

## Plan and Design:

Like a house, a well-designed landscape should start with a plan, or rather, a series of plans. The first plan is a base plan which shows the major elements of the current landscape, including the footprint of the house, driveway, patios, walkways and all existing trees, shrubs and garden beds. The base plan should also show directions (indicate which way is north), and should include the location of spigots, downspouts and external electrical outlets.

A base plan needs to be drawn to scale. The easiest way to do this is to use graph paper with eight or ten squares per inch (1:8 or 1:10 scale). You'll probably also need a friend or spouse to help hold the tape measure as you work your way around the yard.

Once the base plan is complete, the next step is to make a bubble diagram. This involves taking a copy of the base plan and adding descriptive notations ("bubbles") to indicate such things as views that need to be enhanced, areas that need screening for privacy, and areas that have specific uses. This is the time to decide how you want to use various areas in your yard. For instance, if you like to barbecue, you'll need to include an outdoor cooking area. If you have children or pets you'll need a play area. You may even want a "library" - a private niche where you can retreat with a good book.

The final step is to use the bubble diagram to come up with a well-defined landscape plan, identifying specific site details (fences, trellises, decks, etc.) and a planting scheme. The landscape plan serves as the blueprint for constructing the finished Xeriscape, so you'll want to be as specific as possible when it comes to the type and number of plants. Group plants according to their light and water requirements - don't put plants that like dry conditions in the same area as plants that need frequent watering. Put taller plants in the back of the garden bed, and shorter plants near the front.