
Masterclass Certificate in Therapeutic Garden Design

Plants and Materials in Therapeutic Garden Design

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In the realm of therapeutic garden design, the selection of plants and materials plays a crucial role in creating an environment that promotes healing, relaxation, and overall well-being. Understanding the key terms and vocabulary associated with plants and materials in therapeutic garden design is essential for creating spaces that are not only aesthetically pleasing but also functional and beneficial to those who interact with them.

Therapeutic Garden Design

Therapeutic garden design involves the intentional creation of outdoor spaces that are specifically designed to promote healing, relaxation, and overall well-being. These gardens are often used in healthcare settings, such as hospitals, nursing homes, and rehabilitation centers, to provide patients, residents, and visitors with a space to connect with nature and experience the benefits of outdoor environments.

Therapeutic garden design takes into account various factors, including plant selection, materials used, layout and design principles, accessibility, and sensory elements to create a space that is conducive to healing and relaxation.

Plants in Therapeutic Garden Design

Plants play a central role in therapeutic garden design, as they have the ability to evoke emotional responses, provide sensory stimulation, and contribute to the overall aesthetic of the space. The selection of plants in a therapeutic garden should take into consideration factors such as color, texture, fragrance, and seasonal interest to create a diverse and engaging environment.

Some key terms and concepts related to plants in therapeutic garden design include:

- **Healing Plants**: These are plants that have been traditionally used for their medicinal properties and are believed to have healing benefits. Examples include lavender, chamomile, and aloe vera.
- **Therapeutic Plants**: These are plants that are specifically selected for their therapeutic value, such as their ability to reduce stress, improve mood, or provide sensory stimulation. Examples include scented geraniums, lemon balm, and rosemary.
- **Native Plants**: These are plants that are indigenous to a specific region and have adapted to the local climate and soil conditions. Using native plants in therapeutic garden design can help create a sense of place and support local wildlife.

- **Edible Plants**: These are plants that produce fruits, vegetables, herbs, or other edible parts. Including edible plants in a therapeutic garden can provide opportunities for sensory stimulation, connection to nature, and engagement in horticultural activities.
- **Medicinal Plants**: These are plants that have been scientifically proven to have medicinal properties and are used in healthcare settings for their healing benefits. Examples include echinacea, ginkgo biloba, and St. John's wort.
- **Aromatic Plants**: These are plants that produce fragrant oils or compounds that can have a calming or invigorating effect on the senses. Including aromatic plants in a therapeutic garden can enhance the overall sensory experience and promote relaxation.
- **Sensory Plants**: These are plants that engage one or more of the five senses (sight, smell, touch, taste, and hearing) and provide opportunities for sensory exploration and stimulation. Examples include velvety lamb's ear, fragrant lavender, and rustling ornamental grasses.
- **Healing Gardens**: These are specially designed outdoor spaces that are intended to promote healing, relaxation, and well-being through the use of plants, materials, and design elements that support physical, emotional, and spiritual health.
- **Restorative Landscapes**: These are landscapes that are designed to help individuals recover from stress, fatigue, or illness by providing opportunities for relaxation, reflection, and connection with nature. Restorative landscapes often include elements such as water features, seating areas, and sensory gardens.
- **Planting Design**: This refers to the process of selecting and arranging plants in a garden to achieve a desired aesthetic or functional outcome. Planting design takes into account factors such as plant form, color, texture, height, and spacing to create a harmonious and visually appealing composition.
- **Plant Palette**: This refers to the selection of plants that are chosen for a specific garden or landscape design. The plant palette should take into consideration factors such as climate, soil conditions, sun exposure, maintenance requirements, and desired aesthetic effects.
- **Planting Zones**: These are areas within a garden or landscape that are designated for specific types of plants based on their light, water, and soil requirements. Planting zones help ensure that plants thrive in their designated locations and contribute to the overall design of the space.
- **Seasonal Interest**: This refers to the changing appearance of plants throughout the year, including variations in foliage, flowers, and fruit. Designing for seasonal interest in a therapeutic garden can provide visual diversity, stimulate the senses, and create a dynamic and ever-changing landscape.
- **Water-wise Plants**: These are plants that are well-adapted to drought conditions and require minimal water once established. Using water-wise plants in therapeutic garden design can help conserve water, reduce maintenance needs, and create sustainable landscapes.

