



## A Garden Plan will Cure CHAD

by Dorothy Downing, UC Master Gardener

Do you love plants? Do you love reading about them and looking at pictures of them? Do you love planting and growing them? When you see a plant that captures your attention, do you buy it, even if you don't know where to plant it? Will that plant sit on your porch for a month, waiting for that perfect spot to turn up—and die before you do?

You may suffer from CHAD:  
Compulsive Horticultural  
Acquisition Disorder.

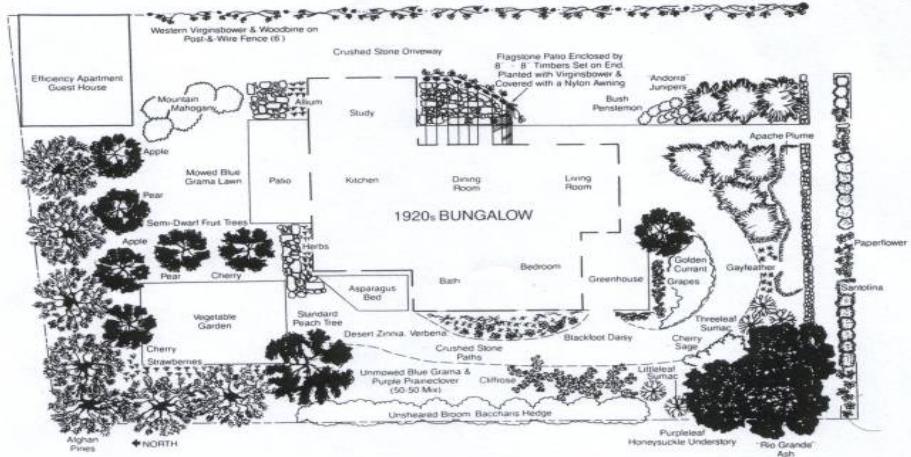
Overcoming CHAD is difficult. It requires self-control and, seeing the big picture. You will need to use your plant acquisition fever and channel that energy into planning your garden. Additionally, it is necessary to come up with a garden design that will force some order and structure onto the chaotic and frenzied practice of selecting plants for your garden. Here is an approach that may help you to overcome CHAD.

A garden is much more than a collection of plants. It is the expression of your ideas and your life; who you are and what you do. Plants, ironically, are an obstacle during the beginning stages of designing. So, hard as it may seem, try to forget about them for a moment. For now, try to think about the space itself, and what you want your garden to contain. Garden design involves conscious decisions and intent. You must have a strong vision of your design in order to make the garden a success. But remember, there are no fixed rules in designing a garden. This is your garden, and it needs to make you happy. When it no longer achieves this, you are free to make whatever changes you wish.

Start with finding out what you like. Grab a friend or two, then go and visit some local gardens to see what might thrive in your garden. Visit your neighbors' gardens, botanical gardens, and public gardens. Buy a book or check one out from the library to help you decide what your garden should include.

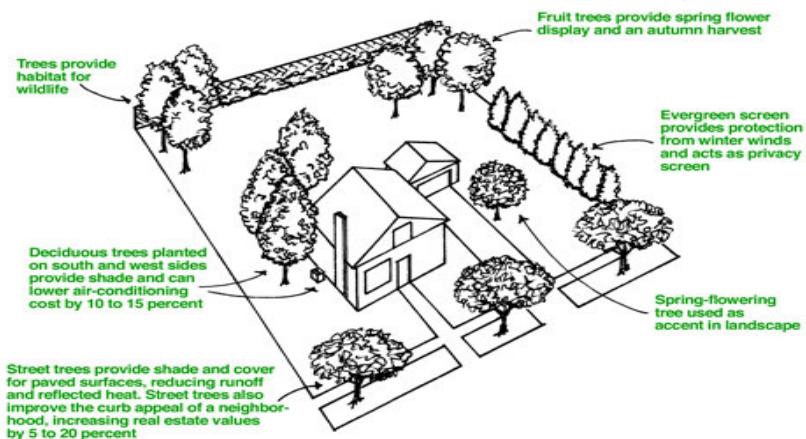
Think about how you move through your garden's spaces and what you do, or would like to do in these spaces. What do you want to see, smell, and feel in the entry area? Think about how you use your garden. What sort of activity will occur in the sitting area? Where do you entertain? Where do the children play? If your pets will be occupying the area, where will they eat, sleep and exercise? Do you need space for a vegetable garden? Do you want to add a water feature?

Define your garden with hardscape and structures. Consider flagstone paths, cobblestone walkways, edged planting beds, picket fences, and arbors. All of this structure helps to form your garden's foundation. The



backbone of your garden comes next. This includes trees, evergreens and shrubs, which all help to define areas. Furthermore, these backbone plants add color, fragrance and texture. Engage the senses. Consider incorporating various contrasting textures through the inclusion of various leaf shapes, bark on trees, running water, pleasant fragrances, eye catching color, shade and sunny areas.

Create a focal point to draw and direct the eye. Every garden, no matter what its size, benefits from a focal point. Without a main feature, your eye flits from plant to plant and section to section. This makes it difficult to truly examine and appreciate the harmony of the garden. A focal point can be created through various methods, such as the use of yard art, a shed, a collection of bird houses, an arbor or a weeping tree.



There is harmony and unity when all the parts of the garden work together as a whole. Using a limited color palette, creating a repetition of plants, colors or structures and a clear focal point can all lend themselves to creating a sense of harmony in your garden. Themed gardens, like white/moonlight gardens, chocolate gardens, hummingbird gardens and cottage gardens all have built-in unity.

Once you have a simple garden plan, you can start collecting what you love, whether it is a stunning plant or an antique watering can. Be flexible; let the design evolve. Since gardening is a living art form, it is constantly changing. Gardens get better over time, with plants filling in, mingling and becoming lusher. And now that you have a garden design, you will be less tempted to buy that irresistible plant on an impulse, because you know that it just doesn't belong in your garden. Once you reach this stage in your level of gardening know-how, you will have overcome CHAD.

*The UC Tulare and Kings County Master Gardeners will be offering hands-on rose pruning demonstrations on Saturday January 10, in Visalia at the Tulare County Courthouse from 10 AM. to 1 PM. Also on Saturday January 10, rose pruning demonstrations will be offered at the Ralph Moore Rose Garden in Visalia, from 12 Noon to 3 PM. In Hanford, rose pruning demonstrations will take place on Monday January 19 from 10 AM to 1 PM at the Old Grangeville Church, located at 14060 Hackett St., Grangeville.*

*Bring your gloves, pruning shears and a small bucket for clippings. Learn while you prune with the Master Gardeners!*

January 8, 2015