



Garden or Landscape Area

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

Knowing the size of your garden or landscape area has value in making future decisions. Determining the square footage is necessary for deciding on materials to purchase, including grass seed, fertilizer, compost, mulch, number of plants to cover an area.

You should also have a record of the dimensions of sections of your garden, such as the yard space size on each side of your house, an alcove or an extra area in an odd-shaped property. The success of future garden plans may depend on acquiring accurate information -- to match the design layout with the realities of the site size. For instance, selecting a tree that matures to a

width within the boundaries of the space you have might save replacement or pruning costs to keep it in bounds. Figuring out where a family sized vegetable garden fits includes knowing the opportunities or limitations of space.

If you are focusing your site assessment on a *study area*, carry out this step on it.

ACTIVITY

Starting a sketch by recording dimensions

MATERIALS:

RETRACTABLE 25', 50' OR 100' MEASURING TAPE; OR YARDSTICK

GRID LINED PAPER (LETTER OR LEGAL SIZE)

PROPERTY DEED

PENCIL

CLIPBOARD



Make a quick sketch of your property on grid lined paper as if you were looking at it from an airplane. You don't have to be a good artist to mark where the house, outbuildings, fences, walls, or ponds are located. Your property deed will give some information, but your sketch can include other features.

Mark where there are obvious hills or sloping land. A circle to indicate the extent of non-flat places will do at this point.

Get the overall length and width of your property from the property deed. Use the retractable measuring tape or yardstick to measure other property sections or study areas. If part of your property is wooded or natural meadowland, re-measure the area that is currently cultivated, as the property deed may not make that distinction.

An alternative method is to measure one of your typical pace steps as you walk. Count out how many paces you make for the space's length and width. Multiply by the distance of your typical pace step. This method is useful on large properties, where a retractable measuring tape or yardstick are impractical. Measuring your pace step gives you an estimate, not an exact measurement.

ESTIMATED TIME: 1 HOUR

On large properties, use more than one grid sheet, but clearly mark how they all fit together. Large grid sheets are available but may be harder to photocopy.

Measure more spaces than you think you need, since you may make some changes in your garden or landscape in the future.

There are some more expensive measuring tools on the market, such as a device to measure ground distance with a wheel, handle and revolving distance counter. Laser measuring devices with digital counters are also sold; these need a wall, fence or other upright surface to get a reading from the laser beam.

USING WHAT YOU FOUND IN THIS STEP

Mark all these dimensions on the sketch.

Keep the sketch and store it on a clipboard. You will be asked to make notes on it in the steps that follow.

Convert length and width measurements for the whole or sections of your garden to square footage and mark it on your sketch.

Length (ft.) x width (ft.) = square feet.

Supplies are ordered later, based on square footage.

You can determine how steep any slopes you indicated on your sketch are by doing the optional step on slopes at the end of this workbook.

