looser, more informal **wild edge** at the sidewalk (above) into a slightly more **organized meadow** and **structured planting** (below) closer to the house, reflecting increasing levels of care and interaction.



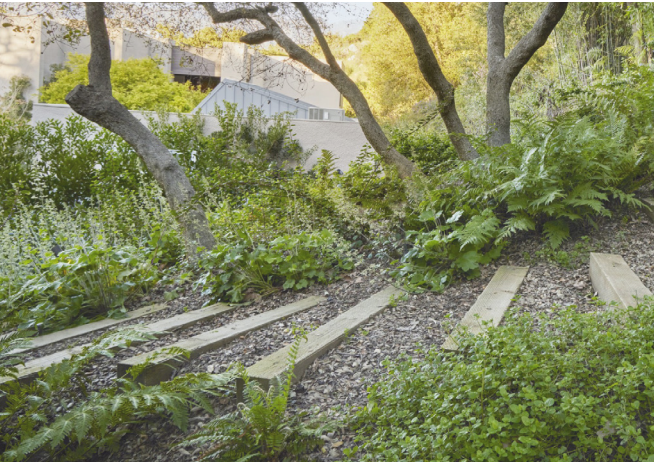
"The Skin Horse had lived longer in the nursery than any of the others...He was wise, for he had seen a long succession of mechanical toys arrive to boast and swagger, and by-and-by break their mainsprings and pass away, and he knew that they were only toys, and would never turn into anything else."



Raised beds provide a clear framework, while surrounding planting softens the edges, allowing the space to feel lived-in rather than fixed and rigid.



It's a yoga meditation plank during the day, but also it can be a stage for a child to put on a performance in the afternoon.



Shade side edges maintain the wild approach with a mix of ferns and native shade loving plants that offer a lived in feeling that can provide character.



Exploration for the young child turns into a school friends hangout zone then turns into a quiet reading nook for parents when the kids away.



"Weeks passed, and the little Rabbit grew very old and shabby, but the Boy loved him just as much."



Native no-mow lawn grass. Like the rest of the garden, it becomes more itself through use and shifts in form reflecting the life of the evolving family.

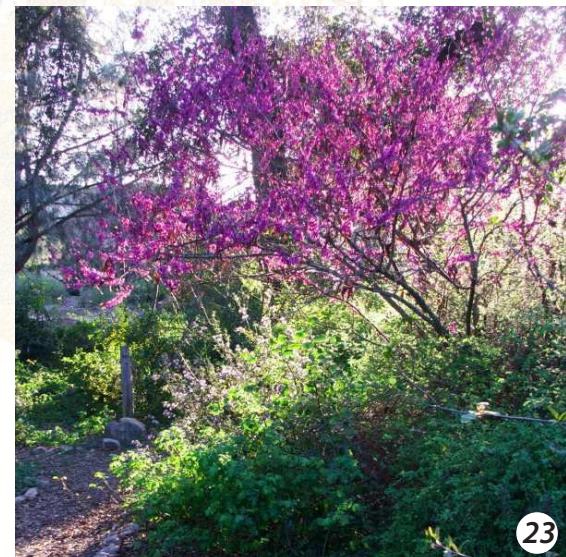


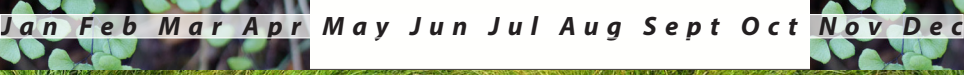
Velveteen Rabbit illustrations by Erin Stead