- **Pollinator Plants**: These are plants that attract bees, butterflies, birds, and other pollinators to the garden. Including pollinator plants in a therapeutic garden can support biodiversity, promote ecological balance, and create a vibrant and dynamic ecosystem.
- **Habitat Plants**: These are plants that provide food, shelter, and nesting sites for wildlife, such as birds, butterflies, and beneficial insects. Including habitat plants in a therapeutic garden can support local ecosystems, enhance biodiversity, and create a more resilient and sustainable landscape.
- **Plant Communities**: These are groups of plants that grow together in a specific habitat or microclimate and have developed mutually beneficial relationships. Designing with plant communities in mind can help create resilient and sustainable landscapes that mimic natural ecosystems.
- **Planting Schemes**: These are arrangements of plants within a garden or landscape that are designed to achieve a specific visual or functional effect. Planting schemes may include elements such as color combinations, texture contrasts, focal points, and seasonal variations to create harmonious and engaging compositions.
- **Plant Maintenance**: This refers to the ongoing care and management of plants in a garden, including tasks such as watering, pruning, fertilizing, weeding, and pest control. Proper plant maintenance is essential for the health, vitality, and longevity of plants in a therapeutic garden.

Materials in Therapeutic Garden Design

In addition to plants, the selection of materials in therapeutic garden design is equally important, as they can contribute to the overall aesthetic, functionality, and accessibility of the space. Materials in a therapeutic garden should be chosen for their durability, safety, sustainability, and ability to withstand the demands of outdoor environments.

Some key terms and concepts related to materials in therapeutic garden design include:

- **Hardscape Materials**: These are non-living materials, such as stone, concrete, wood, metal, and glass, that are used to create paths, patios, seating areas, walls, and other structural elements in a garden. Hardscape materials provide structure, definition, and functionality to the space.
- **Softscape Materials**: These are living materials, such as plants, grasses, groundcovers, and moss, that are used to create planting beds, borders, and other green spaces in a garden. Softscape materials add color, texture, and movement to the landscape and help soften the hardscape elements.
- **Natural Materials**: These are materials that are derived from nature, such as stone, wood, bamboo, and clay, and are often used in therapeutic garden design to create a sense of connection to the natural world. Natural materials can provide warmth, texture, and authenticity to the space.
- **Sustainable Materials**: These are materials that are environmentally friendly, energy-efficient, and

resource-efficient, such as recycled glass, reclaimed wood, bamboo, and permeable pavers. Using sustainable materials in therapeutic garden design can help reduce environmental impact, conserve resources, and promote sustainable practices.

- ****Accessible Materials****: These are materials that are designed to be easily used and navigated by individuals of all ages and abilities, including those with physical disabilities, mobility challenges, or sensory impairments. Accessible materials in a therapeutic garden can help create inclusive and welcoming spaces for all users.
- ****Therapeutic Materials****: These are materials that are specifically chosen for their sensory, tactile, or therapeutic properties, such as textured surfaces, interactive features, or calming colors. Including therapeutic materials in a garden can provide opportunities for sensory stimulation, cognitive engagement, and emotional well-being.
- ****Safety Materials****: These are materials that are selected for their ability to promote safety and reduce risks in a garden, such as slip-resistant surfaces, rounded edges, and non-toxic finishes. Safety materials are important considerations in therapeutic garden design to ensure a secure and hazard-free environment for users.
- ****Durable Materials****: These are materials that are resistant to wear, weathering, and damage, such as stainless steel, concrete, and composite decking. Using durable materials in therapeutic garden design can help prolong the lifespan of the space, reduce maintenance needs, and ensure long-term functionality.
- ****Eco-friendly Materials****: These are materials that are produced using sustainable, non-toxic, and environmentally friendly practices, such as low-VOC paints, organic fabrics, and recycled plastics. Eco-friendly materials in therapeutic garden design can help minimize environmental impact, support healthy indoor air quality, and promote sustainable living.
- ****Universal Design****: This is an approach to design that aims to create environments that are accessible, inclusive, and usable by people of all ages, abilities, and backgrounds. Universal design principles can be applied to therapeutic garden design to ensure that the space accommodates diverse needs, preferences, and abilities.
- ****Biophilic Design****: This is a design philosophy that emphasizes the connection between humans and nature and incorporates natural elements, patterns, and materials into built environments to promote health, well-being, and productivity. Biophilic design principles can be applied to therapeutic garden design to create spaces that foster a deep sense of connection to the natural world.
- ****Sensory Garden****: This is a type of garden that is specifically designed to stimulate the senses, such as sight, smell, touch, taste, and hearing, through the use of plants, materials, and interactive features. Sensory gardens are often used in therapeutic settings to provide sensory stimulation, cognitive engagement, and emotional support.

