

CARIBBEAN LANDSCAPING

Design Principles for Tropical Yards That Work

🌱 SECTION 1 — START WITH THE LAND



Read the site before planting

Visual: Yard diagram with sun, slope, wind arrows

Key Points (Icons + Short Text):

- ☀️ Observe sun (morning vs afternoon)
- 🌬️ Track prevailing wind
- 🌧️ Note drainage paths
- 📐 Respect slope & contours

Rule:

👉 *Design with the land, not against it.*

🌿 SECTION 2 — PLANT IN GROUPS (RULE OF THREE)

Nature never plants in singles.



Diagram: Triangle plant cluster

Labels:

- **Tall Accent** – Cordyline / Palm
- **Mid Layer** – Ixora / Hibiscus
- **Filler** – Croton / Shrub

Why it works:

- Depth
- Balance
- Natural flow

🌿 SECTION 3 — LAYER YOUR PLANTS

Just like the rainforest

Visual: Cross-section of garden layers

Layers (Bottom → Top):

1. Groundcover (Wedelia / Periwinkle)
2. Shrubs (Ixora / Croton)
3. Small trees (Frangipani / Pigeon pea)
4. Canopy (Palm / Poui)

Benefit:

- ✓ Shade
- ✓ Cooler yards
- ✓ Less weeds
- ✓ Better airflow

SECTION 4 — HARD + SOFT BALANCE

Plants need structure



Hardscape:

- Stone paths
- Stepping stones
- Gravel edges
- Seating areas

Softscape:

- Plants
- Mulch
- Lawns
- Living borders

Rule:

 *Too much concrete = heat. Too much plant = chaos.*

☂ SECTION 5 — DESIGN FOR RAIN (CRITICAL)

Rain is your biggest force

Visual: Water arrows moving through yard

Smart Moves:

- Gravel bases
- Sloped beds
- Mulch everywhere
- Avoid flat concrete traps

Callout:

⚠ *Most Caribbean gardens fail because water has nowhere to go.*

🌸 SECTION 6 — USE LOCAL, HARDY PLANTS

Low effort. High reward.



Great Choices:

- Ixora
- Croton
- Yellow Elder
- Hibiscus

- Palms (Royal, Foxtail, Christmas)
- Sea Grape (coastal)

Why locals win:

- Less water
- Less pests
- Less maintenance

SECTION 7 — MULCH & COMPOST

Feed the soil, not just the plant

Visual: Mulched bed + compost pile

Mulch options:

- Wood chips
- Coconut husk
- Dry leaves

Benefits:

- Moisture control
- Cooler soil
- Weed suppression
- Healthier plants

🌿 SECTION 8 — EDIBLE + ORNAMENTAL MIX

Beauty that feeds you



Examples:

- Chives as borders
- Lemongrass as screens
- Pigeon peas as shrubs
- Peppers & herbs near kitchen

🌿 EDIBLE RULE OF THREE — DIAGRAM 1

Kitchen Garden Cluster (Near the House)



Triangle Layout

Lemongrass (Tall / Screen)



Hot Peppers
(Fruit Crop)

Chives
(Edible Border)

Plant Labels

- **Lemongrass** – Tall, aromatic screen; wind break
- **Hot Peppers** – Medium-height fruiting plant
- **Chives** – Low edible border and ground cover

Why This Works

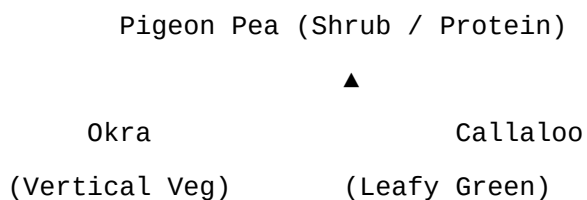
- Height + harvest + border in one cluster
- Strong scent deters pests
- Perfect near kitchen path or back door

🌿 EDIBLE RULE OF THREE — DIAGRAM 2

Backyard Protein & Greens Cluster



Triangle Layout



Plant Labels

- **Pigeon Pea** – Tall edible shrub; nitrogen fixer
- **Okra** – Upright vegetable crop
- **Callaloo** – Low, leafy green ground layer

