# Site Analysis: Creating a Base Map

Once you've picked your garden site it can be helpful to create a base map for your site. This will help you to identify what features are already there and analyze how best to fit your garden into the existing landscape.

Step 1: Learn your *pace.*

To simplify measuring your garden site and determining various distances it is helpful to first learn your *pace.* Start by laying a measuring tape out on the ground. To determine your pace start at one end of the measuring tape with your feet together, take one normal walking step with your left foot, then your right; bring your feet together. Wherever your feet land equals one pace.

Step 2: Measure your garden site boundary.

Pace the length of your potential garden site. Count the number of paces you walked, then multiply the number of paces by the length of one pace. This is should give you your boundary length measurement.

Step 3: Create a map scale.

Draw the length of the boundary on a piece of paper. Create a map scale by dividing the actual length of the boundary by the length of the boundary line drawn on the paper.

Step 4: Continue to measure and record.

Pace the next boundary of the property from the end point of the first boundary measured. Roughly estimate the angle between one boundary and the next. Record both measurements on your base map. Repeat until all the site's boundaries are recorded.

<u>Step 5:</u> Record cardinal directions.

Stand at a junction of one of the boundaries and use a compass to determine the direction of magnetic north.  Record this on your base map.

<u>Step 6:</u> Fill in the site.

Walk the site; as you go, mark the various landscape elements you notice (some examples are given below).  You may want to loosely pace out the location of these elements in relation to the closest garden site boundary.  Use symbols to record all significant elements on your base map.

- Vegetation (bushes, trees, grasses, etc.)
- Rocks
- Wet areas, streams
- Sloped areas (rough degree & direction slope is facing)
- Buildings
- Parking areas
- Sidewalks and pathways
- Playgrounds
- Playing fields
- Water sources
- Drains and sewers
- Fences

- Movement through landscape (signs of foot traffic outside of designated walkways)
- Wildlife habitat
- Signs of wildlife
- Sunny areas
- Shady areas
- Potential problem areas (erosion, poor drainage, heavy foot traffic, use of herbicides, pesticides, or other pollutants)
- Other elements (fire hydrants, lampposts, trash cans, etc.)

**Resources used:**

Kiefer, J. and Kemple, M. (1998). *Digging Deeper: Integrating youth gardens into schools and communities: A Comprehensive Guide.*  Montpelier, VT: Food Works, Common Roots Press.

Weiland, L. (2012). *Community Garden Connections Education Manual: A year-round manual for guiding the educational growth of garden leaders.*  Community Garden Connections, Antioch University New England.