

Informal shrub borders frame a house and separate it from neighbors. A lower planting under windows, with a slightly higher one near the door, emphasizes the entrance because of the contrast in heights.

Foundation plantings, those around the base of a house, can bring out the best architectural features of your home and make it blend with the surrounding landscape. The basic rule for foundation plantings is to develop strong corner groupings, with accent plantings placed at either side of the doorway. In general, place plants where strong vertical architectural lines meet the ground.

If your house has a high foundation, use large shrubs at the corners, and train one or more vines or espaliered plants on one of the walls.

Planting for the side of the house should be simple in outline. It need not be continuous--the foundation can show without impairing the basic design.

For the front of the house, plan strong corner groupings that will be attractive for at least three seasons. Choose upright, rounded, or pointed evergreens, such as junipers, yews, and pines. Then supplement them with a special doorway accent, such as a flowering vine--clematis, perhaps. Use short hedges around corner plantings to unify the house and site and also to form a textured background for a flower bed.