

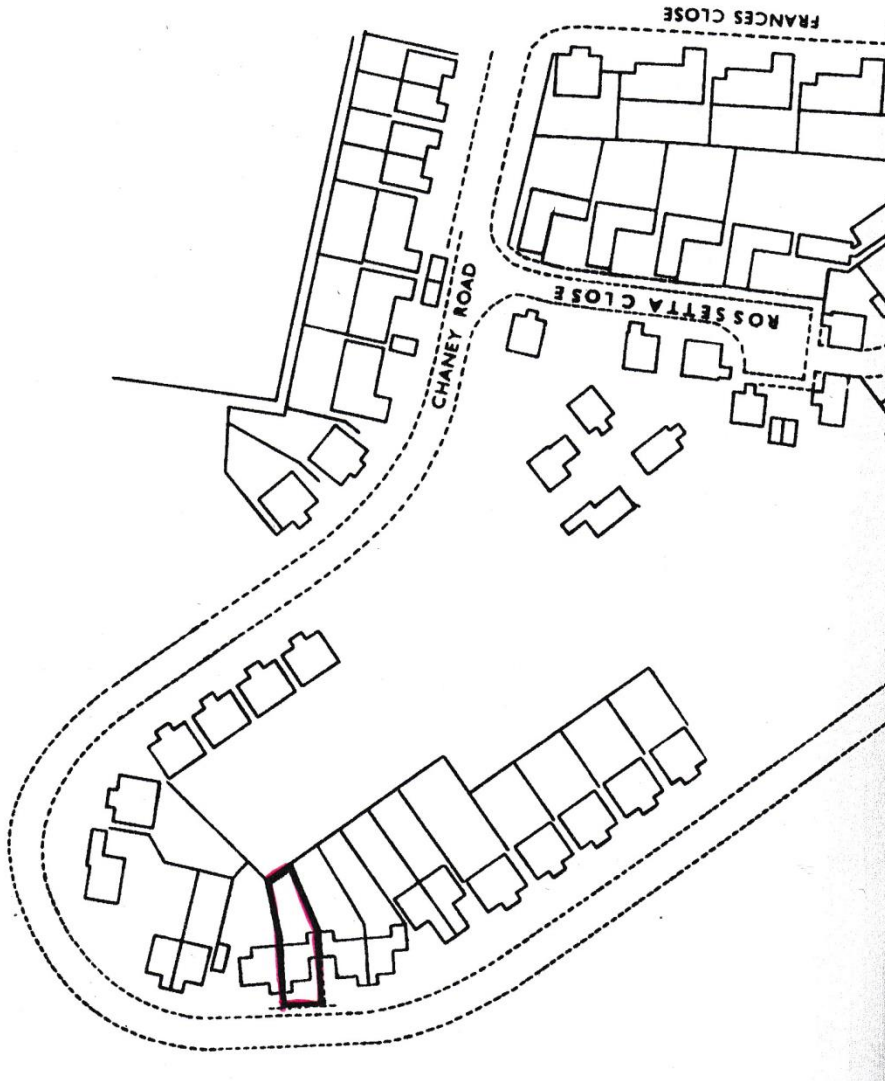
Lazy Greedy Backyard Gardening

A PDC Project

Sonja Eisenbeiss



Property



- semi-detached house with attached garage on the right and cloakroom extension in the front
- driveway in front of the garage
- small front garden to the left of the driveway
- project: back garden

Previously

- back garden accessible via door from living room & door from garage
- water outlet inside the garage, next to front door
- small compost heap in corner between fence & garage
- surrounded by wood-pannel fences with wooden posts on sides & overgrown Leylandii hedge at the back
- lawn on the right, mixed borders on left and back
- small wooden play house in right back corner
- initial development: soil improvement through slightly raised beds for lawn and borders (with some initial attempts at Huegelkultur), with thin wooden planks and sicle-shaped path between lawn and borders