Why This Works

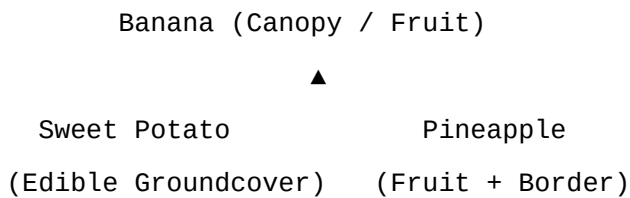
- Mimics natural food forest layering
- Improves soil fertility
- High food yield in small space

🌸 EDIBLE RULE OF THREE — DIAGRAM 3

Fruit Tree Guild (Food Forest Style)



Triangle Layout



Plant Labels

- **Banana** – Tall fruit canopy; creates shade
- **Sweet Potato** – Edible groundcover; soil protection
- **Pineapple** – Low-maintenance fruit border

Why This Works

- Shade + ground cover + fruit
- Suppresses weeds naturally
- Excellent for slopes and sunny yards

OPTIONAL MINI DIAGRAM (BONUS)

Herb Rule of Three (Container or Raised Bed)

Basil



Thyme

Rosemary

Simple. Productive. Beautiful.

TEACHING CALLOUT (Great for Your Website)

Edible Rule of Three:

Combine **one tall food plant**, **one medium producer**, and **one low edible cover**.

Arrange in a triangle for balance, airflow, and continuous harvest.

CARIBBEAN-SPECIFIC EDIBLE TIPS

- Space wider for airflow (humidity control)
- Mulch heavily
- Rotate fast growers (callaloo, chives)
- Compost feeds these systems exceptionally well

SECTION 9 — OUTDOOR LIVING SPACES

The Caribbean lives outside

Visual: Veranda + garden connection

Design ideas:

- Shaded seating
- Garden paths to fruit trees
- Soft lighting
- Breezeways

SECTION 10 — THE NATURAL FLOW

Closed-loop living

Diagram: Circular flow

Kitchen → **Compost** → **Garden** → **Plate**

Final Message:

 *What you return to the soil comes back stronger.*

INFOGRAPHIC DESIGN NOTES (FOR YOUR SITE)

Format:

- Vertical infographic (ideal for blog + Pinterest)
- Sections clearly separated
- Icons + minimal text

Colors:

- Leaf green
- Earth brown
- Sky blue
- Banana yellow accents

Fonts:

- Headings: Poppins / Montserrat
- Body: Nunito / Open Sans
-

Flowering Focal Cluster (Front Yard Friendly)



Hibiscus (Tall / Focal)



Ixora (Flowering Mass) Croton (Color Foliage)

Plant Labels

- Hibiscus – Tall focal plant, large flowers
- Ixora – Medium shrub, dense blooms
- Croton – Medium shrub, colorful foliage

Why This Works:

- One focal point
- Two supporting plants
- Flowers + foliage contrast
- Ideal near entrances or walkways

🌴 RULE OF THREE — DIAGRAM 2

Tropical Texture & Height (Modern Look)

Triangle Layout



Foxtail Palm (Vertical Accent)

Philodendron
(Broad Leaf Texture)

Lomandra
(Grass Texture)

Plant Labels

- **Foxtail Palm** – Tall vertical anchor
- **Philodendron** – Broad-leaf tropical texture
- **Lomandra / Mondo Grass** – Fine-texture base

Why This Works

- Strong height contrast
- Mix of leaf sizes
- Clean, modern tropical feel
- Great for contemporary homes

🌸 RULE OF THREE — DIAGRAM 3

Low Border / Pathway Cluster



Triangle Layout

Cordyline (Accent Color)
▲
Ixora (Flowering Base) Ixora (Flowering Base)

Plant Labels

- **Cordyline (Ti Plant)** – Color accent, upright form
- **Ixora (Left)** – Flowering base shrub
- **Ixora (Right)** – Repetition for balance

Why This Works

- Repetition without stiffness
- Clear visual rhythm
- Excellent for borders, fences, and paths



QUICK TEACHING BOX

Rule of Three Tip:

Use **1 accent plant** and **2 supporting plants** with different heights or textures. Arrange them in a triangle—not a straight line—for natural balance.