

## Plantra® Landscape Project Guide

*Your Comprehensive Roadmap to Transform Your Yard Naturally*

This guide will help you plan, execute, and maintain a successful landscape planting project. Whether you're creating wildlife habitat, enhancing privacy, or building a legacy for future generations, proper planning is the foundation of long-term success.

**Core Philosophy:** At Plantra, we're committed to our "Plant Like You Mean It" principles to recommend only planting what you can properly protect and nurture through full establishment. Quality and proper care matter more than quantity.

### Phase 1: Pre-Planting Preparation

*Start this phase at least one year before planting*

#### 1. Define Your Vision and Goals

Clear goals ensure your resources are focused and help others understand how to support your project. Start by answering these essential questions:

##### Purpose and Objectives

- **Why am I planting?** (e.g., wildlife habitat, privacy screening, energy savings, aesthetics)
- **What specific outcomes do I want?** Consider consulting with landscape professionals to establish measurable benchmarks
- **When do I expect results?** Set realistic timelines:
  - Short-term (1-3 years)
  - Mid-term (3-5 years)
  - Long-term (5-10+ years)

#### 2. Create a Realistic Budget

Allocate funds for each phase of the project. Remember: investing in protection and establishment products upfront is far more cost-effective than replanting later.

##### Budget Categories

- **Site assessment and professional consulting fees**
- **Site preparation** (weed control, soil amendments)
- **Plant materials** (only purchase what you can properly maintain)
- **Protection and growth products:**
  - Grow tubes & tree and shrub shelters
  - Tree bark protectors
  - Support stakes

- Weed barrier
- Fertilizer and repellents
- **Long-term aftercare** (watering, weeding, pruning)
- **Equipment and labor costs**

### 3. Identify Specific Objectives

These objectives will guide your plant selection and site layout. Check all that apply to your project:

- **Aesthetics** - Visual beauty and curb appeal
- **Privacy** - Screening from neighbors or roads
- **Energy savings** - Shade in summer, windbreak in winter
- **Wildlife attraction** - Provide food, water, and cover for desired species
- **Recreation** - Outdoor entertainment and enjoyment
- **Legacy** - Long-term benefit for future generations
- **Other** - Equipment storage, noise reduction, etc.

### 4. Conduct a Thorough Site Assessment

Understanding your property's unique characteristics is critical to selecting appropriate plants and planning their placement.

#### Physical and Natural Attributes

- **Create a scaled property map** showing:
  - Property boundaries (verify to be a good neighbor)
  - Existing vegetation
  - Natural features (rock outcrops, streams, wetlands)
  - Slope and drainage patterns
  - Structures (buildings, fences, patios)
  - Prevailing winds
  - Underground and overhead utilities
  - Planned development (yours and neighbor's)
- **Conduct soil analysis** (pH, nutrients, composition)
- **Survey wildlife** currently present and potential species to attract
- **Map sun and shade patterns** throughout the day
- **Determine your plant hardiness zone**
- **Evaluate viewsheds** - current and projected line-of-site views after maturity

#### Personal Use Considerations

- Play areas for people and pets
- Entertainment and gathering spaces
- Vegetable and flower gardens
- Storage, composting, and utility areas

## 5. Select Appropriate Plant Materials

Choose plants strategically based on your goals, site conditions, and long-term maintenance capacity.

### Working with Nurseries and Professionals

- **Research and select a reputable local nursery** that can provide ongoing support
- **Consult with experts to:**
  - Match species to your specific region and site conditions
  - Determine optimal planting times
  - Plan for three vegetation zones: canopy (trees), shrub, and ground layers
  - Select diverse species for extended seasonal benefits
- **Order early** - ideally a year in advance to ensure availability and allow for proper site preparation

### The Benefits of Native Plants

Native species are often the most effective choice because they:

- **Thrive naturally** in local conditions with better growth and hardiness
- **Support more wildlife** - native animals depend on native plants
- **Require less maintenance** reduced disease, climate stress, and replanting needs
- **Reduce invasive species problems**

## 6. Decide: Do-It-Yourself or Get Professional Help?

### Self-Assessment for DIY Projects

Before committing to doing it yourself, honestly evaluate:

- Do I have the necessary knowledge and skills (or can I acquire them in time)?
- Do I have sufficient time to do the job properly?
- Do I own or can I afford the required tools and equipment?
- Do I have access to adequate labor assistance?
- Can I safely transport and temporarily store plant materials?