First Steps: Garden Layout

- back garden accessible via door from living room & door from garage (= craft/utility room), with new outdoor water outlet next to back door of garden
- removal of Leylandii hedge & unused play house
- 180cm high stronger wood-pannel fences with concrete posts for better wind protection on sides & back
- reduction of garden sloping through new steps:
 - ca 70cm difference between the top end of the garden path & the lower end of the path (at stairs to the house)
 - patio connecting house and garage, separated from the higher garden area through a low wall, with two steps going up to the garden (60cm high)

Positives

- manageable size for one person
- appropriate sun light for vegetables and herbs
- views from living room and upstairs guest room & study
- direct access from living room through French doors
- access through garage for soil & plant deliveries, etc.
(though limited by size of back door to the garden)
- wall separating patio from garden and catching some of the slope already in place

Challenges: Landscaping

- poor soil quality (fast draining, lack of organic matter):
 - raised beds with food-compatible railway sleepers
 - ericaceous compost
 - top soil + mushroom compost + manure
- stumps from previous Leylandii hedge at the back end
 - double-height raised beds with ericaceous compost
- recurring wind damage to wood panels near the back
 - Stronger panels and concrete posts plus concrete slab base
- less sun on the patio from mid day, resulting in moss growth & slippery surface, plus leaves from trees
 - replacement of decking with natural sand stone
 - reduction in number of planters for easier cleaning

Challenges: Wild Life

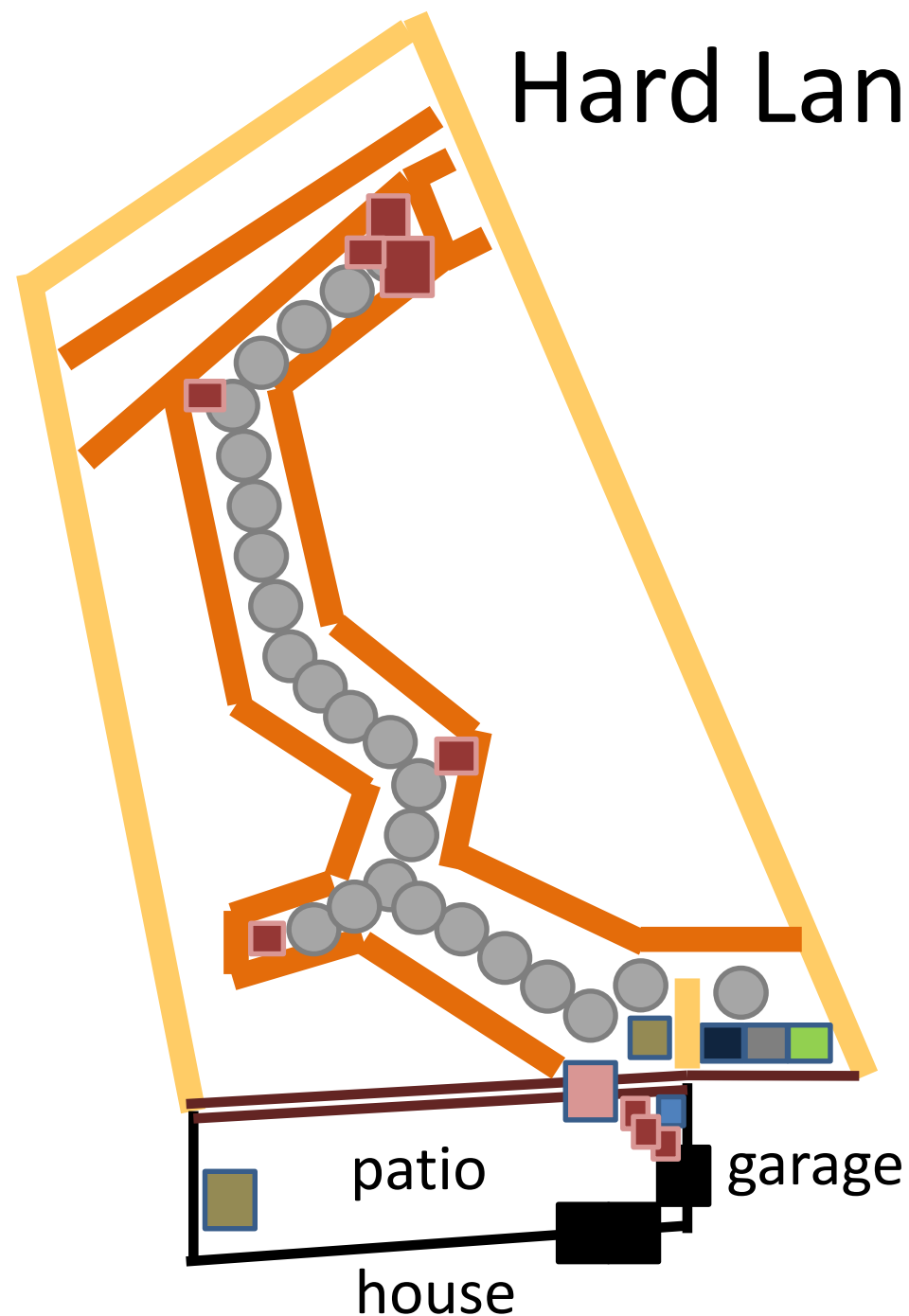
- Unusually high numbers of slugs & snails
 - plants that are less attractive to slugs & snails
 - Barriers
 - wire/copper cloches, gutter brushes, etc.)
 - Nepalese creeping raspberries
 - gravel path
 - hand removal
 - leaving areas with elevated old stepping stones etc.
for toads, frogs from neighbouring garden ponds
- Large number of visiting cats
 - no soil left empty for long
 - wire/copper cloches for seed beds
 - no bird feeders







