

## Remote Ecosystem-First Design Form

Bona Terra is providing streamlined design services for small gardens up to 400 square feet without the expense of an on-site consultation. This form is free to all: homeowners can use it as a guide to create their own designs or pass along to whoever is designing your garden to save on fossil fuels. Contractors and designers are welcome to use this form as well, and if you like and you appreciate what we have created, send us \$5 every time you use it.

With this form, you will be guided through the steps of conducting your own pre-design survey in lieu of scheduling an on-site visit. We charge \$1 per square-foot, with a minimum of \$100.

Call Jeremy at (703) 407- 0718 to ask about designs over 400 square feet.

What you can expect to receive from our remote design service:

- Free assistance filling out the form if you need it. Please do your best to fill out as much as possible, but we are here to help if you are having issues with any portion of the form.
- Plant selection that is focused on restorative practices rather than human aesthetic preferences.
- Functional choices that match your maintenance skill level. A landscape can only be restorative if it is paired with realistic maintenance. All of these designs are either low or the lower end of medium maintenance.
- A simple plant map with plant selections, plant sizes, and spacing that fit your budget.
- Estimated quantities of soil amendments, mulch, and fertilizer that match your soil preparation plan, square footage and species of plants. See our site preparation guide on the website to choose the best site prep method for your garden.
- A list of plant sizes and quantities for easy ordering.
- 15 minutes of phone consultation included in the outlined price.

Our plant guide is currently being updated to include more information about maintenance tips, reproductive habits, and where these plants can be found naturally occurring in the wild. Find this information on our website at [www.bonaterradc.com](http://www.bonaterradc.com) soon as we continue to update and improve our plant guides.

Step 1: Fill out this form to the best of your ability. If you are having trouble filling out any portion of the form, feel free to call Jeremy (703) 407-0718. This will not be included in your consultation time.

Step 2: Submit your form and photos for review. Email the form to [sarah@bonaterradc.com](mailto:sarah@bonaterradc.com). Once our office has collected your form and made a file for you, we will review your form and let you know that we are ready for your consultation.

Step 3: Schedule your consultation. When you receive the email notification that we are ready to schedule your consultation, please respond with two preferred times between 12-5pm Monday-Thursday. You get 15 minutes of phone consultation included in the outlined price. If consultation needs to exceed this time, we will bill extra time at \$100 per hour or \$2 per minute, whichever is less.

Step 4: Consultation. We'll go over your plan in about 5 minutes and you'll have approximately 10 minutes for Q&A

Step 5: We will send an invoice for the design.

Step 3: Once the invoice has been paid, in the following 1-10 days, Jeremy will use the information from this form and from the phone consultation to generate a simple, hand-drawn design that will contain a plant map and a list of plant species including quantities and sizes.

Step 4: Once you have approved your design, you can send this plant list to [plantsales@bonaterradc.com](mailto:plantsales@bonaterradc.com) to place an order for native plants. If you need revisions we will bill \$100 per hour or \$2 per minute, whichever is less.

**Your Name:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Phone Number:** \_\_\_\_\_

**If your consultation needs to exceed the 15-minute time, we will bill extra time at \$100 per hour or \$2 per minute, whichever is less.**

Check here if you understand and accept this policy

**Choose your type of garden design. You can select more than one option.**

*See the following section of this form for descriptions of each of these garden designs*

Mowable Meadow

Mulch Manicure

Thirsty Thrivers

- Bio-Drill-No-Till
- Canopy Companions
- Pocket Pollinator Garden
- Sidewalk Symphony
- Diversity Demonstration
- Suggest a Style

**Would you like a Garden Add-on? You can choose more than one.**

Trick My Turf: We get it. You want to support pollinators and wildlife, but you still need a place to toss the frisbee and catch some sun rays while you read a book with a Mojito in your hand. We have a selection of small native plants that can handle foot traffic and the lawnmower while still providing food for wildlife. Choose this affordable option and we will add a few plants for you to put in your lawn that can easily propagate themselves throughout the yard.

Monarch My Meadow: We need to support Monarch butterfly populations. You know it, I know it, let's do something about it and put some milkweeds anywhere we can in your yard.

Bring the Bees: This one's free! When you choose this option we'll be sure to tell you how to create more habitat in your yard during our consultation. There are over 4,000 species of bees in the United States alone and about 3,998 of them really need our help, so let us tell you just how easy it is to be a friend to the bees.