### Hiring a Professional Contractor

If hiring professionals, thoroughly vet candidates by checking:

- **Experience** - Track record with similar projects, including preparation, planting, and follow-up care
- **References** - Contact previous clients to verify quality of work
- **Written contract** - Detailed pricing, timeline, and performance guarantees
- **Insurance** - Adequate general liability and equipment coverage

## 7. Prepare the Planting Site

Proper site preparation dramatically increases survival rates and reduces long-term maintenance.

- **Control competing vegetation** using methods appropriate for your site:
  - Mulching
  - Manual removal (scalping with hand tools)
  - Mechanical (mowing, tilling)
  - Chemical herbicides (always follow label instructions)
- **Prepare soil** according to test results and plant requirements
- **Apply initial weed control measures**
- **Mark planting layout** with flags or stakes
- **Confirm property lines** to avoid disputes

## 8. Establish a Record-Keeping System

Documentation helps track progress, measure success, and troubleshoot problems.

- **Start photo and video documentation** before breaking ground and continue through project completion
- **Track budget** - Compare actual spending to projections
- **Maintain a planting diary** – Record activities, observations, and lessons learned

## Phase 2: Planting Season

### 9. Organize Planting Logistics

Coordination and preparation ensure planting day runs smoothly.

- **Layout and mark planting locations** in advance using flags or stakes
- **Arrange plant transport and handling** - Consult with your nursery about best practices for your specific materials
- **Schedule labor well in advance** to ensure help is available when needed

### 10. Install Protection and Growth Aids

Protecting young plants at planting time is essential to success. Don't skip these critical steps.

- **Grow tubes/tree shelters** - Protect seedlings, volunteers, and direct-seeded nuts from chewing animals and weather
- **Tree bark protectors** - Guard saplings against antler rub and rodent damage
- **Weed barrier fabric** - Suppress weeds while ensuring plants receive full sunlight, moisture, and nutrients
- **Fertilizer** - Continue nutrition in the field; don't let it end at the nursery
- **Repellents** - Use alongside physical barriers for comprehensive protection

## Phase 3: Post-Planting Care

### 11. Monitor and Maintain Plantings

Regular maintenance during the establishment period determines long-term success.

#### Field Inspections

- **Conduct regular surveys** to assess survival and growth (document with photos and video)
- **Check condition of protection materials** - grow tubes/tree shelters, stakes, weed barriers, etc.
- **Manage competing vegetation** on an ongoing basis
- **Prune and take corrective actions** as needed

### 12. Review and Adjust

Regular assessment helps you learn from experience and refine your approach.

- **Measure performance against original goals** - Are you on track?
- **Assess survival and growth rates**
- **Compare budget vs. actual expenditures**
- **Update your project diary** with observations and insights

## Keys to Success

### Remember These Core Principles “*To Plant Like You Mean It*” :

- **Plan thoroughly** - At least one year of preparation pays dividends
- **Plant realistically** - Only plant what you can properly protect and maintain through the full establishment phase
- **Protect your investment** - Grow tubes / tree shelters, barriers, and other aids are cost-effective insurance
- **Go native when possible** - Native plants thrive and are better adapted to your local conditions
- **Document everything** - Records help you learn and improve
- **Be patient** - Landscapes take time to mature

*A well-planned landscape project creates lasting value for you, your community, and future generations. By following this guide and truly planting like you mean it, you'll ensure your new plantings don't just survive...they thrive and succeed.*