PLANT PALETTE

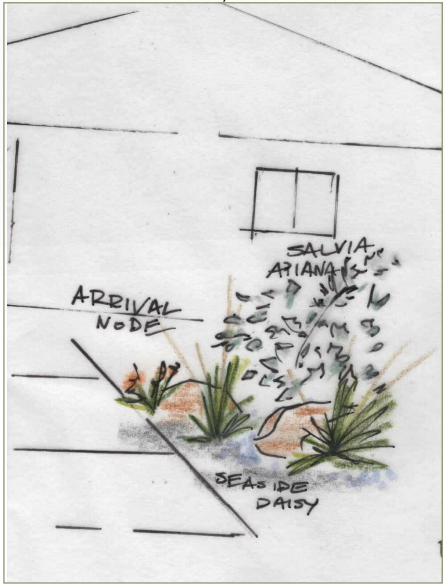
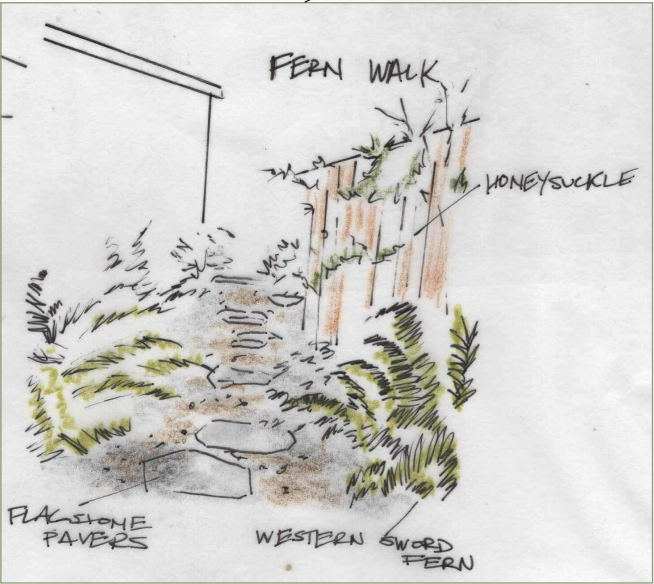
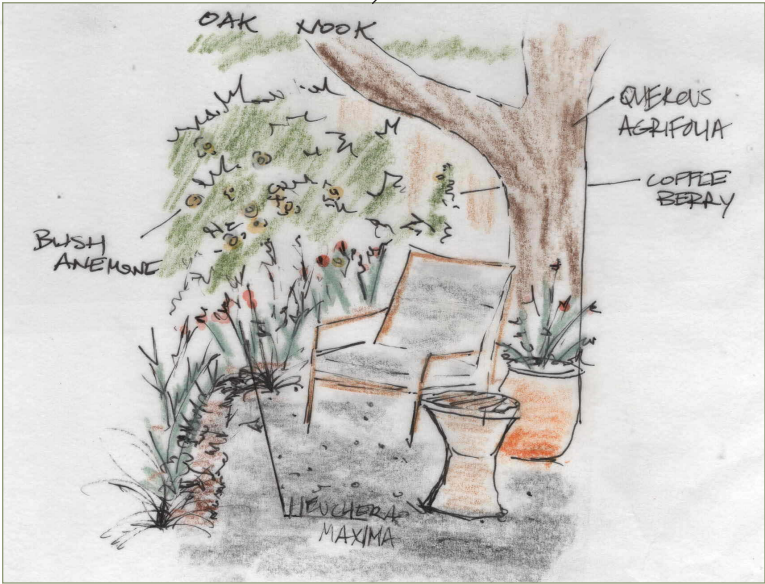
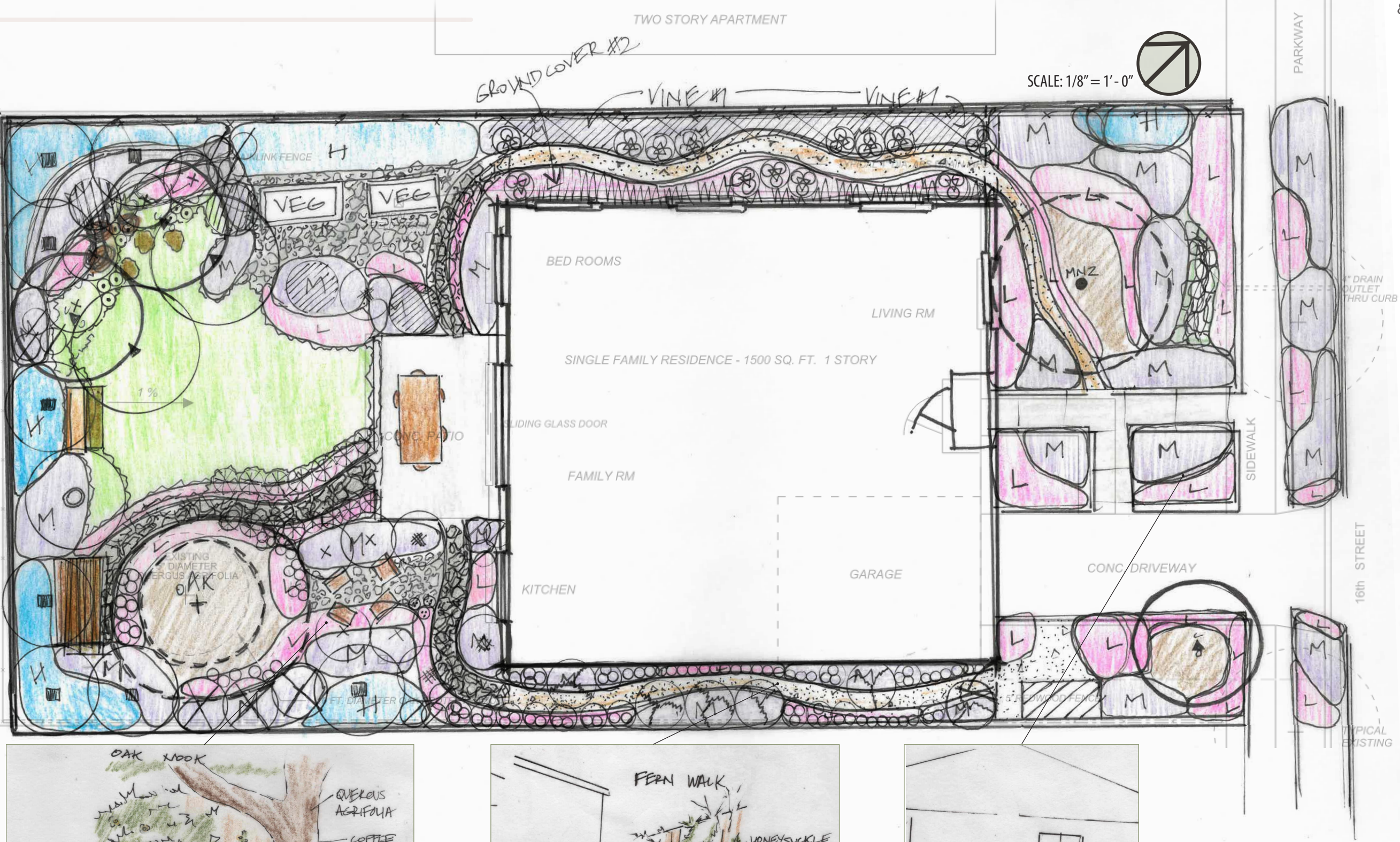
1. **Deergrass**
Muhlenbergia rigens
2. **Red Yucca**
Hesperaloe parviflora
3. **Purple Needlegrass**
Nasella pulchra
4. **Concha California Lilac**
Ceanothus concha
5. **California Wild Strawberry**
Fragaria californica
6. **Chapparral Honeysuckle**
Lonicera subspicata
7. **California Maidenhair Fern**
Adiantum jordanii
8. **Narrowleaf Milkweed**
Asclepias fasciculata
9. **Terra Cotta Yarrow**
Achillea millefolium 'Terra Cotta'
10. **St. Catherine's Lace**
Eriogonum giganteum
11. **Island Alumroot**
Heuchera maxima
12. **Western Sword Fern**
Polystichum munitum
13. **Naked Buckwheat**
Eriogonum nudum
14. **Coffeeberry 'Eve Case'**
Rhamnus californica 'Eve Case'
15. **Seaside Daisy**
Erigeron glaucus 'Bountiful'
16. **Cleveland Sage**
Salvia clevelandii
17. **White Sage**
Salvia apiana
18. **Hummingbird Sage**
Salvia spathacea
19. **Berkeley Sedge**
Carex tumulicola
20. **Bush Anemone 'Elizabeth'**
Carpenteria californica 'Elizabeth'
21. **California Meadow Sedge**
Carex pansa
22. **Manzanita**
Arctostaphylos 'Dr. Hurd'
23. **Western Redbud**
Cercis occidentalis



