



Homesteads and Habitats – Sustainable Landscape Design

Mulysa Melco

[mulysa@resiliencedesign.com](mailto:mulysa@resiliencedesign.com)

503-956-0152

## **Making a Base Map**

Creating a base map of your property will help you get to know your site better. Making the plan yourself will save you money on your landscape design project. An accurate, to-scale plan allows for site analysis, proper plant spacing, planning the right amount of space for each area/element and circulation route, and many other considerations in the design process. And when it comes time for installation, the plan can be used to accurately estimate materials and labor costs. Follow the steps below and let me know if you have questions along the way.

1. Gather your materials: Graph paper (8 squares per inch or make  $1/8"=1'$ ), paper and clipboard, pencil, tape measure. A helper is nice to have too.
2. Have your helper (or a stake) hold one end of the tape measure as you note the dimensions of your lot. I find it helpful to sketch out the basic outline of the lot and house (or print out a map from [Portland Maps](#)) and then fill in the details while measuring. Don't worry about it being proportional – that comes later. Include major features such as:
  - a. house, door locations and windows
  - b. driveway, walks and paths
  - c. out buildings and fences
  - d. vents and downspouts
  - e. utilities and locations of gas, water and electric lines (if known)
  - f. trees, major shrubs, and plants you want might want to keep (or attach a list.)

3. Once you've jotted down all the measurements on the scratch copy you can sit down and draw them out on the graph paper to scale (1/8" on paper equals 1' on land). Indicate which way is North.
4. You can send your base map by mail, or scan it and send it digitally.

Some folks like to make their plan in Sketch-up, Illustrator or another computer program and that's fine too. Either way, send me your base plan and we'll get started!

## Examples



