



WEBER BASIN WATER

LEARNING GARDEN

CHEAP-SCAPES

Creating beautiful landscapes and gardens on a budget

About the instructor:

Zac Roberts

- Conservation Coordinator - Weber Basin Water Conservancy District
- ISA Certified Arborist (UT-4527A)
- 20 years landscape maintenance experience
- Installed own yard on a small budget. Finished, then decided to move and do it all over again.



Landscaping on a budget can be tricky...

Things to consider



IMPORTANCE OF
PLANNING



EDUCATION



TIPS FOR
MATERIALS



TIPS FOR LABOR



TIPS FOR TOOLS
AND EQUIPMENT



RESOURCES



Planning

Having a plan is IMPORTANT!

“An hour of planning can save you 10 hours of doing.”

-Dale Carnegie

- ▶ Develop a design for the whole site.
 - ▶ Take into account what your site already offers
 - ▶ Terrain, Trees, Views, etc.
 - ▶ Materials- (example: gravel in soil.)
 - ▶ Identify aspects you are comfortable with and those you are not.
 - ▶ Identify the form and style you want.
 - ▶ Identify how the project can be phased.
- ▶ If you were to budget a little extra on any aspect of your project, then spend it on your plan design.
- ▶ Plans can also be developed using free resources like Localscapes program.



*If you don't know
where you're going
any road will take
you there*



<https://www.etsy.com/listing/258112133/cheshire-cat-quote-alice-in-wonderland>



General vs. Specific Plans

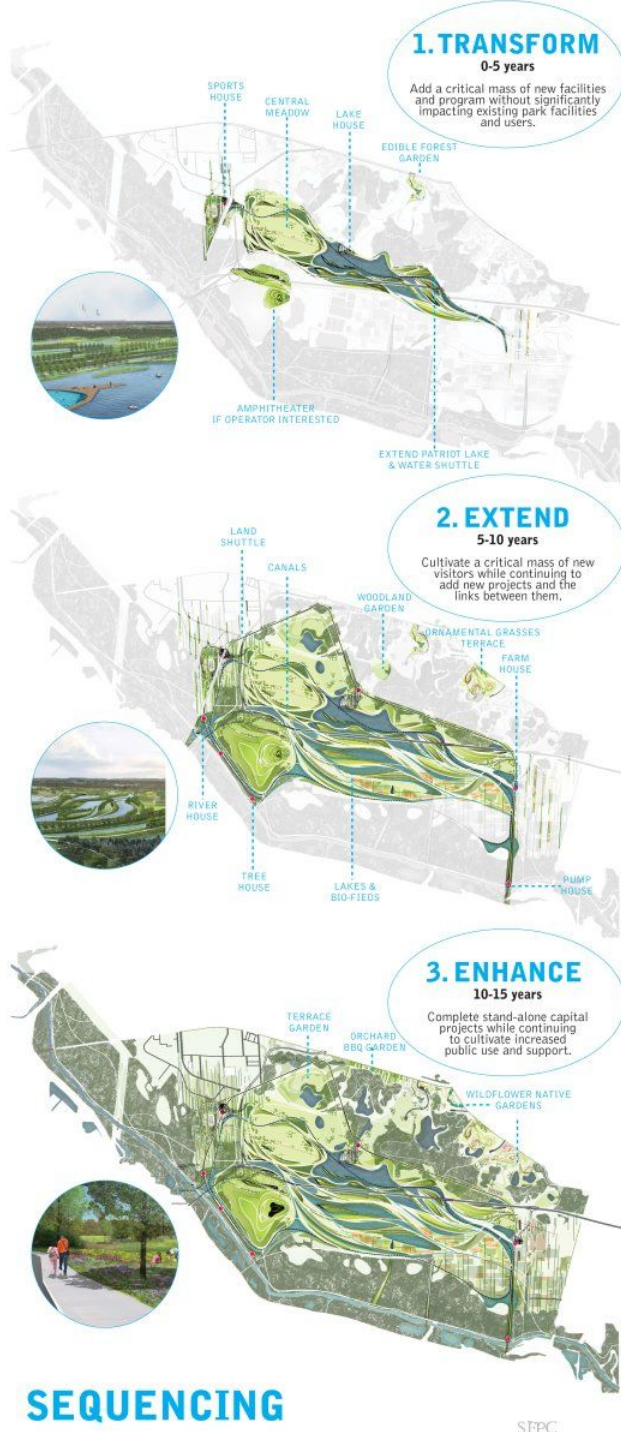
▶ Specific Plans

- ▶ Call out specific materials to be used
 - ▶ Plants
 - ▶ Hardscape materials
 - ▶ Mulch colors/varieties
 - ▶ Gravel mixes

▶ General Plans

- ▶ Use generalities to define materials to be used
 - ▶ “Orange and purple flower mix”
 - ▶ “Light wood chip mulch”
 - ▶ “Large shade tree”
 - ▶ Gravel path

*Adapting a specific plan to meet your budget requires some flexibility in materials you choose. If a selected material is out of your budget, look for materials that have similar properties and accomplish the same function.



