

# Foundation Bed Planting Guidelines

## Planning

Unless you have plants you absolutely love, starting from scratch may be the best choice.

Reworking soil is the key component to any planting. Regardless of soil type, adding 3 to 4 inches of compost will ensure your new plantings will thrive.

Any shrubs that you have to keep low and “meatball” (prune into geometric shapes) should be replaced with less maintenance-needy plants. Shrubs that mature to their natural shape will be the most natural-looking in the end.

Using a mix of annuals, perennials, shrubs and small trees will give the foundation bed depth and provide all season color. A mix of evergreen and deciduous shrubs makes for a more natural landscape.

Make the bed wide enough. Twelve feet out from the house will provide room for the planting to have depth.

Always plant according to the plant’s maximum size. If the plant has a height of more than 6 feet, it is not suited for a foundation planting under windows. If the spread of a plant is 4 feet, make sure to leave 4 feet on all sides to ensure it has room to grow. While this may look odd at first, it will pay off in the long run.

Many of the plants listed on these pages are cultivars of plants, meaning there may be many diverse types of plants with similar names. Make sure to check for exact names or similar plants with similar growing habits. If not, you may end up with a 10-foot plant when you wanted one only a foot-high.

Any trees used in a foundation planting should be small or under 20 feet and should be planted away from the home.

## Planting

The best time to plant shrubs is in the fall. This gives the plant time to establish before the heat of summer. Perennials also thrive when planted in the fall.

Make sure to break up the root ball when planting. Remove approximately half of the nursery soil to ensure that the roots of the plant meet the native soil.

Soak the plant in water for about 5 minutes before planting. As you are backfilling the soil, add water after each layer. Plants that go in the ground with adequate water will perform better and have less transplant shock.

Make sure the top level of soil around the container plant is level with the bed where it is being planted. Planting too deep will languish and eventually suffocate the plant.

Lightly tamp soil around the plant with your hands.

For the first week water daily. After this water 3 times per week during the summer months until established.

# Pollinator Foundation Bed

Planting a bed with pollinators in mind will work double time. Not only will the planting look great, but also it will provide habitat and food for the conservation of declining insects. The key to a good pollinator habitat is planting clumps of like plants together and providing food (nectar and pollen) in spring, summer and fall. Most pollinator plants need full sun.

### ***Camellia sasanqua* ‘Mine-no-yuki’**

#### **Snow on the Ridge Camellia**

Best for blank wall space or between windows.

Not under windows

Evergreen

Height: 6-9’ | Spacing: 6’

Part shade

### ***Camellia sasanqua* ‘Shishigashira’**

#### **Lion’s Head Camellia**

Evergreen

Hot pink fall flowers

Height: 4-5’ | Spacing: 4’

### ***Hydrangea paniculata* ‘Jane’ Little Lime**

#### **Little Lime Panicle Hydrangea**

Deciduous; prune to 1’ in late winter

White flowers in July-September

Height: 3-5’ | Spacing: 3’

### ***Pieris japonica* ‘Purity’**

#### **Lily-of-the-valley Bush**

Evergreen

White, bell-shaped flowers in spring

Height: 3-4’ | Spacing: 3’

### ***Baptisia* ‘Pink Lemonade’**

#### **Pink Lemonade False Indigo**

Yellow flowers fading to purple in spring

Early pollinator plant

Perennial. Cut back to ground after first frost

or by the end of February

Height: 4’ | Spacing: 4’

### ***Eutrochium dubium* ‘Little Joe’**

#### **Joe-pye-weed**

Light pink flowers in fall

Full sun

Great for butterflies and bees

Mix in with shrubs in the back of the planting

Height: 3’-4’ | Spacing: 1’

### ***Ilex glabra* ‘Shamrock’**

#### **Inkberry**

Evergreen, neat shrub with a rounded natural shape

Height: 5’ | Spacing: 5’

Plants for the middle and front of bed

### ***Abelia x grandiflora* ‘Kalidescope’**

#### **Glossy Abelia**

Evergreen

White summer flowers

Height: 2-3’ | Spacing: 3’

Full sun to Part shade

### ***Loropetalum chinense* var. *rubrum* ‘Crimson Fire’**

#### **Crimson Fire Loropetalum**

Evergreen

Great for under windows

Height: 2-3’ | Spacing: 3’

Full Sun

**Abelia 'Rose Creek'**

**Abelia**  
Evergreen  
White summer flowers  
Height: 2-3' | Spacing: 2'

**Distylium 'Swing Low'**

**Swing Low Distylium**  
Evergreen dense shrub with blue-green foliage  
Height: 2-3' | Spacing: 4'  
Plants for middle of the bed

**Buddleja 'Smbndl' Pugster Amythyst**

**Pugster Amethyst Dwarf Butterfly Bush**  
Deciduous; prune by half in late winter  
Purple flowers June-September  
Height: 2' | Spacing: 2'

