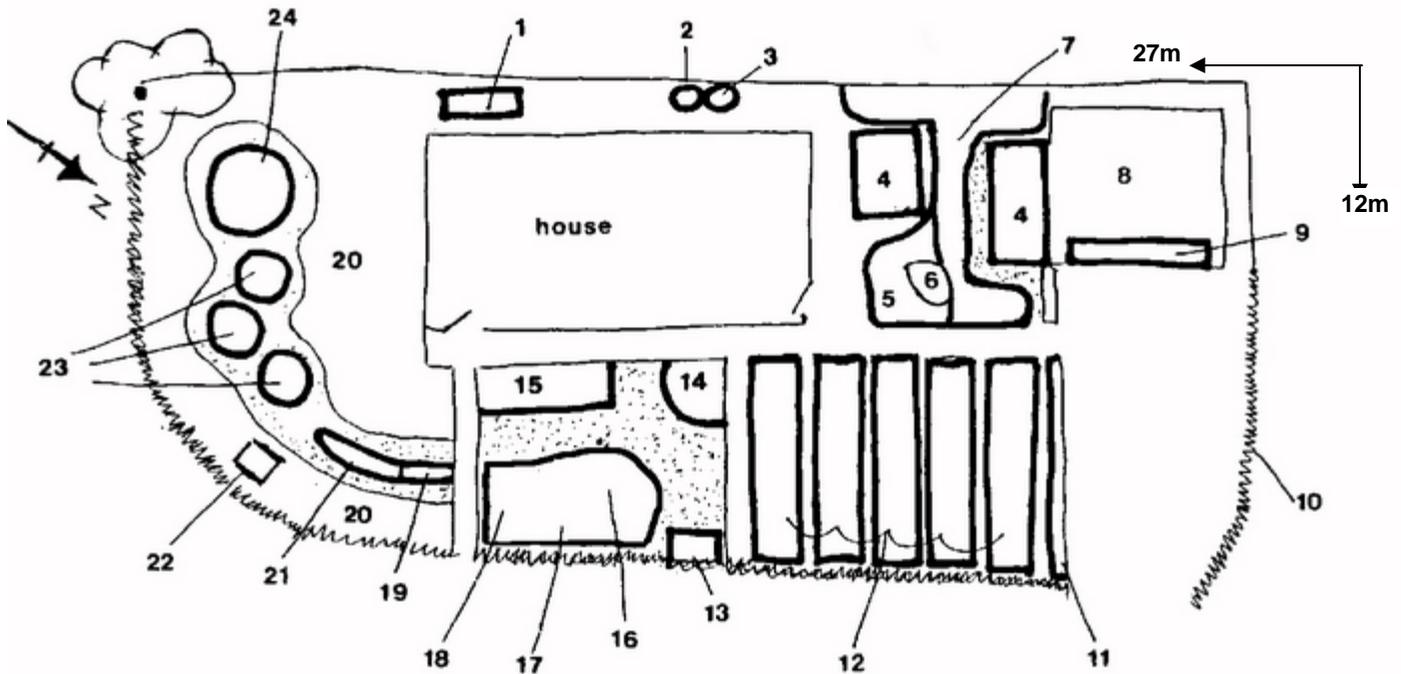


# THE NATURAL GARDEN - A PRODUCTIVE PARTNERSHIP WITH NATURE



- |                  |                         |                        |                           |
|------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. leafmold heap | 7. wild area            | 13. double compost bin | 19. upright clay pipes    |
| 2. water butt    | 8. garage               | 14. herb spiral        | 20. herbaceous, etc.      |
| 3. comfrey butt  | 9. tree & shrub nursery | 15. rhubarb & nettles  | 21. seed scatter bed      |
| 4. greenhouse    | 10. conifer hedge       | 16. raspberries        | 22. cold frame            |
| 5. rockery       | 11. cane & soft fruit   | 17. spray chrysanthums | 23. wig-wam beds          |
| 6. wildlife pond | 12. raised beds - veg.  | 18. hardy geraniums    | 24. native tree wild area |

Not all gardens are **consciously** designed. In most cases, they **evolve** over years, incorporating lessons **learnt** and including ever more **ambitious** schemes for diversity. Our aim for them in the longterm is to assist us in our desire for **fulfilment** and for a measure of **self-reliance** within our own part of the **natural world**.

True garden design is often a series of **informed choices**. A grass lawn has little purpose if it is never used; its maintenance is costly in fossil fuels and our time; and there is rarely anything else growing in it except grass! I had lawn on three sides of my house (shown above) but, over time, it has been turned into **productive areas** that grow food, provide ornamentation and also give wildlife refuge. Food production is only a proportion of the garden as the other areas are needed

to create the **natural balance** in pests and predator insects that is fundamental in natural food production.

The garden has **essential structures** that are needed to support its long-term fertility, and to be able make full use of all the **space** and **resources**. This is true whatever the mix is of food production to ornamental or wildlife areas. Thus we need a **compost bin**, **water butts**, a **leafmold stack**, **cane wigwams** and **bags of manure**. Some gardeners tend to **hide** these away at

the **bottom** of the garden. However, we should recognise their importance in supporting our garden and **position** them where they have **easy access**, and are **close** to their **point of use**.

We should also recognise that **diversity** is the key to **sustainability**. The larger the **range** of plants grown - particularly mixing in some **native plants** - the greater the chance that the **forces of nature** will be **on our side**. For thousands of years, nature has **balanced** its own economy - **predators** keep pests at bay and diseases **die out** as the host is removed. So we give our garden **flowering** shrubs, trees and plants that not only lift our own **spirits** but play **host** to the **insects, birds** and **mammals** that we wish to share in our part of the **natural world**.

For some creatures, an **undisturbed refuge** is the bribe to attract them in to our

garden and keep them there. A small wild area of **native** trees, with **shade** and **ground cover** underneath, as well as **rotting** logs and **bark**. And a wildlife **pond** containing **oxygenating** plants and surrounded by ground cover for the **emerging** frogs. These provide the **natural habitats** that the **untamed** world is familiar with. What we are trying to do is create a garden where the natural world is **welcome** and where we produce **harmony** and **mutual** benefit.