**What is/was growing on-site pre-installation?**

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**Who is preparing the soil?**

- Residents (You are)
- Volunteers
- Professionals

**What is your soil preparation method? You can select more than one option.**

- Mowing
- Cardboard for one year
- Mechanical vegetation removal

Solarization

**How deep has your garden been tilled/do you plan on tilling?**

No till

1-3"

3-9"

6-12"

**Who is planting?**

Residents (You are)

Volunteers

Professionals

**Who will be maintaining the garden?**

Residents (You are)

Volunteers

Professionals

**How many hours of maintenance per 100 square-foot do you plan on performing monthly?**

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**What is your plant budget?**

Minimal, I'm on a budget \$200 per 100 square feet.

Medium, I want things grown in sooner but I want to keep costs reasonable \$300-400 per 100 square feet.

Largest, I want to have my garden be in its final state as soon as possible.

**Do you want us to base the plant list off of Bona Terra's current available inventory (so that you can use the plant list we provide to order native plants)?**

Yes

No

**Submit photos of the area to be designed. Provide at least two angles with surrounding structures and vegetation. Upload the pictures when you send in this form.**

**Send us a photo of the soil in your garden space. stick a shovel into the ground 8-10" and tilt back. Take a photo of the hole and soil, and upload here (It's okay if this photo is taken before tilling). Upload the picture when you send in this form.**

**Is your property fenced?**

Yes

No

**Do you have a dog? If yes, please describe their size and personality. Does your dog go to the bathroom in the yard? Does it mostly stay indoors, or does it have free-reign of the yard (this is actually practical, but feel free to elaborate about your doggo. We're dog-loving bunch)?**

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**Do you have deer, rabbits, or other wildlife concerns?**

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**List the type of wildlife you are interested in supporting or attracting.**

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**What is your address? This is so that we can Google your location to see what types of biospheres are nearby.**

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**Make a map of your yard. It doesn't have to be pretty, but it should include the house, walkway, and street/road. Measure and designate the dimensions of the area to be designed. Upload the map when you send in this form.**

**When this form is completed, email it along with your photos and map to  
sarah@bonaterradc.com**

## Garden Descriptions

**Minimal Maintenance Gardens:** There are two options for minimal maintenance gardens: the Mowable Meadow and the Mulch Manicure. Read the descriptions below for information about each of these garden plans, but it is important to keep in mind that most human-occupied ecosystems in the Chesapeake Bay watershed are naturally forest covered areas and you will be constantly dealing with the ecosystem's natural proclivity to return to forest. These plans will help give you the tools for success growing natives while keeping pioneering forest species and invasive plants in check.

**Mowable Meadow:** Low maintenance is achieved through two mechanisms: (1) By choosing plants that readily spread underground and seed prolifically we will ensure that you will have healthy plants that can grow back easily from the root systems and readily fill the soil seed bank with their seeds. (2) By waiting until winter time when your plants have set their seeds you can trim off your seed heads and collect them in a paper bag. Mow between 1/2 and 1/4 of the meadow area in December or January annually and spread your collected seeds in the mowed area. Water them in so they do not blow away, and it is also a good idea to put a little compost on top of them so that they do not get damaged by the sun's UV rays or get stolen by birds and small mammals.

*Read more:* By mowing you will knock back all the trees and vines that would otherwise naturally occupy your ecosystem giving your perennials that have died back to the ground the upper hand in the spring. Since all of the energy they have collected in the previous year is stored in the underground root systems, these plants will be unaffected by winter mowing. Woody plants such as vines and trees that store part of their energy in their above-ground wood will have a portion of their gathered energy taken away from them and put them at a disadvantage to the perennials that stored all their energy underground. We only recommend mowing a fraction of the space annually because many insects and wildlife overwinter in stems from flower spikes. Whenever possible you should skip mowing and hand-weed to support insect populations. While mowing does provide effective means of slowing down trees and vines it will not kill them, and you will still have to weed some trees and vines out of your garden space although not as often as you would if you did not mow. By collecting the seeds and placing them in desired areas you'll ensure the soil seed bank is saturated with the desired plants in the desired location and any young undesirable plants will not have the chance to set seeds making your maintenance lower as you continue this practice. For bonus benefits collect the stems of your perennials, tie them into a bundle and leave them out for habitat for pollinators.

**Mulch Manicure:** This method of low maintenance is the one most people are familiar with. You'll see it being implemented in parking lots and franchise business plantings nationwide. This

method is ideal if you are hiring a company to perform your maintenance since by and large this method is what most landscape maintenance companies are familiar with. While it is effective it will limit your plant selection.