Executing a plan in phases

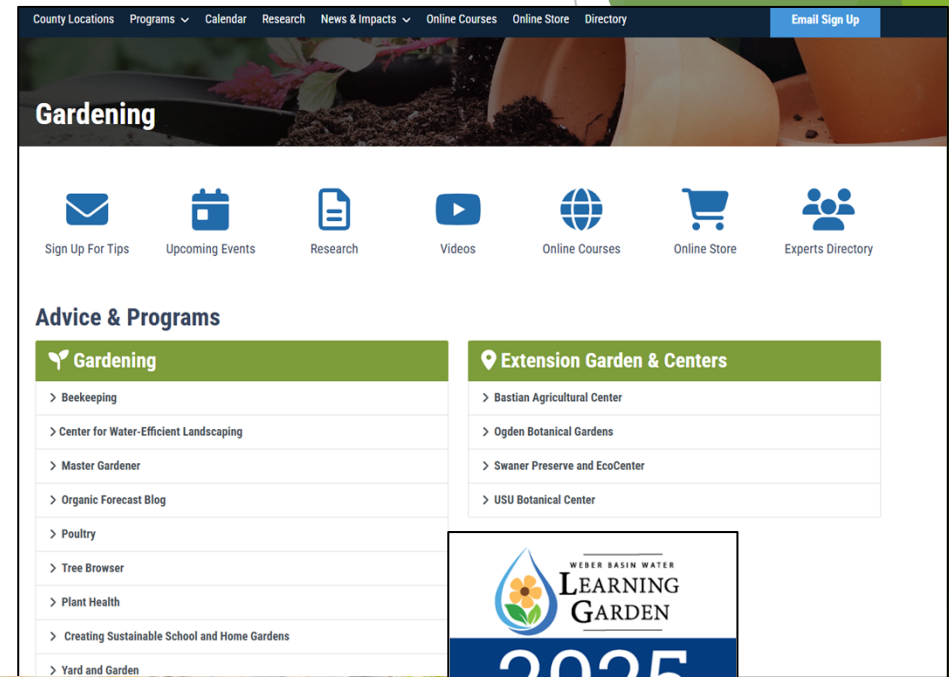
- ▶ Phasing projects allows for:
 - ▶ Budget to be spread over more time.
 - ▶ Experience to grow from one phase to another.
 - ▶ Project plan to be executed efficiently
- ▶ When planning phases it is important to know when to to perform tasks.
 - ▶ First install main-line irrigation and install valves or make necessary retrofits to existing system. (split zones, install pressure reducers and filters, etc.)
 - ▶ Think about working in outward facing areas first
 - ▶ Front yards, park strips,
 - ▶ Consider starting with smaller areas to gain experience and learn what works and what doesn't.



Education

Where can I go for help learning about how to install my project?

- ▶ Look for information from trusted sources.
 - ▶ Utah State University Extension Service
 - ▶ Reputable, peer-reviewed, scientific, etc.
 - ▶ Local Water Districts
 - ▶ Employ experts in the field of water conservation and horticulture.
 - ▶ Learning/demonstration gardens
- ▶ Be wary of these sources:
 - ▶ YouTube
 - ▶ Could be great information that is not applicable to Utah.
 - ▶ Social Media
 - ▶ Can be useful for ideas. Just vet them against trusted sources.
 - ▶ Friends, neighbors, contractors, etc.
 - ▶ May not be up-to-date on best practices and new technologies.



<https://www.allprodad.com/5-ways-to-love-your-neighbor/>

WEBER BASIN WATER
LEARNING GARDEN

2025 Classes & Events

Free landscape classes throughout the season to help you become more water-efficient and successful with your landscape.