Hard Landscaping



- doors (75cm garage door, 120cm French door)
- 180 cm high wood panelling w concrete posts & panels
- H60 brick wall
- raised bed (H20 W10 wall)
- Gravel path
- 2 steps (H60 D80)
- mains water outlet
- rectangular wooden planter with 160 cm trellis
- Ceramic planters
- 900l compost bin
- 190l water butt
- Tool storage box



Users, People Care & Fare Shares

- house owner:
 - one person
 - gardening experience
- others:
 - occasional entertaining in the garden
 - sharing of flowers and produce with house guests and friends

Cut Flowers (People Care & Fair Shares)



Forget-me-not, primula, sweet cicely (flowers & leaves), fennel

Functions, Needs & Wishes

- food production (fruit, leafy veg, herbs)
- view from the house (living & guest room, study)
- fragrance and beauty
- pollinator friendly, but mosquito repellent (lemon balm)
- a path with changing views for inspiration
- occasional cut flowers
- a small multifunctional space:
 - entertaining (tables & chairs stored in garage)
 - laundry drying (washing line installed plus fold-out)
 - relaxation (large outdoor bean bag in garage)
 - connection between the house and craft/utility room
 - potting area
 - potential for the creation of a conservatory (patio)

Budget and Maintenance Time

- about £5.000 for
 - hard landscaping (raised beds, fences)
 - top soil, gravel, compost, manure
 - plants (two small trees, many herbs and some vegetable plants already there)
- planters and hand tools already available and sufficient
- about 5 hours on average a week time for planting, maintenance & harvesting
- frequent periods of absence, typically during the school holidays and in May & June (from a few days to 1 month)

Zones

- General Design Questions:
 - How often I need to *use* the element?
 - How often I need to *service* the element?
- Specific Design Question for this project:
Can some zones be realised in other areas?
 - the front garden
 - the community allotment in the village (ca. 15min)

Zones

- The back garden itself and the front garden mix elements from zones 1 and 2, with small areas of Zone 5:
 - on the right edge of the back garden, hidden behind screens, trees, and bean/pea trellis
 - wild life stack hidden behind large pink berry planters
- Zones 3-4 are realised elsewhere:
 - the community allotment in the village (ca. 15min)
 - blackberries for foraging around the village

Wind

- relatively sheltered
- in particular closer to the house
- shelter provided by newly installed higher and more stable fences with concrete posts instead of the earlier lighter fence with wooden posts

Water

- water butt for garage roof (proven sufficient most of the year, except for planting time in summer), option for having a water butt for main roof in the front garden
- water outlet on garage side wall, linked to self-retracting hose on garage back wall
- fast draining soil, improved through adding top soil with mushroom compost, manure, and garden compost
- dry spot in corner between patio and house (on the left side viewed from the house), made easily accessible for pouring out water from the house (produce-washing water, left-over tea, cafetiere, etc.)

