PRODUCED BY THE MADISON FOOD POLICY COUNCIL - JUNE 2017

GUIDE TO PLANTING EDIBLE, NATIVE AND POLLINATOR FRIENDLY LANDSCAPES IN YOUR YARD AND TERRACE

For Residential Zones in the City of Madison

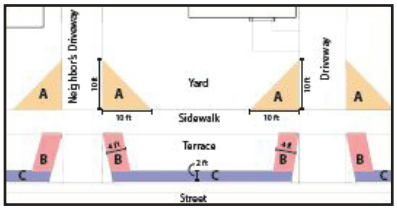
WHAT CAN I PLANT IN MY TERRACE? HOW CAN MY YARD HELP POLLINATORS? DO I HAVE TO HAVE A LAWN?

If you're asking any of these questions, you've come to the right place! Madison residents have a number of options for how to landscape their yards and adjacent street terraces. The City requires that you keep your yard and terrace well maintained and free of noxious weeds, but allows you to plant all sorts of things. From traditional lawns and flowerbeds to vegetable gardens, native plants or pollinator-friendly plantings, you can create the yard that makes you happy.

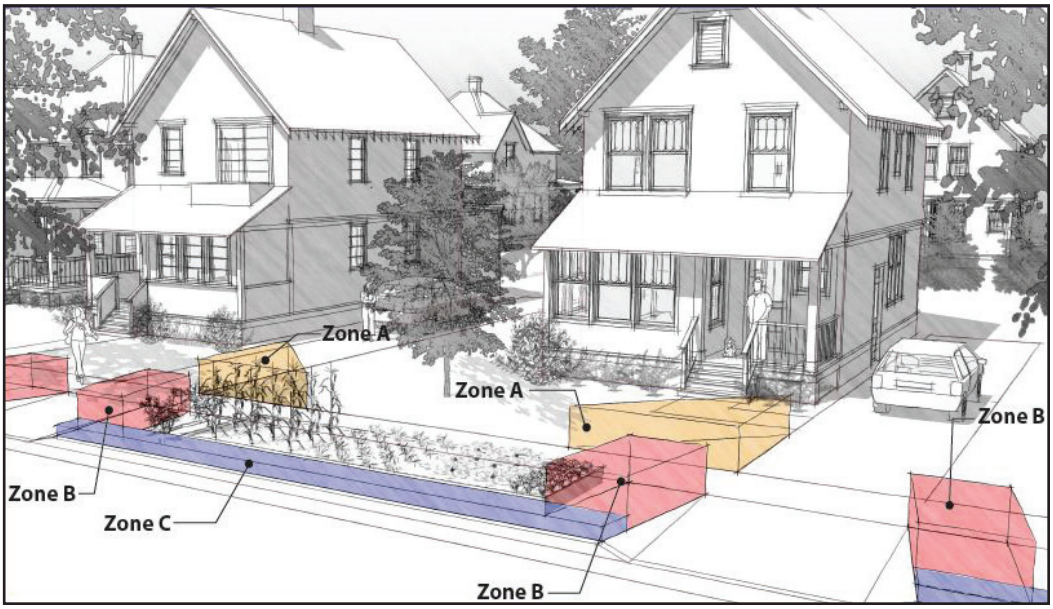
Let's define our terms: Your yard is the area between the building and the sidewalk (or where the sidewalk should be). The terrace is the area between the sidewalk and the curb or street.

In both your yard and terrace, there are some limits on how high your plantings can be. This is about safety and visibility. In areas near driveways, plantings shouldn't be taller than 30 inches, and along the curb they shouldn't be taller than 8 inches; also, you may not plant anything within a 6 foot radius of a fire hydrant.

The terrace is public property that you maintain. Most terraces have underground utilities, so you must always call **Digger's Hotline** before digging, and know that the City may need to dig up whatever you plant there in the event of street or utility construction. Street trees are planted and maintained by the City's Forestry Department, which appreciates your help watering new trees or any tree in dry years, and protecting them from harm. While you can plant a wide variety of things in the terrace—a vegetable garden, flowers, groundcover, lawn, and more—you can't plant trees or shrubs, because nothing woody is allowed. You also can't build any permanent structures within the terrace, like raised beds.