Common Name <i>Botanical Name</i>	Width & Height <i>(At Full Growth)</i>	WUCOL	Bloom Season	Maintenance	Pollinators
Manzanita <i>Arctostaphylos ‘Dr. Hurd’</i>	10–15’ H x 8–10’ W	Very Low	 Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sept Oct Nov Dec	Prune lower twigs to expose the smooth, dark red bark structure. Prune only in hot summer months.	Winter flowers provide early nectar for native bees and hummingbirds.
Western Redbud <i>Cercis occidentalis</i>	10–15’ H x 10–15’ W	Low	 Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sept Oct Nov Dec	Prune only in late spring after flowering to shape. Remove dead wood or crossing branches to maintain tree form.	Native leafcutter bees snip perfect circles from leaves to line nests.
St. Catherine’s Lace <i>Eriogonum giganteum</i>	3–6’ H x 4–8’ W	Very Low	 Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sept Oct Nov Dec	Deadhead spent flower skeletons in late fall if a clean look is desired, or leave them on for winter color. Trim lightly to shape.	Attracts countless native bees, predatory wasps, and butterflies.
Bush Anemone ‘Elizabeth’ <i>Carpenteria californica ‘Elizabeth’</i>	5–6’ H x 3–4’ W	Low	 Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sept Oct Nov Dec	Requires minimal pruning. Pinch tips of young plants to encourage a bushier habit. Remove spent flower clusters.	Open, cup-shaped white flowers attract a wide variety of native pollen-gathering bees.
Coffeeberry ‘Eve Case’ <i>Rhamnus californica ‘Eve Case’</i>	6–8’ H x 4–6’ W	Low	 Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sept Oct Nov Dec	Trim in late winter before new spring growth flushes.	Small flowers are a favorite of tiny native bees. Autumn berries feed local birds.
Concha California Lilac <i>Ceanothus concha</i>	6–8’ H x 4–6’ W	Very Low	 Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sept Oct Nov Dec	Prune very lightly immediately after spring bloom. Don’t cut back into old wood that lacks leaves, it will not regrow.	Spring blooms crawl with native bumblebees, honeybees, and other beneficial insects.
White Sage <i>Salvia apiana</i>	3–5’ H x 3–8’ W	Very Low	 Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sept Oct Nov Dec	Cut back flower stalks down to the main foliage mound in late summer or fall after seeds have dropped.	Adapted for large native bumblebees and carpenter bees who wrestle the petals open.
Cleveland Sage <i>Salvia clevelandii</i>	3–5’ H x 5–8’ W	Very Low	 Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sept Oct Nov Dec	Cut back by up to one-third in late summer or early fall to prevent the center of the shrub from becoming woody.	Magnet for hummingbirds.
Red Yucca <i>Hesperaloe parviflora</i>	3–4’ H x 3–4’ W	Very Low	 Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sept Oct Nov Dec	Cut dead flower stalks down to the base of the rosette in winter. Remove damaged outer leaves as needed.	Long-lasting tubular flowers are highly attractive to hummingbirds throughout the summer.
Hummingbird Sage <i>Salvia spathacea</i>	1–2’ H x 3–5’ W	Low	 Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sept Oct Nov Dec	Cut down spent, drying woody flower stalks to the base in late summer to encourage fresh, clean ground foliage.	Exceptionally high nectar content specifically designed to feed resident hummingbirds.
Western Sword Fern <i>Polystichum munitum</i>	2-6’ H x 2–5’ W	Moderate	 Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sept Oct Nov Dec	Cut away old, tattered, or browned outer fronds at the base in early spring just as new “fiddleheads” begin to uncurl. Do not mow.	Provides structural shelter for ground-nesting insects, though it does not produce nectar.