Sun

- on patio early in the day
- at the far end of the garden by sunset
- shade from fences, house, garage
- patio shaded by all of them later in the day, plus shade from the 60cm wall to the garden

Soil & Fertilizer

- large plastic compost container in corner between fence and garage wall, behind trellis
- using alkanet and forget-me-not as cover crop
- occasional use of organic chicken manure
- mini "Huegelkultur" with ericaceous compost in large planters: much better results for pink berries than planting in regular raised bed with ericaceous compost



The small pink berry planted in ericaceous compost does not look too bad - until you compare it to the same plants planted on the same day in large planters with sticks and branches at the bottom, topped with other plant materials and deep layer of ericaceous compost



Challenge: Pretty vs. Useful

- Utility corner: hiding water butt, tool box, pots, and compost heap behind a fence panel that extends the wall of the garage
- Trellis panels also used to screen off utility corner, with the same type of panels used on fence walls and in planters to achieve visual coherence
- Repeating plants for coherence (campanula, sweet cicely, blackberries, wine berries, geraniums, rhubarb, fennel)
- Less attractive vegetables on allotment (e.g. carrots, leeks, potatoes)
- Zone 5 mini-areas on edges and behind larger plants



Colour Scheme

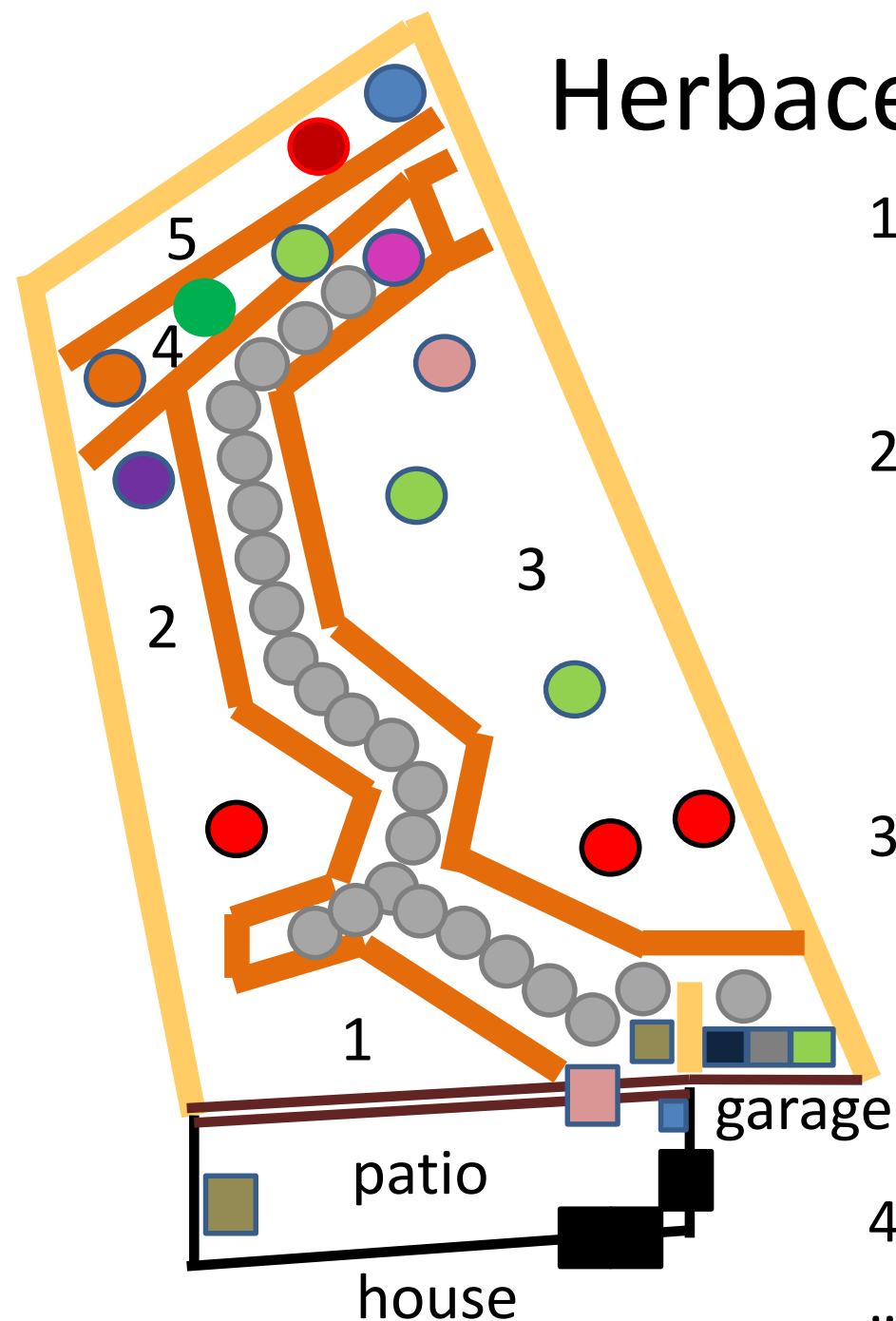
- fresh yellows and blues in (early) spring (e.g. daffodils, primula, forget-me-not)
- calming colours in summer and autumn (white, purple, blue, soft pink)
- no orange, warm/fiery red, maroon
- leaf colours used in addition to flowers, with:
 - silvery/grey colours & variegation close to house
 - lime-green and red farther away, against light-coloured fence





