RESTORE: Gardens as Restorative Places

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The **six universal design considerations** of *RESTORE: How Green Spaces support Human Restoration* (2025) are a **starting point** for discussions with garden users. By understanding what these design considerations mean for you (or a target user group), you can create or enhance a garden of any scale, type or aesthetic style.

The prompts and questions will guide you to begin exploring what the design considerations may look like, **how they might impact your experience** of a space and how they can help provide autonomy, rest and respite within a planted place. (RESTORE the book provides greater depth of discussion and case study samples for each of the design considerations.)

The mind map templates offered at the end of this handout may be used to begin a visual exploration into personal preferences within this design model. You may also choose to use it in a digital format through image searches, or the old-fashioned way with magazine cut outs. However you choose to explore, discuss and investigate the six design considerations is up to you – I hope the prompts support you on your creative journey. Enjoy your personal space of green respite!



HIERARCHY OF GREEN SPACE ACCESS

1. *Users should **be outdoors**, literally within the green space where they are able to **physically interact** and use **all their senses to experience** the space.*

2. *If #1 is not possible, views to the green space should be provided, allowing users to witness seasonal and temporal changes and aspire to personally experience the space at a future time.*

3. *If #2 is not possible, images of nature-based scenes and natural spaces should be provided in the form of murals, photographs/ posters, paintings and if possible through indoor plants and flowers.*

CHOICE

Control to access diverse spaces to suit capacity; Privacy / Social

VERDANT

70:30 Plants to Hardscape; Habitat; Life Cycle;
Connection from Indoors to Outdoors

SPATIALITY

- Legible Layout
- Refuge & Enclosure (Perceived/Actual Safety)
- Casual Maintenance
- Domestic Atmosphere (Human Scale)

COMFORT

- Sun / Shade
- Seating Diversity
- Natural Materials
- Seasonal Shelter
- Signs of Care

MOVEMENT

- WALK – Gentle Exercise
- Wheeled Access
- Surfaces - 'slow down'
- 2 'escape routes' (bypass route)

SENSUAL

- Fascination (distraction)
- Water
- Soundscape
- Colour
- Memory

CHOICE

What type / level of choice is most important to you?

How can choice give you independence in this space?

How are private and social spaces offered?

What can the experience of transition between spaces be?

Where can you find quiet and calm in this space?



Path networks and width (for passing)
Surface materials

Plantings for stimulation or calming
Accessible plants

Diverse seating
Sun & Shade
Private & Social spaces

Structures of Shelter and Shade

Clear entrances
Flush Thresholds?
Landmarks?

VERDANT

What would 70:30 plants to hardscape look like for you?

Where can the life-cycle be evident in your space?

How can wildlife interactions be supported?

Can the space be viewed and accessed easily from inside?

Where can you witness and create biodiversity?



Paths with soft edges
Surface materials

Diverse Plantings
Habitat creation
Seasonal interest

Insect Hotels?
Bird Baths?
Features near windows

Undercover areas
Seats near plantings
Raised beds

Vertical plantings?
Views from indoors
Evening lights

SPATIALITY

What makes space legible for you? (E.g. open, simple…)

How can refuge (enclosure) be offered in this space?

What are important elements of human scale to you?

What elements give you a sense of safety/refuge?

What are some domestic scale touches that are meaningful to you?



Wider paths (path hierarchy)
Casual Maintenance

Enveloping plantings
Human Scale
Visual Screening

Familiar and domestic features at a human scale

Shade
Shelter structures

Clear entrances
Views that invite exploration

COMFORT

Is shade or sun more important to you?

Where can stopping points be integrated in this space?

Which natural materials do you prefer?

What is a personal touch in the space for you?

What could seasonal shelter be in your space?



Paths easy to walk upon
Natural materials
Care of surfaces

Diverse plantings
Deciduous plants?

Diverse seating
Natural materials

Structures of Seasonal shelter and shade

Flush Thresholds?
Lighting for evening access?

MOVEMENT

How would you like to move through the space?

What can support you to slow down in this space?

How/where can multiple escape routes be included?