Deergrass <i>Muhlenbergia rigens</i>	3–4’ H x 3–4’ W	Low	 Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sept Oct Nov Dec	Cut back hard to 4–6 inches above the ground every 2 to 3 years in late winter to clear out old thatch.	Like the old Skin Horse, its thick thatch provides habitat and nesting shelter for insects and ladybugs.
Purple Needlegrass <i>Nasella pulchra</i>	1–3’ H x 1–2’ W	Very Low	 Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sept Oct Nov Dec	Cut back/rake out dead thatch in late summer after seeds drop to refresh the green clumping appearance.	Wind-pollinated grass, but serves as a host plant for several skipper butterfly caterpillars.
Berkeley Sedge <i>Carex tumulicola</i>	1–2’ H x 1–2’ W	Low	 Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sept Oct Nov Dec	Cut back to 2–3 inches in late winter if it looks shaggy, or comb out dead blades with gloves.	Seeds feed small songbirds; dense clumps provide shelter for beneficial ground beetles.
Chapparral Honeysuckle <i>Lonicera subspicata</i>	6-10’ H x 6–10’ Spread (Vining)	Low	 Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sept Oct Nov Dec	Prune after summer flowering to control size or guide its climbing direction.	Blossoms host long-tongued insects, butterflies, and hummingbirds.
Narrowleaf Milkweed <i>Asclepias fasciculata</i>	2–3’ H x 1–2’ W	Low	 Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sept Oct Nov Dec	Cut completely down to the ground in late fall after it goes dormant.	The ultimate story of becoming Real. It allows itself to be worn ragged by Monarch caterpillars so that they can transform.
Terra Cotta Yarrow <i>Achillea millefolium ‘Terra Cotta’</i>	1–2’ H x 2–3’ W (spreads by rhizomes)	Low	 Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sept Oct Nov Dec	Cut back spent flower heads to the ground to trigger a secondary bloom. Shear down to the flat foliage mat in winter.	Flat flower heads act as landing pads for predatory wasps, and small butterflies.
Naked Buckwheat <i>Eriogonum nudum</i>	1–3’ H x 1–2’ W	Very Low	 Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sept Oct Nov Dec	Remove dried flower stalks in late fall. The low basal foliage rosette requires zero pruning.	Highly valuable nectar source for small native blues and metalmark butterflies.
Island Alumroot <i>Heuchera maxima</i>	1–2’ H x 2–3’ W	Moderate - Low	 Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sept Oct Nov Dec	Cut flower spikes down to the base of the plant in early summer once blooms fade. Remove dead lower leaves.	Tiny flower bells are actively visited by hummingbirds and smaller native bees.
Seaside Daisy <i>Erigeron glaucus ‘Bountiful’</i>	1’ H x 2’ W	Low	 Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sept Oct Nov Dec	Deadhead regularly by snapping or cutting off spent daisies to stimulate year-round blooming cycle.	Popular nectar landing pad for butterflies and small native bees.
California Maidenair Fern <i>Adiantum jordanii</i>	1-2’ H x 1-3’ W	Moderate	 Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sept Oct Nov Dec	Requires zero pruning. Let the plant naturally dry up and disappear when it goes dormant during dry spells.	Does not attract pollinators, but provides micro-climates for damp-soil insects.
California Meadow Sedge <i>Carex pansa</i>	Groundcover	Low	 Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sept Oct Nov Dec	Can be left unmowed for a floppy meadow look, or mown 2–3 times a year for a traditional lawn look.	Provides cover for beneficial insects; seed heads offer forage for local birds.
California Wild Strawberry <i>Fragaria californica</i>	Groundcover	Low	 Jan Feb Mar Apr May Jun Jul Aug Sept Oct Nov Dec	Pull up or redirect wandering runners if they begin to spill over the flagstones.	Just like the wild rabbits that danced at the edge of the wood, it ventures out from the shade to the real, wild world outside.