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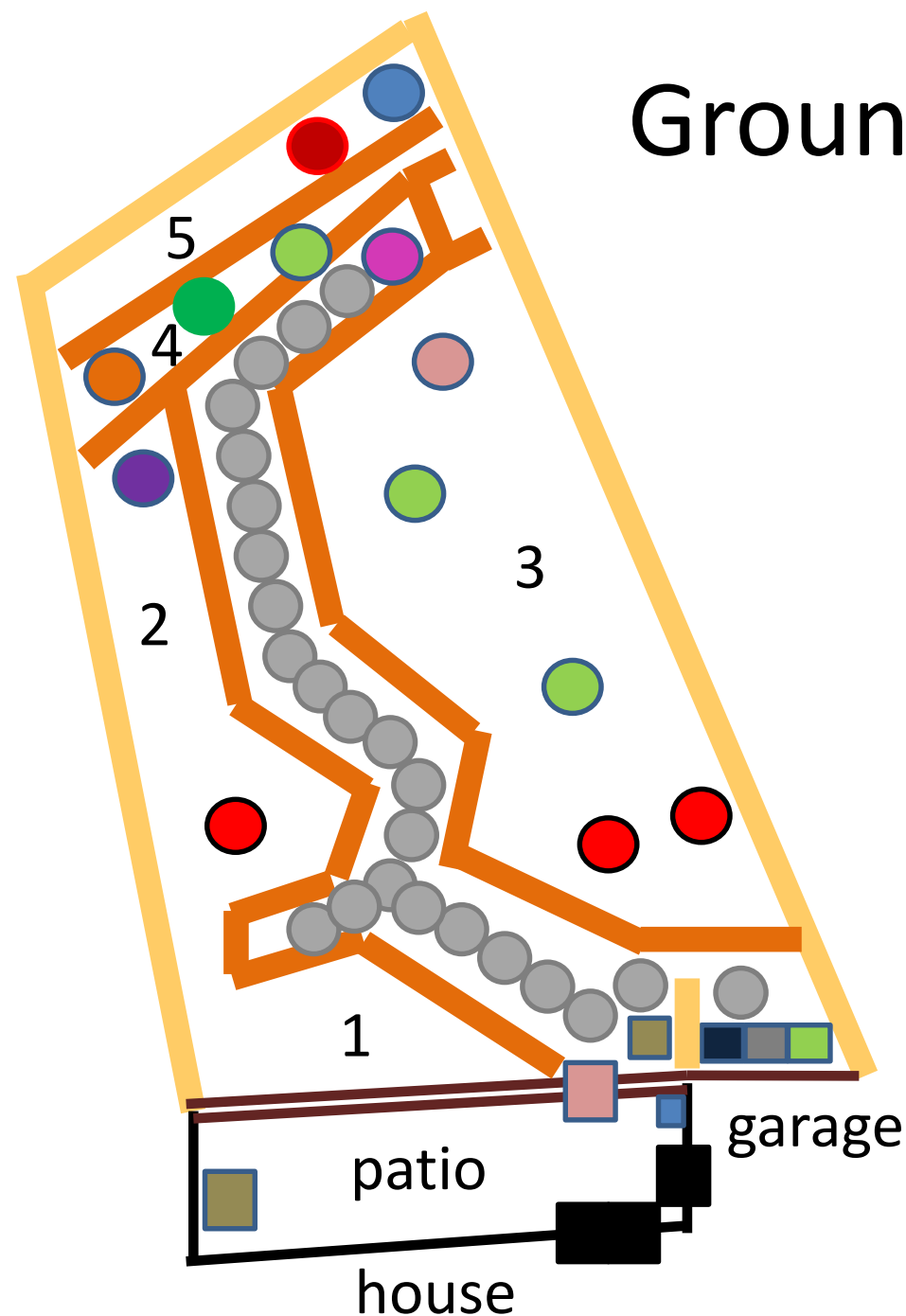
Herbaceous & Roots