What features can impact the experience of walking through the space?

Is there scope to use the space as a form of green exercise?



Path that are easy to move on
Wide paths?
Escape routes

Plantings that don't impede movement
Various levels of plant contact

Features within physical and visual contact to paths

Structures of Seasonal shelter and shade

Flush Thresholds?
Evening access through lighting?

SENSUAL

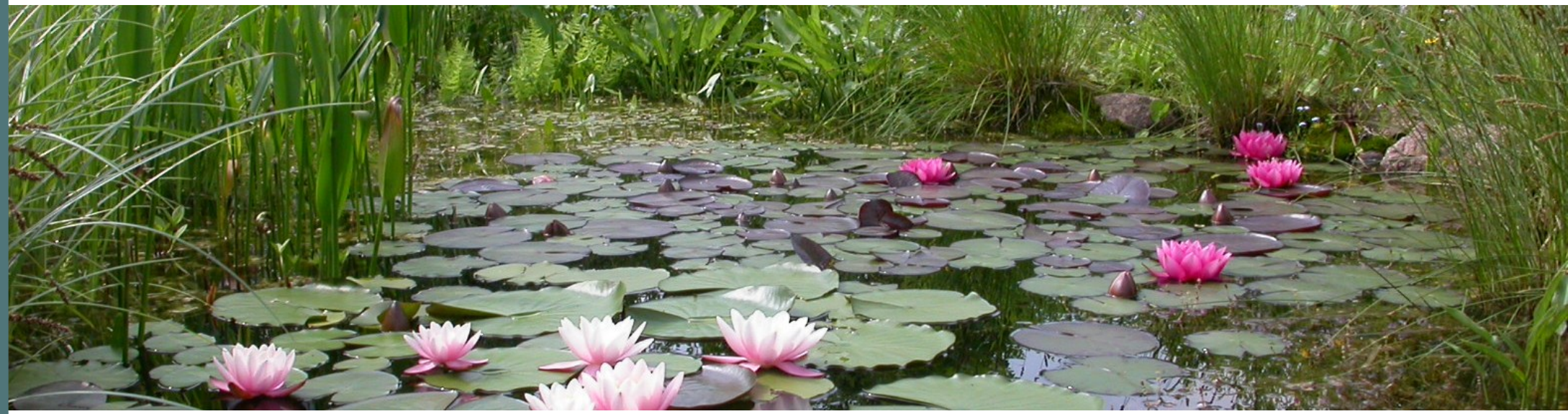
What type / level of sensory stimulation do you prefer?

What stimulates your fascination in a garden?

Which senses would you like to enhance or mute?

What colours and fragrances resonate most for you (memory)?

Could your space incorporate water – How, if so?