- **Healing Environment**: This refers to an environment that is intentionally designed to promote healing, relaxation, and well-being through the use of plants, materials, colors, lighting, and spatial arrangements. Creating a healing environment in a therapeutic garden can help reduce stress, anxiety, and pain, and enhance the overall quality of life for users.
- **Outdoor Living Space**: This is an area within a garden that is designed for relaxation, socialization, and recreation, such as seating areas, dining areas, fire pits, and outdoor kitchens. Outdoor living spaces in therapeutic garden design can provide opportunities for social engagement, physical activity, and connection to nature.
- **Therapeutic Landscape**: This is a term used to describe a landscape that is intentionally designed to promote healing, relaxation, and well-being through the integration of plants, materials, and design elements that support physical, emotional, and spiritual health. Therapeutic landscapes are often used in healthcare settings to provide patients, residents, and visitors with a space to connect with nature and experience the benefits of outdoor environments.
- **Healing Pathways**: These are paths or walkways within a garden that are designed to encourage movement, exploration, and contemplation, such as meandering trails, labyrinth gardens, and meditation walks. Healing pathways in therapeutic garden design can provide opportunities for physical activity, mental relaxation, and spiritual reflection.
- **Restorative Gardens**: These are gardens that are designed to help individuals recover from stress, fatigue, or illness by providing opportunities for relaxation, reflection, and connection with nature. Restorative gardens often include elements such as water features, seating areas, planting beds, and sensory gardens to create a peaceful and rejuvenating environment.
- **Nature Play Area**: This is an area within a garden that is designed to encourage outdoor play, exploration, and learning, such as climbing structures, sand pits, mud kitchens, and nature trails. Nature play areas in therapeutic garden design can provide opportunities for children and adults to engage with nature, develop sensory skills, and foster creativity and imagination.
- **Therapeutic Retreat**: This is a secluded area within a garden that is designed to provide a private and peaceful space for relaxation, meditation, or reflection, such as a secluded bench, a quiet corner, or a sheltered alcove. Therapeutic retreats in therapeutic garden design can offer a respite from the demands of daily life and provide a sanctuary for contemplation and rejuvenation.
- **Healing Sanctuary**: This is a term used to describe a space within a garden that is designed to evoke feelings of serenity, tranquility, and peace, such as a meditation garden, a prayer garden, or a healing labyrinth. Healing sanctuaries in therapeutic garden design can provide a refuge from stress, anxiety, and pain, and promote a sense of calm and well-being.
- **Therapeutic Features**: These are design elements within a garden that are specifically chosen for their

therapeutic value, such as water features, wind chimes, sensory gardens, and sculpture gardens. Including therapeutic features in a garden can enhance the sensory experience, promote relaxation, and support emotional well-being.

- **Healing Garden Design Principles**: These are guiding principles that inform the design and development of therapeutic gardens, such as biophilic design, universal design, evidence-based design, and person-centered design. Following healing garden design principles can help create spaces that are supportive, inclusive, and beneficial to the health and well-being of users.
- **Planting Guidelines**: These are recommendations for selecting, arranging, and maintaining plants in a garden to achieve desired aesthetic, functional, and therapeutic outcomes. Planting guidelines may include considerations such as plant selection, spacing, soil preparation, watering, fertilizing, and pruning to ensure the health and vitality of plants in a therapeutic garden.
- **Material Specifications**: These are detailed descriptions of the materials used in a garden, including their type, dimensions, color, texture, finish, and installation method. Material specifications help ensure that materials are selected, sourced, and installed correctly to meet design requirements, quality standards, and budget constraints.
- **Design Elements**: These are the visual, tactile, auditory, olfactory, and spatial components of a garden that contribute to its overall aesthetic, functional, and sensory qualities. Design elements may include plants, materials, pathways, seating areas, water features, lighting, and artwork to create a harmonious and engaging environment.
- **Design Intent**: This refers to the overarching purpose, vision, and goals of a garden design, such as promoting healing, relaxation, socialization, education, or sustainability. Design intent guides the decision-making process, design development, and implementation of a garden to ensure that it meets the needs and preferences of users.
- **Design Parameters**: These are the constraints, limitations, and requirements that influence the design and development of a garden, such as site conditions, budget constraints, regulatory requirements, user preferences, and maintenance considerations. Design parameters help inform design decisions and ensure that the garden meets functional, aesthetic, and operational requirements.
- **Design Guidelines**: These are recommendations, principles, and best practices for designing therapeutic gardens, such as creating accessible pathways, incorporating sensory elements, providing seating areas, and selecting resilient plants. Design guidelines help designers, landscape architects, and healthcare professionals create spaces that are safe, welcoming, and supportive of healing and well-being.
- **Design Process**: This refers to the sequence of steps, activities, and decisions involved in designing a therapeutic garden, such as conducting site analysis, developing a design concept, creating design drawings, selecting materials, coordinating installation, and monitoring maintenance. The design process is

iterative, collaborative, and multidisciplinary, involving input from various stakeholders, such as clients, users, designers, and maintenance staff.

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