

Jaffrey Mills Apartments Landscape Consultation

Jaffrey Mills Apartments is a handsome brick condominium complex in Jaffrey, N.H. It is landscaped with many interesting shrubs along a meandering party. Martha and Bill Raymond contact Pat Rossi for landscaping suggestions that would bring more color, liveliness and continuity to the plantings. They asked for guidance concerning right placement of existing shrubs and perennials.

Cultural Requirements

The property has the full range of sun to shade, hot to cool, moist to dry cultural situations. Mulching helps mediate these differences, but watering options should be examined before planting.

Design Guidelines

Determining the scale of the plant to the space is the first consideration. Will this plant suit the larger framework? Is it too small for the space, too large, or is it right?

- Maximize vertical and horizontal opportunities using buildings, walls, fences as support.
- Work with color in relationship to space and light available in particular areas. Is there a dark spot that could use a cheerful evergreen like Euonymus Emerald or Gold? Besides the range of colors in flowers, plant stems and leaves have particular color and hue that can be used dynamically to great advantage.
- Work with good pairings, contrasting leaf forms and textures. This is especially important in small, close-up garden plantings.

Site Requirements

Acknowledge site limitations. Winter can bring large accumulations of snow, snow that both slides off the roof and snow that needs to be put somewhere to clear the walkway. That fact should be kept in mind when planting against the building. Attention should be given to less bright spots of the garden and low light plants put in those areas. Conversely, the area in front of the large granite wall that borders the property gets a lot of sun and heat from the pavement. Proper plant selection and mulching is essential.

The buildings and walls offer many opportunities for vertical climbers that would soften the brick and stonework, bring lots of interest and beauty and would not compromise the integrity of the structures.

Planting Suggestions

Granite Wall Bordering Driveway. The large, impressive blocks of granite that form this wall is a perfect spot to grow vigorous, sun loving vines. I recommend Orange Trumpet Vine. It has brilliant orange, funnel-shaped flowers that are 2-1/2 - 3 inches long blooming mid summer to frost. It is loved by butterflies and hummingbirds.

Honeysuckle could work as well, with several color possibilities and is also loved by butterflies and hummingbirds. The scale would be different, as the vine is somewhat dainty. I would devote 2/3 of the wall to Trumpet Vine, giving the last 1/3 to Virginia Creeper. A native plant (and very vigorous), it has handsome green leaves that turn a brilliant red in autumn.

In front of the wall, where the bed widens, (Beneath the lilac bushes) would be a wonderful spot to move the ornamental grasses. They would have enough room to grow freely and their waving movement would be more visible in an open spot and, as they die back in winter, snow accumulation would not be an issue. Magenta Cone Flowers—Echinacea—pair well with the grasses, or, if you wanted greater mass, Beach Roses. Rosa Rugosa would be beautiful, fragrant and offer rose hips to the birds.

Beyond the grasses, a Smoke Bush with its rosy colored leaves and magical plume would be a dramatic color contrast to the granite.

To unite the shrub plantings that continue across from the garage, I would choose 2-3 perennials and repeat them around the shrubs, The Shasta Daisies could be moved here, Daylilies and fall Asters in blues, purples and pinks for color in the autumn,

Resident Gardens

These gardens want to be intimate and delightful. Flower! Flowering perennials and vines: Peonies, Hydrangea, Clematis, Iris could make these gardens truly lovely.

Existing plants should be evaluated:

- Are they getting enough light?
- Are they alright under the roof's drip line?
- Should they be moved?

Perennials, that die back and wait for spring to resume growth, would be sensible to plant next to the building as the snow would not be an issue.

- Flowering ground covered offer color, fragrance and interest: Ground Phlox comes in lavender, white, pink and hot pink.

- Pinks (carnations) have a lovely gray-green foliage making a tight mat with spicy sweet flowers. Early spring offers an array of Primroses and Forget-me-nots.

- Lady's Mantle is a "must have" for its frothy, spring green flowers that are so wonderful in bouquets. (It pairs beautifully with Daylilies.)

The right sequence for the Resident Gardens area would be to:

- Establish which plants are right for their location and which ones need to move.
- Look at the remaining space to see what is possible.
- Plan for color for the entire growing season.
- Pair plants well and work for continuity throughout.

There are endless possibilities, but you want the gardens to work together as a whole. They should refresh you and bring you joy.

Upper Garden Beside Garages. This garden needs some attention. The tree does not look healthy. This would be a good spot for peonies and iris, as there is a lot of sun and open space.

Note: There are many online sources for plant descriptions and requirements. White Flower Farm is one of these.

Plant Pairings for Resident Gardens

Hydrangea/Daylilies*
Lady's Mantle/Daylilies
Euonymus/ Daylilies/Shasta Daisies
Hosta/ Daylilies/Hydrangea

Peonies/Iris
Clematis/Astilbe
Japanese Painted Fern/Perennial Pink Geranium or Pinks
Beach Roses/Blue-flowering Catmint

Underplantings: Primroses, Forget-me-nots
Undershrubs, Sweet Woodruff - delicate with fresh green color all growing season and white flowers May/June.

Herbs for the cooks in the group and one patch of mint for summer salads and drinks.

* Daylilies are the great mediators; they are like a fountain in the middle of a planting. With the many varieties available they have a long bloom period, they break up dense groupings and float their flowers at an eye-catching height.

Pat Rossi May 2013