Paths with soft edges
Natural materials

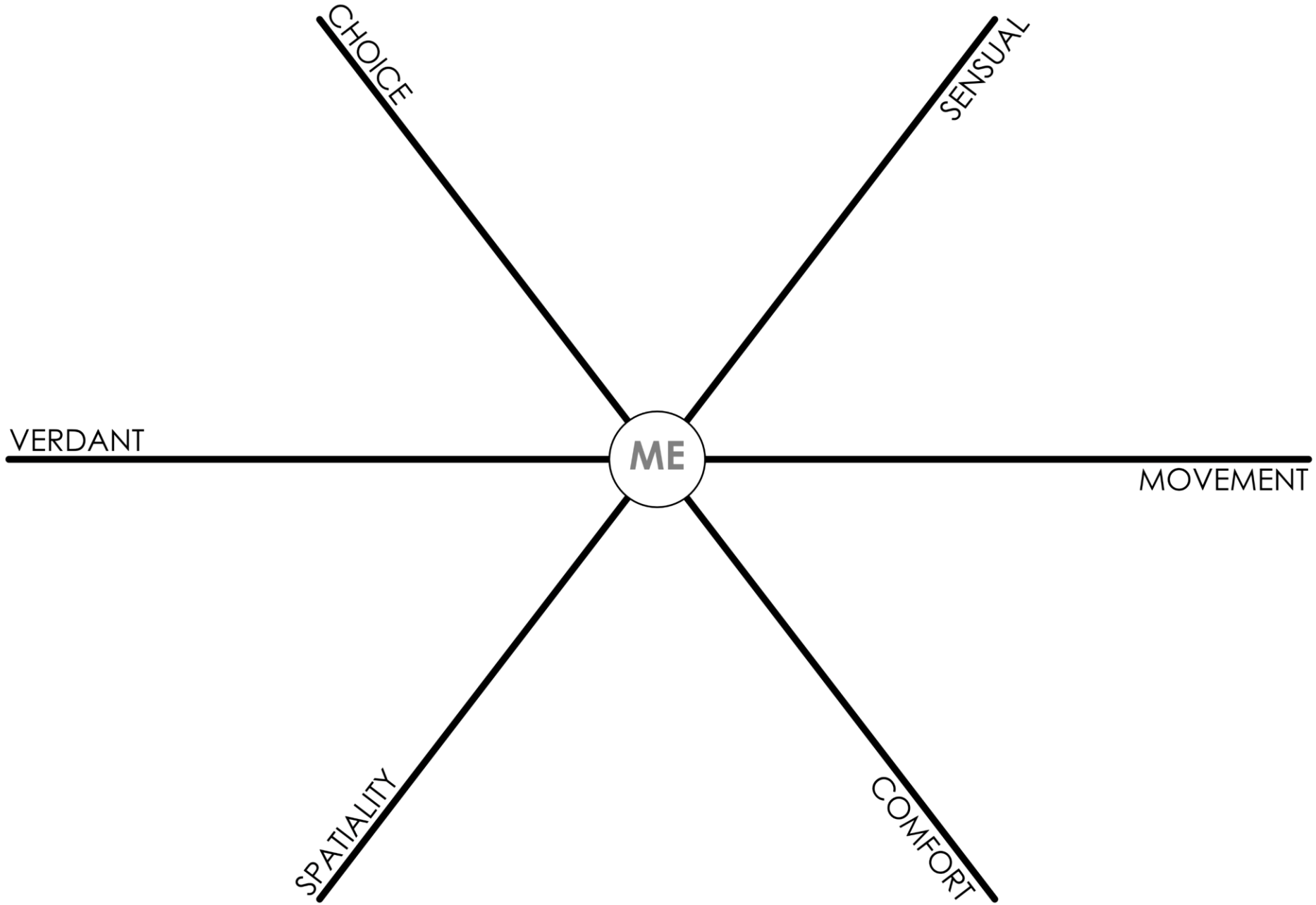
Diverse plantings
Colourful / Monochrome?

Sound elements?
Wildlife habitat?
Familiar features

Water bodies?
Seasonal shelter

Views from indoors
Undercover areas
Evening access?

RESTORE: PERSONAL Design Considerations



RESTORE: PERSONAL Design Considerations

CHOICE	VERDANT	SPATIALITY	COMFORT	MOVEMENT	SENSUAL

DESIGN CONSIDERATIONS MATRIX - TOOL

LEFT Matrix: **Design Consideration Questions** – sample questions to explore when addressing specific user needs. These are a starting point only, with many more questions arising. These questions are useful prior or during conversations with clients, experts and especially users, to move towards the most effective, sustainable and restorative green space design solutions.

RIGHT Matrix: **Practical Design Consideration Overview** – sample overview points to explore when addressing the Design Considerations for specific users. These are a starting prompts only, with many more points arising as the specific site, context, user group and purpose are addressed in more detail during the design process.