[weberbasin.gov](https://www.weberbasin.gov)





Materials

Ways to Save on Materials - Mulches, Hardscapes, and Amenities

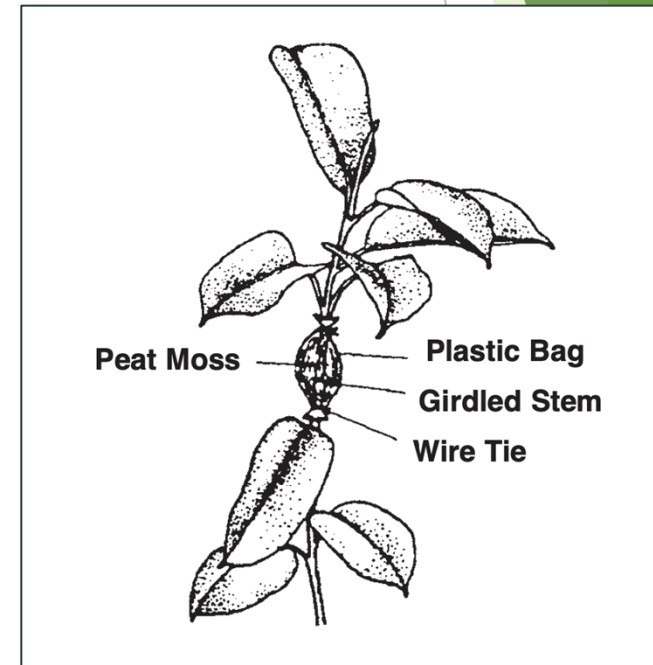
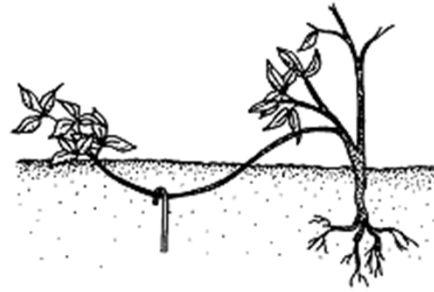
- ▶ Repurpose existing materials (ReStore)
- ▶ ChipDrop
- ▶ Landfill Greenwaste
- ▶ Compost removed lawn for rich topsoil
- ▶ Use demolished concrete as steppingstones/retaining wall block.
- ▶ Staining existing concrete instead of replacing
- ▶ Buy gravel direct from pit
- ▶ Skip buying weed barriers and landscape fabrics
- ▶ Break down wood pallets for wooden foot paths, fencing, boxes.
- ▶ Alternate fencing options
- ▶ Buy mulches/gravels in bulk and not bagged



*Just because it is available doesn't always mean it should be used.

Ways to Save on Materials - Plants

- ▶ Propagate plants yourself
- ▶ Propagate from grocery stock
- ▶ Grow plants from seed
- ▶ Plant Programs (pollinator, Garden-in-a-box)
- ▶ Seed Swaps
- ▶ Plant swaps
- ▶ Farmers markets
- ▶ Purchase smaller plants
 - ▶ 1" caliper tree
 - ▶ 4" pot
- ▶ Facebook gardening groups
- ▶ Classifieds
- ▶ Clearance racks at nurseries
- ▶ Compare prices at nurseries
- ▶ Hit up sales at nurseries and garden centers





Labor

Save time and money

Ways to save on labor

- ▶ DIY can both save and cost you money.
 - ▶ Education is important. Time spent on projects.
 - ▶ Costly mistakes versus doing it right the first time.
 - ▶ Know your limits. Pay for technical work.
- ▶ Find neighbors and friends that are working on projects at the same time.
 - ▶ Recruit help and offer to help others. Form a neighborhood “Co-op”
- ▶ Use the “I-know-a-guy” network.
- ▶ Kill and cover lawn instead of removing.
- ▶ Volunteer organizations
 - ▶ A bit more of a stretch
 - ▶ Church groups
 - ▶ JustServe.org





Tools and Equipment

Ways to Save- Tools and Equipment

- ▶ Co-op rentals (rent one machine use it for multiple projects and split cost.)
 - ▶ Shop around for least expensive rental. Not all rental places have the same prices.
- ▶ Friends
 - ▶ “The only thing better than owning a boat is having a friend that owns a boat.”
 - ▶ Borrow tools and equipment from friends or neighbors.





RESOURCES



Resources

Look for other ways to save

- ▶ Incentive programs
 - ▶ Weber Basin Water offers the Landscape Lawn Exchange program to offset some expense of renovation lawns with water-efficient landscaping.
 - ▶ Rebates on irrigation controllers and other water saving devices
 - ▶ Pollinator habitat program

