

USING NATIVES FOR ENGLISH BORDERS

1. Structure: Borders as "bones"

- **a.** Define the space with metal, stone, grass, wood or shrubbery. This makes the design look cohesive and intentional.
- **b.** Borders can also define "rooms" between gardens. Pathways create continuity and definition, creating an "edge" to plantings that may be ebullient.
- **c.** Consider giving your border or path a curve- it is more interesting.

2. Layers: English borders are tightly planted

- **a.** Choose groundcovers that can ramble and provide green mulch.
- **b.** Mid layer should contain perennials, grasses, herbs and annuals/bulbs.
- **c.** Backdrop: Shrubs, Trees, or Structures act as a frame to the design.

3. Perennials:

- **a.** Natives play an important role as your garden spans seasons. Early spring Ephemerals feed awakening bees, and the last blooming asters and goldenrods feed migratory monarchs.
- **b.** While native plants are preferred- I am not a purist. This means that my grandmothers peonies happily co-exist in my native plant garden. The goal according to Doug Tallamy, is 70% native.
- **c.** Nativars: Sometimes, we need to consider the final size of the native plant. Native Joe Pye, can be up to 11 ft tall, likely too tall for most gardens. Your options are to "Chelsea chop" by ½ around memorial day, to make it a more "appropriate size", and keep it from flopping. Later blooming tall perennials can also be cut by 1/3 July 4th. Another option is to consider the nativar, which has typically only been manipulated in terms of height, or for a characteristic, like the tendency to get diseases like powdery mildew.



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4. Bulbs and annuals:

a. Bulbs look more natural if you create clumps or drifts.

5. Herbs:

a. Herbs can provide very valuable bridges between perennial blooms. Allow some of your herbs to flower, and you will be surprised who visits. Some are even hosts for butterflies- so don't get discouraged if your parsley disappears! Grow extra for the pollinators.

6. Final tips:

- **a.** Repeating color looks more unified in a garden full of diverse plantings.
- **b.** When in doubt, add blue. The bees will thank you (its their favorite color).
- **c.** Winter provides a plethora of interesting opportunities to add color and texture, and feed wildlife. Look for berries (winterberry) color (red twig dogwood) and flowering (witch hazel).
- **d.** Shape and texture are also very interesting. Look at how things appear when they are not blooming- do they have interesting foliage (like native grasses) or bark (like shagbark hickory)?

Resources:

Natives to your area: Consider planting "Keystone" natives. These provide a significant opportunity to invite local fauna into your yard and potentially sustain threatened species.

• https://www.nwf.org/NativePlantFinder

Landscape design plans with native plants:

- https://www.pollinator.org/pollinator-habitat-guides
- https://nativegardendesigns.wildones.org/
- https://extension.umd.edu/resource

Get your garden on the map:

• <u>Homegrownnationalpark.org</u>



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