CONSIDERATION	How – *Compatibility*	Why – *Effect*	What – *Experience*	When – *Access*	Where – *Context*
CHOICE	What type/ level of choice is important for this user? (e.g. seating, spaces)	How can choice give this user independ-ence?	How are social and private spaces offered to this user?	How are transitions between spaces experienced by this user?	How can this user find quiet and calm places in the space?
VERDANT	How can the 70:30 ratio be provided for this user? (e.g. vertically, planting type)	How is the life cycle evident to this user in the space? (e.g. deciduous trees)	How can wildlife interactions be had by this user? (e.g. water, diverse planting)	Can the space be viewed and entered easily by this user from indoors?	How can signs of biodiversity be witnessed by this user?
SPATIALITY	How can legibility be expressed for this user? (e.g. simple and open, playful/ mysterious)	How can refuge (enclosure) be provided for this user?	What provides elements of a human scale for this user and space?	How does this user feel safe in the space? (e.g. *signs of care, casual maintenance, enclosure)*	How does this user experience the space as 'domestic'?
COMFORT	Does this user require prioritising on shade or sun for comfort?	How are stopping/ resting points for this user integrated? (e.g. seats, armrests, walls)	Which 'natural materials' best support this user? (e.g. gravel, timber boardwalk)	How are 'signs of care' evident to this user? (e.g. sweeping of paths, seasonal decorations)	How can 'seasonal shelter' for this user best be offered?
MOVEMENT	How will this user mainly move through the space?	How can this user avoid or 'slow down'/ focus on sensual awareness?	How can multiple 'escape routes' be included for this user's privacy?	How can indepen-dent access for this user be ensured? (e.g. doors unlocked, walled space)	Can the space offer scope for this user to exercise?
SENSUAL	What level of sensual stimulation is best for this user?	How is this user's fascination stimulated? (e.g. water, wildlife friendly planting)	How are sensual traits enhanced/ muted for this user? (e.g. fragrance, soundscape)	How can colour and fragrance stimulate this user's mood and memory?	How can the space include water for this user? (if appropriate)

DESIGN CONSIDERATION QUESTIONS

CONSIDERATION	PATHS	PLANTINGS	FEATURES	STRUCTURES	ACCESS
CHOICE	Network Simple circuit Wide (access/ passing) Surface materials	Stimulating Calming Movable Physically accessible	Diverse seating Shade Sun traps Private nooks Social spaces	Shelter (e.g. gazebo, summer house) Shade (e.g. sunbrellas, shade sails, trees)	Clear entrances Landmarks Flush thresholds Automatic doors
VERDANT	Soft edges (without impeding movement) Raised edging Surface materials	Diverse 70% vegetation Habitat Seasonal cycles evident	Insect hotels Bird baths Bird houses Features close to windows	Undercover areas (year-round access) Seating near plantings Raised beds	Raised beds Vertical planting Extend access (e.g. evening) Viewed from indoors
SPATIALITY	Wide (access/ passing) Hierarchy Casually maintained	Enveloping Visual screening Human scale	Human scale Domestic and familiar	Shelter (e.g. pavillion, glasshouse) Shade (e.g. trees,arbour, pergola)	Clear entrances Viewed from indoors Views that entice exploration
COMFORT	Easy to walk/ move upon Natural materials (where appropriate) Signs of care (swept, kept clear)	Diverse species, types and habits Deciduous species (seasonal shelter)	Diverse seating Natural materials Seasonal/ cultural signs of care	Seasonal shelter (year-round access, e.g. glasshouse) Shade (e.g. trees, bower)	Level thresholds on doors Automatic doors Lit evening access
MOVEMENT	Easy to walk/ move upon Wheeled access Wide (access/ passing) 2 'escapes routes'	Not impeding movement Diverse levels for physical contact (vertical/raised, lower for wheelchairs)	Within physical and visual reach of paths and seats	Seasonal shelter (to be outside year-round e.g. glasshouse) Shade (e.g. trees, shade sails)	Wheeled access Flush thresholds Automatic doors Evening access (lights)
SENSUAL	Natural Materials (if appropriate, bare foot access) Soft edges (without impeding movement)	Colourful and diverse (where appropriate) Monochrome (to reduce stimulation) Heightens sensual experiences	Sound elements (where appropriate) Wildlife habitat (e.g. Birdsounds) Familiar features	Water bodies Seasonal shelter (to be outside year-round e.g. gazebo)	Extend access (e.g. evening) Viewed from indoors Undercover areas (year-round access)

PRACTICAL DESIGN CONSIDERATION OVERVIEW