

## ECOLOGICAL / SITE CONTEXT

- Regional character, model natural areas
- Habitat / ecological corridors to support your local watershed and community
- Awareness about and monitoring for invasive plants and animals in the area
- What are neighboring properties like?
  - Take advantage of borrowed views
  - Objectionable views/noise to screen

## SOLAR PATTERNS

- Pathway of sun throughout day and changes with the seasons
- Shadow from building, canopy of trees blocks direct sun
- Trees vary in the way they affect filtered light to ground below

## SOIL

Soil may vary within the yard, we know that native plants are adapted to all kinds of soils. Could be an opportunity for biodiversity. Have you ever really studied the soil found throughout your yard?

- What kinds exist: sand, silt, clay, or combination (loam)
- Is it healthy with a lot of organisms, do you allow leaves, twigs, etc to shade, then biodegrade and feed them? Take a look! Any invasive jumping worms?
- Compaction/Erosion? Investigate reasons why

## EXISTING VEGETATION ASSESSMENT

- Health and conditions of native trees, shrubs, wildflowers, grasses, ferns, sedges & groundcovers. Are they thriving, providing food and shelter to animals, improving water quality and other ecosystem services?
- Are non-natives providing ecosystem services or other desirable purpose (aesthetic, screening, windblock, shade, etc). If not, opportunity to remove and replace with site appropriate native species
- Invasive species: become familiar with kinds as well as their behavior: how the plants spread, techniques / methods of removal and monitoring

*Note: Creating a diagram or drawing of your own, using Google Maps or aerial photo, property lines, topography, etc. (found via county property search) can be very useful*

## HYDROLOGY

Monitor the way rainwater flows on the site. During a rain event do you see places to increase more natural infiltration rather than sheeting on the surface towards a low spot?

What other drainage patterns do you notice? Is water collecting and not draining, investigate why: compaction, high water table, clay? Have you observed that surface root competition from trees or shrubs dries soil quickly?

## SITE ANALYSIS

Ways to observe the conditions in your yard to better understand all the potential it holds for improved ecological function

Created by The Garden Guru,  
The Living Garden & Revery,  
(April 2023) for:



RIVER CITY (Grand Rapids, MI)