*Read more:* When choosing plants for this style of maintenance it is much more difficult to provide blooms that dovetail together throughout the season, but it is a manageable and straightforward practice that you can easily hire someone to do the work for you. The basic premise is that you choose hearty, long-lived, deep-rooted plants that can push through mulch and tend not to be smothered by it. These plants also tend to be perennials or woody shrubs that generally do not make copious amounts of seeds annually instead relying on a long lifetime to make large amounts of seeds.

Most flowering perennials grow for 3 to 5 years, make thousands of seeds and die. They rely on large numbers of their seeds in the soil seed bank to maintain healthy populations. If you are covering your soil with mulch on an annual basis, you will block the sunlight the seeds need in order to germinate, or they will be buried so deep in the mulch that if they do germinate their leaves will never make it out from under the mulch before they run out of energy and die, thus limiting your plant selection and the variety of flowering plants. That same mechanism that excludes most flowering perennials is the mechanism that keeps this style of garden low maintenance and easy to hire people to perform.

**Thirsty Thrivers:** That darn wet spot in the yard! Nothing seems to grow, well not anymore. With this style of garden - ranging from grasses, shrubs, perennials, and ferns - the water does a lot of the weeding for you, but you'll still want to be familiar enough with each plant to identify it in all stages of life and their reproductive habits. We recommend weeding a couple times a month as wet spots are usually in compacted soil and it is far easier to remove young weeds from impacted soils than it is to remove mature weeds.

**Bio-Drill-No-Till:** So 50 years ago, when your house was built, they scraped off the organic horizon and left you with nothing but clay. Now water sheets off your yard like a Formula One car, building momentum and carrying sediments into the bay, and no matter what you plant, nothing seems to thrive in your compacted clay soil. With this grouping of plants you'll not only have extremely light prep work and low watering needs, but we will also choose plants that have deep roots that break up the soil and allow water to infiltrate as the plants mature. Of course, they'll have to grow well with no fertilizer because you don't want fertilizer running off of your yard contributing to algae blooms in the ocean, so we will be sure to choose plants that have evolved over the millennia to grow in these tough conditions. Best of all you won't have to till this rock-hard soil in order for these plants to thrive. This is ideal for slopes you can't till and for those trying to keep their plant budgets low. This can be a low-maintenance style garden when paired with our mulch manicure or mowable meadow plans.

**Canopy Companions:** Plantings under canopies tend to be low maintenance but due to stiff competition from the roots and shade from the trees limiting the amount of photosynthesis, plants mature much slower. It is important to pair plantings with the specific species of trees, and we will draw on our decades of experience to create a strong match. Our garden design will

be composed mostly of ferns and grasses that can withstand these harsh conditions. Low maintenance is achieved with dense plantings. If your budget is on the lower end of the range, expect to spend 5-10 years weeding the space until the plants reach maturity.

*Curious about spring ephemerals?* We recommend you order your plants from Sunshine Farms in West Virginia, where they have a wide selection of perennials that can grow in *well-established forest communities*.

**Pocket Pollinator:** These gardens are ideal for small urban spaces. The main focus of the Pocket Pollinator is to provide habitat for pollinators year round by dovetailing bloom times and providing fall keystone species as an intrinsic part of assisting pollinators for overwintering. This is a medium maintenance style garden that is intended for people who enjoy learning to identify their plants, their reproductive habits, and are not afraid to get their hands dirty by pulling weeds and preventing any one species from growing and overtaking other ones in the garden.

**Sidewalk Symphony:** Tune up the orchestra in early spring because these plants are going to thrive in one of the most desolate urban areas: the strip between the sidewalk and the road. This area is constantly being inundated with runoff, weeds, extreme heat, pollution and trash. It's a tough spot to grow but we've got a selection of plants that are tried and true. Get ready to hear the hum of insect wings harmonizing with the hum of urban traffic. If you have foot traffic in this space you WILL NEED to address that with stepping stones in order to have success. This is a medium-maintenance garden where you'll have to get your hands dirty and learn about the plants to care for them properly.

**Diversity Demonstration:** Are you ready to be a native plant ambassador? We will make plant selections that will make the neighbors say, "wow, I had no idea native plants could be so beautiful!" This demonstration garden will have your friends, family and neighbors fall in love with native plants and the wildlife they support. Generations of humans to come will thank you. This is a medium-maintenance garden that will require that you learn to identify your plants in all stages of life and to get your hands dirty with plenty of weeding – oh joy! You love that stuff and that's why you're choosing this kind of garden.

**Suggest a Style:** Do you have a garden style in mind that you would like to see added to this form? Let us know!



