

## **Landscaping Guidelines for the Mills Property**

Developed by the Environmental Concerns Committee, Illinois Yearly Meeting

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### **General Statement**

Landscaping of ILYM property, both the original property and the new Mills property, should be guided by earth-friendly, sustainable principles. The overall goal is to create and maintain a beautiful landscape that will support and help conserve bio-diversity of native species of plants, animals, birds and insects, while simultaneously being adapted to human use. Because of this, the landscape at ILYM would serve as an example or pattern of earth-friendly, eco-region-specific land use. Such landscaping would help humans interact in a more positive way with other species with whom we share this part of the earth, and would help embody our call to right care of creation.

### **Land-health Guidelines**

*It seems sensible to leave things physically more or less as-is for the time being until the house is in some sort of working order, Clear Creek has settled in and clear plans are developed. At the moment, yard maintenance should be fairly easy (mainly mowing).*

1. In general, foster sustainability in native plantings by striving for diversity of growth forms, life cycles, and function to ensure redundancy and resiliency to withstand the vicissitudes of changing climate and other disturbances.
2. Assume that no one will be able to take care of plants either daily or weekly; ECC or other dedicated Friends will need to take care of whatever we establish.
3. Over time, reduce turf grass to *necessary* areas.
4. Continue tree care as recommended by ECC.
5. Plant native species of forbs, grasses, trees, and shrubs that need little care once established.
6. Plant in clustered groupings with birds and insect pollinators in mind.
7. Do not use pesticides, herbicides or synthetic fertilizers if at all possible.

8. Use site-generated compost to nurture the living soil.
9. Plan landscape so that rainwater (either as rainfall or from rain barrels) is used for watering needs.
10. Minimize or manage soil compaction caused by vehicles on the property.
11. Use pervious paving for any paved areas.

### **Design Guidelines**

*The two properties should be thought of and planned for as a whole, a **campus** that accommodates constituents (human, plant and animal) and activities and that can grow and change over time. As in a house, there should be spaces suited for different activities and enjoying different characteristics but linked together as a whole.*

1. Create some defined outdoor rooms using placement of buildings and plantings to reinforce the definition.
2. Plan with awareness of views both off of the site and between places on the site (for example, the meeting room in the Mills house needs to keep the view of the old meeting house in the distance).
3. Plan with inspiration—and consideration for issues of functionality, of accessibility, of public/private, quiet/loud, natural/human, active/passive, and other dynamics.

**Note:** Septic system (field and tank) should be located, and will need to be planned for and dealt with as part of the landscape,.

### **Suggestions for the Short Term (the next year or so)**

*Many suggestions have been made. Each would require planning, equipment, workers, and dedicated time.*

- Move rocks and boulders
- Rent stump grinder and remove maple stumps in the “Old Field”
- Keep the “Old Field” mowed and free of woody vegetation
- Cut up wood from maples south of chicken house for use as fire wood
- Develop the water feature near house as a meditation/quiet area
- Cut down trees near electric lines and the Mills house

- Remove the burning bushes from side of house walk
- Improve (make more attractive) the front entrance
- Consider planting some trees such as the free pin oak on offer (when we figure out where).
- Develop lists of suitable native plants to use in planting areas.

**Note:** Re equipment, as part of our planning we should respond to some of Lori's offers such as getting a chipper (a good idea) and discounts on Caterpillar equipment such as a riding mower.

### **Suggestions for the Longer Term**

Create an overall plan for use considering the following suggestions:

(Query: What use is planned for the chicken house?)

- Nature path from the meeting house to the Mills house, possibly winding slightly, with meditative nature features along the way
- Clustered, layered, diverse native plantings appropriate to conditions
- Labyrinth, site to be determined
- Play area
- Second campfire spot (on southwest corner, Mills property)
- Grove of memorial trees
- Row of trees on the periphery for identifying our property but located with attention to views
- Hedgerows
- Parking: a grass, gravel grass or yearly-mowed prairie strip mainly for use during the 5 days of Annual Session
- Hedge to screen the side entrance and kitchen door, but ten feet closer to the road
- Seating at strategic areas
- Gazebo
- Evergreen windbreak to shield house from prevailing winter winds (if room)
- Ultimately, a community garden and orchard