**Muhlenbergia capillaris**

**Pink Muhly**  
Prune grass to about 8" in February  
Pink flowers in fall  
Height: 3' | Spacing: 3'

**Spiraea japonica 'Ncsx1'**

**Double Play Candy Corn Spiraea**  
Hot pink flowers with golden foliage  
Height: 18"-2' | Spacing: 2'

**Lomandra longifolia 'Platinum Beauty'**

**Platinum Beauty Iron Grass**  
White variegated, evergreen grass  
Height: 2'-3' | Spacing: 3'

**Gaura lindheimeri 'Belleza Dark Pink'**

**Belleza Dark Pink Gaura**  
Dark pink flowers throughout the season.  
Cut back spent flowers after each flush and new flowers emerge



# Tropical Foundation Bed

Planting a foundation bed with a theme can make a landscape cohesive. Many people in the Midlands of SC can grow tropical-looking plants that are reliably hardy. These landscapes are especially suited to mid-century modern homes but this design can work with almost any home.

**PLANTS FOR THE BACK OF THE BED (CLOSEST TO THE HOME)**

**Musella lasiocarpa**

**Golden Lotus Banana**  
Yellow bloom in June but grown more for the foliage  
Height: 3'-5' | Spacing: 3'

**Salvia leucantha 'Midnight'**

**Mexican Bush Sage**  
Dark purple flowers late-summer to fall  
Height: 3.5' | Spacing: 3'

**Cephalotaxus harringtonia 'Fritz Huber'**

**Plum Yew**  
Great low-growing, dark green evergreen plant  
Height: 3' | Spacing: 4'

**Hydrangea macrophylla 'Piihm-i'**

**Twist-n-shout Hydrangea**  
Re-blooming lace-cap hydrangea  
Flowers are pink or blue depending on soil Ph  
Prune in late fall or early spring  
Height: 3'-5' | Spacing: 4'

**Hydrangea paniculata 'Leep1'**

**White Wedding Hydrangea**  
Shrub is covered in white flowers in summer  
Prune if needed in late summer or early spring  
Height: 4'-6' | Spacing: 4'

**Illicium parviflorum 'Florida Sunshine'**

**Yellow Anise Shrub**  
Chartreuse foliage stands out in the landscape  
Height: 5' | Spacing: 3'

**Sabal minor**

**Dwarf palmetto**  
Evergreen, stemless palm  
Best against an open wall space, not under a window  
Height: 5-8' | Spacing: 5'

**Alocasia macrorrhizos**

**Giant Elephant's Ear**  
Large tropical leaves  
Dormant in winter, cut back after first frost  
Good on large blank wall, not under windows  
Height: 6-8' | Spacing: 5'

**Cycas revoluta**

**Sago Palm**  
Dark green, tropical-looking foliage  
Not a true palm  
Prune all leaves in late winter for a new flush of leaves  
Height: 3'-8' | Spacing: 4'

**Muhlenbergia dumosa**

**Bamboo Muhly**  
Billowy grass lends a soft texture to the garden  
Height: 3'-4' | Spacing: 3'

**Serenoa repens 'Cinerea'**

**Silver Saw palmetto**  
Slow-growing, small native palm  
Silvery foliage  
Evergreen  
Prune leaves when yellowed or brown  
Height: 4'-8' | Spacing: 5'

**PLANTS FOR THE MIDDLE AND FRONT OF THE BED**

**Rhododendron 'Chinzan'**

**Azalea**  
Vivid Pink, single flowers in spring  
Dwarf. No pruning  
Height: 2' | Spacing: 3'

**Crinum 'Gordon Wayne' x 'Garden Party'**

**Crinum Lily**  
Crinums are a great addition to a tropical planting, and there are many cultivars to choose from with white, pink or red flowers. If foliage is unsightly, cut back foliage after frost  
Height: 3' | Spacing: 3'  
Eucomis 'Glow Sticks'  
Pineapple Lily

**Hesperaloe parviflora**

**Red False Yucca**  
Yucca type plant with cool red flowers in summer  
Needs good drainage  
Full sun  
Height: 3'-4' | Spacing: 3'

**Farfugium japonicum var. Giganteum**

**Giant Leopard Plant**  
Evergreen, large, tractor-seat leaves  
Yellow daisy-like flowers in summer  
Clean up unsightly leaves as needed  
Height: 3' | Spacing: 3'

**Canna 'Lemon Punch'**

**Canna Lily**  
Lemon-yellow flowers in summer on glaucous blue foliage  
Clump forming over time  
Height: 3.5' | Spacing: 3'

**Farfugium japonicum 'Kagami-jishi'**

**Crested Leopard Plant**  
Wavy leaves and yellow spots adorn the leaves of this evergreen.  
Topped in fall with a 2' spike of yellow daisy-like flowers  
Height: 12"-18" | Spacing: 1'

**Salvia greggii 'Diane'**

**Autumn Sage**  
Purple flowers in spring and fall  
Small evergreen shrub  
Height: 18" | Spacing: 3'

**Salvia guaranitica 'Rhythm and Blues'**

**Anise-scented Sage**  
Cobalt flowers spring-fall  
Height: 3' | Spacing: 3'

**Hibiscus moscheutos 'Ruthib2'**

**Head Over Heels Passion Hibiscus**  
Hot pink blooms on a deep purple-leaved plant  
Summer blooming  
Perennial, cut back in early spring  
Height: 3' | Spacing: 4'