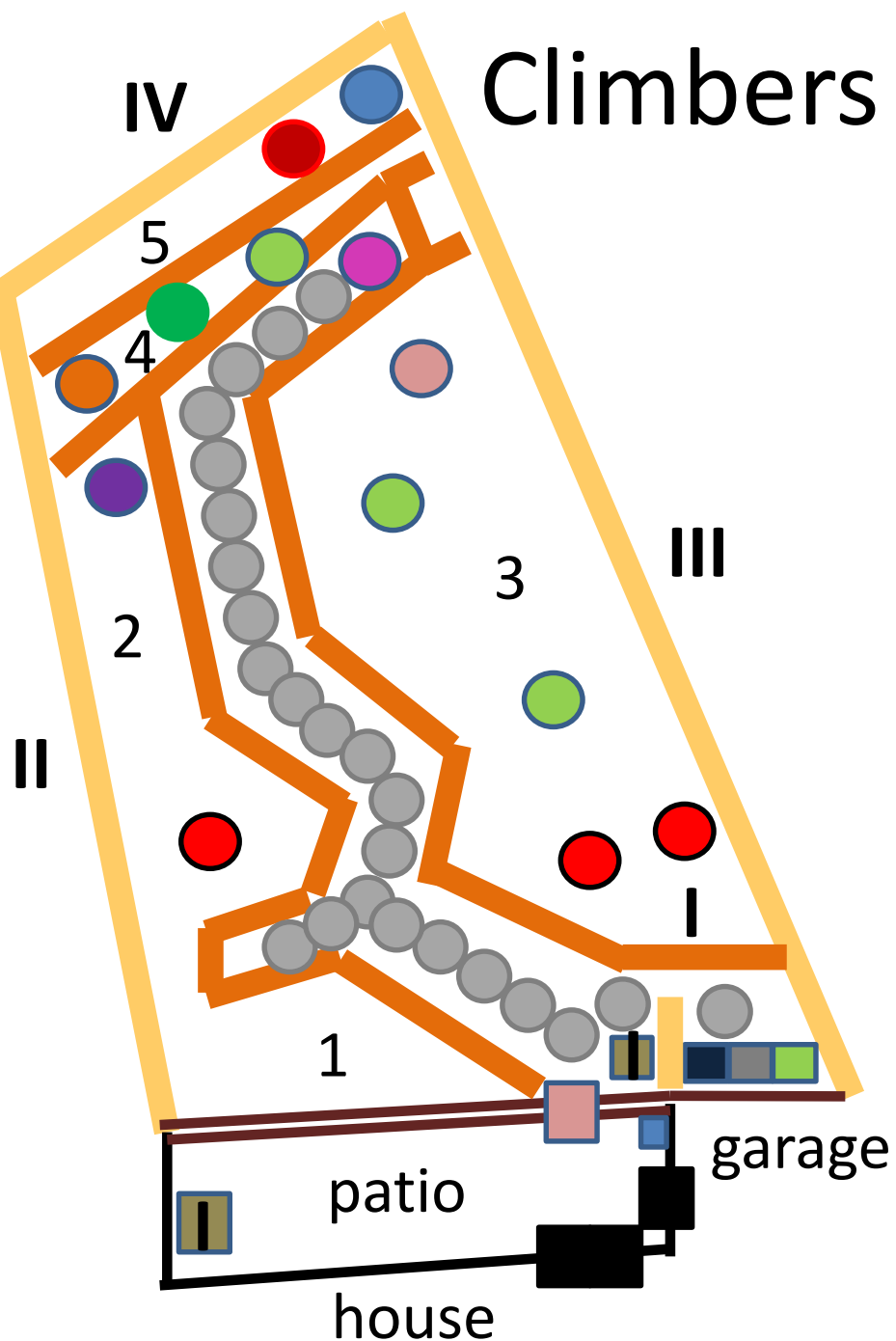
1. Rhubarb, chives, lavender, rosemary, peppermint, oregano, curry plant, leafy greens
2. Rhubarb, chard, perennial cauliflower, lavender, mallow, lemon balm, fennel, foxglove, sage, campanula, dyer's alkanet, onions, sweet cicely,...
3. Geranium, fennel, parsley, tansy, oregano, peppermint, sweet cicely, dyer's alkanet..., edged w. lavender & campanula; seedbed for leafy greens with cloches
4. + 5. Aquilegia, red orach
... forget-me-not (everywhere!)