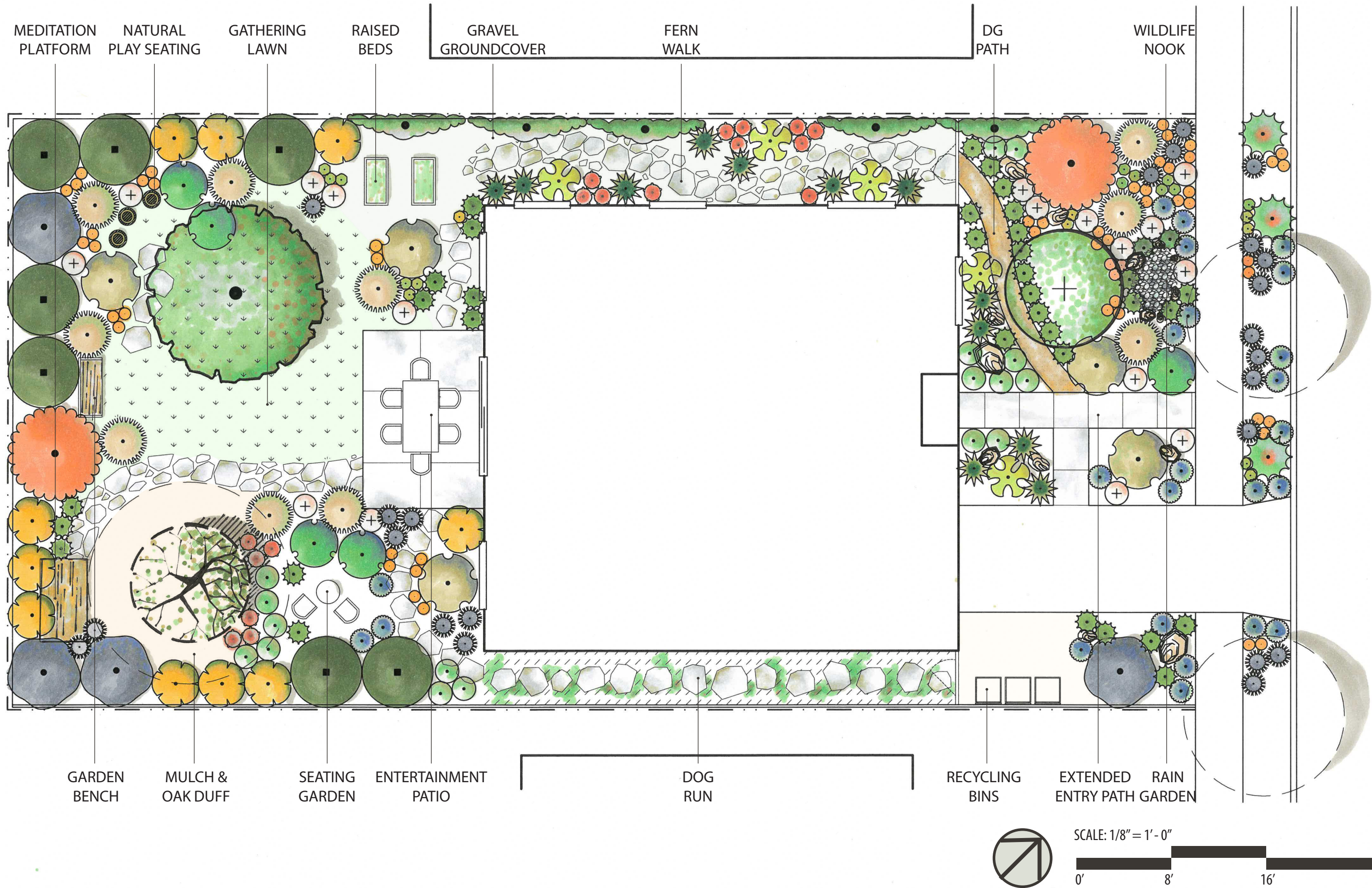
ALL

- Rhamnus californica
- Muhlenbergia rigens
- Salvia leucandria
- Eriogonum nudum
- Achillea millefolium
- Salvia spathacea (x3)
- Heuchera maxima
- Woodwardia fimbriata
- Salvia apiana
- Carpenteria californica
- Asclepias fasciculata
- Eriogonum giganteum
- Carex turmicola



PLANTING PLAN

SEE NEXT PAGE FOR PLANT SCHEDULE ►



PLANT SCHEDULE

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SYMBOL	Botanical Name	Common Name	Container Size	Quantity	Spacing	Notes / Variety
TREES						
	Arctostaphylos 'Dr. Hurd'	Manzanita	24" Box	1	10'-15' o.c.	Large focal tree, slow growth
	Cercis occidentalis	Western Redbud	24" Box	1	12'-15' o.c.	Canopy to be pruned up to allow passing below
SHRUBS						
	Eriogonum giganteum	St. Catherine's Lace	5 gal	2	6'-8' o.c.	Focal shrub with strong seasonal change
	Carpenteria californica 'Elizabeth'	Bush Anemone 'Elizabeth'	5 gal	10	4'-5' o.c.	
	Rhamnus californica 'Eve Case'	Coffeeberry 'Eve Case'	5 gal	7	5'-6' o.c.	
	Ceanothus concha	Concha California Lilac	1 gal	4	5'-6' o.c.	Vibrant deep blue flower clusters; arching branches; dark green foliage.
	Salvia apiana	White Sage	1 gal	5	4'-5' o.c.	Highly aromatic
