

BENEFICIAL LANDSCAPES TOOLKIT

As defined by the Environmental Protection Agency, beneficial landscaping enables us to avoid or lessen negative effects of urbanization while meeting our needs for function, beauty, and many other benefits. This includes:

- **Environmental benefits** - The health of our air, water, and land are protected through pollution prevention; solid waste reduction; energy conservation; water conservation; ecological restoration; and wildlife habitat protection and enhancement.
- **Economic benefits** - We save time and money for more enjoyable pursuits when we prevent pollution, use less landfill space, conserve energy and water, maintain and restore ecological integrity, and reduce the need to purchase fossil fuels, lawn chemicals, and power maintenance equipment.
- **Aesthetic benefits** - Our native flora is naturally beautiful and pleasing to the senses, and our native wildlife species are adapted to and dependent upon it for food, cover, and shelter. This means we enjoy more wildlife near our homes and workplaces.

Beneficial landscaping, sometimes referred to as “natural” or “native landscaping” (though it is more than that), contains a number of principles that focus on meeting our needs and sense of beauty while maintaining or restoring healthy natural ecosystems.

Some of these principles include:

- Select regionally native plants to form the foundation of the landscape.
- Reduce the use of turf. Instead, install woodland, meadow or other natural plantings.
- Reduce or eliminate the use of pesticides. Practice organic gardening or integrated pest management. Cooperative extension agents can help with natural alternatives to pesticides.
- Compost and mulch onsite to eliminate solid waste, control weeds, restore nutrients and organic matter to your soil, and reduce or eliminate the need for fertilizer and herbicide applications.
- Practice soil and water conservation. If irrigation is used, use drip irrigation or other water conserving techniques, and water in the early morning or evening hours.
- Create additional wildlife habitat to help compensate for land lost to urban/suburban development.

Beneficial landscapes, as proposed in this Study, can be edible, shade providing, drought tolerant, pollinator promoting, avian habitat supporting, wetland friendly, while bringing seasonal beauty at the same time. The diagram below illustrates how esplanades can maximize each benefit through plant material and its arrangement. Benefits can be combined and strategies can differ by corridor. Consistency will be achieved through a curated list of plant selections.

BENEFICIAL LANDSCAPE TYPES

Fruiting trees, edible leaves, herbs, and even vegetables can be grown in the streetscape and medians. Every plant on this list is edible.



Rich with oaks, elms, pecans, and pines. The canopy cover yields ideal growing conditions for Yaupons, Wax Myrtle, and Viburnums with an understory tolerating shaded conditions. Can be ideal for a variety of urban wildlife.



Plants of this typology require little water once established. Most plants will require full sun, similar to the native prairies this typology mimics.



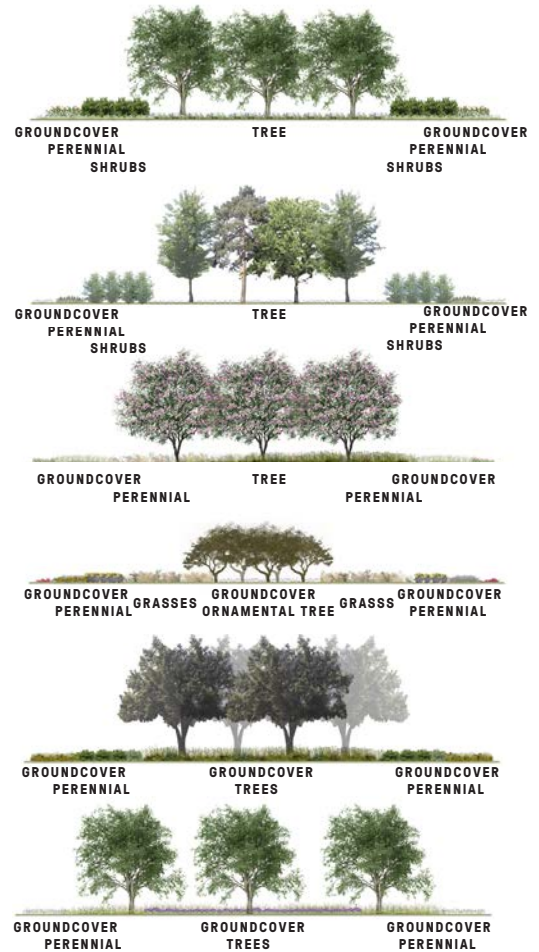
This garden emphasizes variety of pollen-heavy perennials and host plants.



Promotes plants that attract birds and other wildlife. The recommended natives provide food and habitat. Plant arrangement should be staggered, mimicking conditions in nature that allow for perching, nesting, and feeding.



Plants native to the Gulf Coast region are desirable in the neighborhood. These trees are tolerant of wet conditions and often mitigate, or clean, storm-water.





PLANT SELECTION

Using either specific or combined models of Beneficial Landscape Types (defined in the diagram on p.54), a plant palette can be assembled for each of the esplanades. The chart on this page identifies plant species, by their trophic levels, that could work well in the Study Area. Each color ring around the plant image categorizes the species by their ecological benefits; edible, shade, drought tolerant, pollinators, avian and wetland (i.e. Pecans are edible, shade loving/providing, avian supporting, and wetland tolerant).