Zone A: 10 ft by 10 ft triangle restricted to 30 inches in height. MGO 27.05(2)(bb)
Zone B: 4 ft wide area parallel to driveway aprong restricted to 30 inches in height. Terrace Treatment Policy
Zone C: 2 ft wide area parallel to street restricted to 8 inches in height. MGO 27.05(2)(2)(f) and Terrace Treatment Policy. This is to allow passengers to exit a vehicle when parked next to the curb. Not enforced if parking is prohibited at all times.
Other Requirements - Terrace Treatment Policy: Plantings shall not be placed within two feet of the back of the curb or edge of the shoulder on roadways with on-street parking. Under no circumstance shall any plant encroach over a sidewalk, curb or roadway shoulder. No plants shall be placed within a five foot radius of a terrace tree or fire hydrant.



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Your yard can include almost anything in your planting area, but you should remove "noxious weeds" (see Madison General Ordinance 23.29) and invasive species (see Resource list). If you want to plant native grasses, e.g. in a prairie mixture that also includes flowers, consider a "natural lawn," which currently requires a permit (see MGO 27.05(f)). These ordinances have recently been revised to allow for more pollinator-friendly plantings; if you have questions about what is allowed, please call Kyle Bunnow at (608) 266-6503.

To provide habitat for pollinators, consider planting flowers of different colors that will bloom throughout the growing season to appeal to as many different species as possible. **Olbrich Botanical Gardens**, Madison's public garden, provides gardening information and responds to garden questions at its **Garden Answer Service**. Olbrich's Education Department offers a variety of lectures and workshops about gardening, pollinators, sustainable horticulture, children's programming and more.

This guide is the result of several initiatives by the Madison Food Policy Council involving collaborations among elected officials, city agencies and citizen committees. Since 2013, the City has:

- Adopted a new **Terrace Treatment Policy** with guidelines for plantings within terraces and street intersections;
- Created a Pollinator Protection Task Force that authored a Report offering strategies to protect pollinator habitat on city-owned land and private property throughout Madison;
- Signed onto the nationwide **Mayor's Monarch Pledge**; and
- Been designated a **Bee City USA**.

The Madison Food Policy Council sees this guide as an opportunity to combine and present to Madison residents the key features of these city initiatives in a user-friendly way, and make it easily available in online and printed formats. It is also hoped that residents will use the guide as a starting point, and seek additional resources to maximize the environmental benefits of their terrace and yard plantings.

RESOURCES

City of Madison
- » Terrace Treatment Policy
  www.cityofmadison.com/sites/default/files/city-of-madison/engineering/documents/terrace%20treatment%20policy%202016%20edits.pdf
- » Pollinator Protection Task Force Report
  www.cityofmadison.com/sites/default/files/city-of-madison/mayors-office/documents/Pollinator%20Protection%20Task%20Force%20Report%20FINAL%203-24-16(1).pdf
- » Mayor's Monarch Pledge
  nwf.org/Garden-For-Wildlife/About/National-Initiatives/Mayors-Monarch-Pledge.aspx
- » Bee City USA
  www.beecityusa.org
- » Electronic version of this document
  www.cityofmadison.com/mayor/priorities/food

Olbrich Botanical Gardens
www.olbrich.org
- » Garden Answer Service:
  Call (608) 246-5805
  Email: **olbrichplantinfor@cityofmadison.com**
- » Visit the Schumacher Library:
  www.olbrich.org/visit/schumacher.cfm

Dane County UW-Extension
dane.uwex.edu

Wild Ones - non-profit focused on native plants & landscapes
www.wildones.org/chapters/madison

Madison Area Master Gardeners Association
www.mamgawi.org

Wisconsin DNR Invasive Species List
dnr.wi.gov/topic/invasives

Xerces Society - non-profit conserving pollinators & habitat
http://xerces.org

United States Department of Agriculture – Monarch Butterflies
www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/detail/national/plantsanimals/pollinate/?cid=nrcseprd402207

Digger's Hotline
www.diggershotline.com

ALL PHOTOS COURTESY OF OLBRICH BOTANICAL GARDEN

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