	Salvia clevelandii	Cleveland Sage	1 gal	5	4'-5' o.c.	Pungent fragrance
	Hesperaloe parviflora	Red Yucca	5 gal	3	3'-4' o.c.	
	Salvia spathacea	Hummingbird Sage	1 gal	17	18-24" o.c.	Spreads out horizontally via underground rhizomes
	Polystichum munitum	Western Sword Fern	1 gal	5	2'-3' o.c.	
GRASSES						
	Muhlenbergia rigens	Deergrass	5 gal	10	3'-4' o.c.	
	Nasella pulchra	Purple Needlegrass	1 gal	23	12-18" o.c.	Bunch grass
	Carex tumulicola	Berkeley Sedge	1 gal	36	15-18" o.c.	
VINES						
	Lonicera subspicata	Chapparral Honeysuckle	1 gal	5	4'-6' o.c.	
GROUNDCOVERS & LOW PERRENIALS						
	Asclepias fasciculata	Narrowleaf Milkweed	1 Gal	16	18-24" o.c.	
	Achillea millefolium 'Terra Cotta'	Terra Cotta Yarrow	32-Cell Flat	2	12-18" o.c.	Flower heads emerge apricot and fade to clay
	Eriogonum nudum	Naked Buckwheat	1 Gal	2	12-18" o.c.	
	Heuchera maxima	Island Alumroot	1 Gal	17	18-24" o.c.	
	Erigeron glaucus 'Bountiful'	Seaside Daisy	4" Pot	24	18" o.c.	
	Adiantum jordanii	California Maidenhair Fern	4" Pot	12	12" o.c.	
	Carex pansa	California Meadow Sedge	50-Cell Flat	29	8 in. o.c.	Green turf forming cover to handle traffic
	Fragaria californica	California Wild Strawberry	50-Cell Flat	12	18 in. o.c.	Will take roughly 2 seasons to cover with 18 in. spacing