Ground Cover

1. Dead nettle, viola
2. Camomile lawn
3. Camomile lawn & wild strawberries, bugle
4. & 5. Nepalese raspberries



Climbers / Vertical



- I. Beans & peas (on trellis, in large wooden planters as well as in bed 3)
- II. Japanese wineberries
- III. Thornless blackberries
- IV. Thornless blackberries & golden hops









The Problem is the Solution

- self-seeding Forget-me-nots and Dyer's Alkanet
 - early pollinator, gap filler and cover crop, to be composted after going to seed, cut flowers from forget-me-nots and textile dye from Alkanet
- Angelica, initially planted as gap filler leaving lots of hard-to-compost hollow stems
 - material for insect-hotel (with hair bands and plant support surplus to demand), placed behind large planters at the end of the garden
- nettles & lambs quarters
 - Harvested as food, ideally when small
- self-seeding plants in gravel path
 - Easy to find and relocate or give away

Star Plant: Perennial Cauliflower



Star Plant: *Campanula Poscharskyana*



- edible leaves & flowers
- long flowering season
- evergreen
- weed suppressing
- spreading quickly
- cut flowers for small bouquets
- attractive to beneficial insects
- drought and wetness resistant
- sun to dappled shade
- easy to divide or transplant

Star Plant: Sweet Cicely



- edible flowers, leaves, seeds, roots
- aniseed taste, sweetener for rhubarb, etc.
- self-seeding
- weed-suppressing
- attractive to beneficial insects (e.g. hoverflies)
- attractive most of the year due to feathery leaves and flowers & seed stands (cut and come again)

What did not Work

- Honey suckle or honey berries, cranberries, Chilean guavas (stayed small or died)
- Best-performing fuchsias ("Display", with great berries and flowers) not coming back after the winter
- Lime-green leaved fuchsias growing very well in front garden, but not coming back after the winter in back garden

Experiment: Growing from Scraps



- Celery sometimes works, but not always.
- Final size and success rate are still unknown.
- Leek or spring onions sometimes regrow, but very weak.

Things to Do

- better pruning of trees
- more wild life stacks & shelter
- Planters on patio for greens & fuchsia
(after traveling time)
- water butt in front garden for main roof
- drought-resistant hanging baskets
(e.g. sedum & sempervivum)
- attractive perennial tubers
- more late-blooming plants
(e.g. sedum, dahlias with edible tubers)