**Carex divulsa**

**Grassland Sedge**  
Small, dark green, evergreen grass  
Cut back in February if there is winter damage  
Height: 12" | Spacing: 12"

***Distylium 'Piidist-v'***

**Cinnamon Girl Distylium**

Good alternative to boxwood  
New foliage is purple fading to blue-green  
Height: 2'-3' | Spacing: 3'

***Hydrangea macrophylla 'Bailmacfive'***

**Summer Crush Hydrangea**

Bright red ball-shaped flowers on a compact, neat shrub  
Prune in late fall-early spring by half  
Height: 18"-3' | Spacing: 3'

***Salvia greggii 'Furman's Red'***

**Autumn Sage**

Semi-evergreen foliage with dark red flowers in spring and again in fall  
Height: 2'-3' | Spacing: 18"

***Carex oshimensis 'Everillo'***

**EverColor Everillo Sedge**

Golden yellow, small sedge for edges  
Height: 12" | Spacing: 12"

***Kniphofia 'Orange Blaze'***

**Red Hot Poker**

Orange flowers late spring into summer  
Cut back spent flowers to encourage new blooms  
Height: 2'-2.5' | Spacing: 18"

# Edible Foundation Bed

Don't have room for a vegetable garden? Have more room in your front yard than the back? Maybe all your sun is in the front yard. The solution is to grow edibles mixed in among your permanent plantings. This new movement called "foodscaping" lets you use food producing plants in an ornamental setting without having to build a vegetable garden. We have grown food plants in this foundation planting to illustrate what you can do to incorporate feeding your family simply by sprucing up the front of your home.

**PLANTS FOR THE BACK OF THE BED (CLOSEST TO THE HOME)**

***Ficus carica 'Majoam'***

**Little Miss Figgy Fig**

A dwarf fig that works well in the front of the home  
Deciduous but interesting branching in winter  
Height: 4'-8'

***Matteuccia struthiopteris 'The King'***

**Ostrich Fern**

Edible fiddle heads in spring.  
Bright green vase-shaped fern  
Prefers some shade or supplemental water  
Deciduous  
Height: 3'-5' | Spacing: 3'

***Citrus reticulata 'Ponkan'***

**Mandarin Orange**

Small evergreen tree for open space along a wall  
Large mandarin orange fruit  
Height: 10'-20'

***Feijoa sellowiana 'Tharfiona'***

**Bambino Dwarf Pineapple Gauva**

Dwarf, rounded, evergreen shrub with edible fruits  
Height: 3'-4' | Spacing: 4'

***Hemerocallis 'Autumn Minaret'***

**Daylily**

Edible flowers from June to September  
Height: 2' | Spacing: 2'

***Asparagus officinalis 'Jersey Knight'***

**Garden Asparagus**

Edible spears after 3 years in the ground  
Spear cut April-May and then soft, ferny foliage  
Height: 3'-4' | Spacing: 18"

***Asparagus officinalis 'Purple Passion'***

**Garden Asparagus**

Edible spears after 3 years in the ground  
Purple spears emerge for cutting April-May and then soft, ferny foliage  
Height: 3'-4' | Spacing: 18"

**PLANTS FOR THE MIDDLE OR FRONT OF THE BORDER**

***Vaccinium corymbosum 'Zf06-179'***

**Jellybean Blueberry**

Dwarf blueberry, large fruits, spring flower with midsummer fruits  
Deciduous  
Height: 1'-2' | Spacing: 2'

***Origanum x majoricum***

**Italian Oregano**

Tall oregano used in Italian cooking  
Evergreen in midlands climate  
Height: 1'-3' | Spacing: 2'

***Cymbopogon citratus***

**Lemon Grass**

Leaves and white portion of the stem used in cooking  
Lemon flavor

Tender but usually hardy in the ground in midlands. Cut back in February if necessary  
Height: 2'-3' | Spacing: 3'

***Fragaria x ananassa 'Eversweet'***

**Everbearing Strawberry**

Fruit May-frost  
Height: .5'-1' | Spacing: 1'

***Salvia yangii 'Denim 'n Lace'***

**Russian Sage**

Blue flowers are edible and have a peppery flavor  
Gray-green aromatic leaves can be steeped as tea  
Needs good drainage  
Height: 2'-3' | Spacing: 3'

***Vaccinium virgatum 'Premier'***

**Rabbiteye Blueberry**

***Prunus persica 'Desert Gold'***

**Peach**

Peaches are a great tree to espalier, or train to grow, against an open wall space.  
Height: if espaliered, height is maintained as needed

***Pyrus pyrifolia 'Hosui'***

**Asian Pear**

Pears are a great tree to espalier, or train to grow, against an open wall space.  
Height: If espaliered, height is maintained as needed



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