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How to Go About Designing Your Landscape

Common Landscape Design Features

If you want to build an attractive landscape, but do not where to begin, there are plenty of common landscape design ideas and features available for you to gain inspiration. You can use the ideas yourself or add a little twist to make the landscape design all your own. There are any number of conventional landscape ideas that can help you get started on your own projects and provide inspiration for future projects.

Some of the most common landscape design features are decks and patios. These can either be professionally installed or you can build one yourself. Patios and decks provide a great deal of enjoyment on many levels as part of the use of space in the landscape design. You can use decks and patios for family gatherings or for entertaining.

They can also be used to great effect as places to just sit and relax and enjoy. While a basic square shape is the most common of these landscape features, it is also possible to get them in different shapes, depending on your preferences and your needs. However, if you care for your landscape yourself, the square is very convenient for other activities, such as mowing and trimming the lawn.

Rock gardens are features that are rising in popularity as well. These landscape features can provide a great deal of attractiveness, but make use of fewer plants. Landscapes that include rock gardens need less water and less attention. Additionally, the plants that often go with rock gardens are usually hardier and need a little less care. These are easy to care for, and can save money. Additionally, it is possible to build your own rock garden in the landscape, saving you even more money.

English cottage gardens are known for their lack of formality. There is no rigidity in their designs, and because they are more or less allowed to “just grow” require less maintenance than some other types of gardens. These are common gardens because they evoke a sense of charm. They are most common in backyard landscaping, for those who want to enjoy the garden and show an informal sense of elegance while entertaining.

In the United States, of course, the lawn remains the most dominant landscape feature, especially in the front. But an English cottage garden can be very fine due its riot of flowering plants. Most landscape features of this sort include rose bushes, perennials and vines. Sometimes they are even allowed to go across pathways. Because perennials are so used, they grow back every year, without much effort.

An increasing trend in landscape design is incorporating elements of the Japanese garden. Of course, in Western circles, many of the times this is interpreted to mean showy flowers. These showy flowers grab attention, and many times landscapes will center around these plants. They can be difficult to take care of, as they are often non-native.

They can also be expensive. However, some people are turning their backyard landscapes into gardens that are more in keeping with traditional Japanese garden principles of simplicity including more foliage and design structures. These types of gardens are less expensive and can be equally attractive.

And, of course, the most common landscape feature is the lawn. This is because the lawn allows a platform for family activities. Additionally, overall, it is also fairly easy to care for. It need only be mowed by machines that are relatively easy use, and it can be fertilized and watered fairly inexpensively, if one does so properly and with common sense. Different people do a variety of things with their lawns, and it has become increasing popular to add a small flowerbed in the middle of the lawn for decoration. Having trees on the lawn is also another popular way to adorn the lawn and make it more inviting and attractive.

Creating a beautiful landscape is a matter of enjoyment for many people. However, many of them find it difficult to know where to begin, and know what is possible. But if you are hesitant about where to begin or what to do, trying a tried and true landscape feature can help you succeed in your endeavors to beautify the home environment.

Is a Landscape Architect Really Necessary?

Many people feel that when they are ready to design a landscape, that a landscape architect is necessary. They do not feel that their natural tastes or inclinations are "correct," and they feel that they may irrevocably ruin their yard if they try something on their own. While it is true that some people may cause irreversible damage to their homes when they try their hand at design without a landscape architect, what they do not realize is that their problems have very little to do with design.

A landscape architect will not actually install your features or plant your flowers, trees, and shrubs. That is up to you. You either have to do it yourself or hire someone to follow the plan drawn out by the architect. So, the question becomes whether or not you really need the help of a landscape architect to design your home environs.

Landscape architects can be very useful when it comes to using space. A square deck may save you money, but it may look out of place, and it may not be as usable as you would like. This is where a landscape architect can help. She or he can look at your available space, and suggest possible uses for it. These architects are experienced in combining utility with attractiveness, and it may be worth your while to spend \$50-\$200 for a consultation or two.

It really depends on your budget, and whether you can afford such expensive advice. The architect may also be able to give you ideas for walkways, fences, and patios. However, it is important to note that most landscape architects are not gardeners, and many of them are not experts in plant care.

When working in a certain area, many landscape architects make use of commonly used plants that are widely known to grow well in a particular region. This means that you may end up with a design that, rather than being personal, looks very similar to other designs. Also, your

architect is not going to be able to instruct you on what you need to do to amend your soil if the plants recommended will not flourish with the make up of your soil.

Plus, many architects specify mature plants in their designs. This is because they are visualizing the attractive completed project. Mature plants cost much more than smaller plants, and such specifications may price you out of your landscape project.

The fact of the matter is that most people can determine their own preferences for landscapes by drawing out their own plans. With the help of local urban planning Web sites or a local university's plant specialist, it is possible to discover which plants thrive in your climate. Additionally, you can browse online to find plans for a variety of projects and flower gardens. If something looks comfortable and attractive to you, then there is no reason why cannot incorporate it into your landscape design. The key is trusting in your own taste.

Something that can be a lot less expensive than hiring a landscape architect to consult with and then to design your yard (the whole process can cost upward of \$800-\$1,000), it is possible to use software. Many stores sell this software, and it is available online. It is fun to use the software to figure out various possibilities for your home, and some of them even come with information like what you need for a specific design, and approximate cost estimates. This software not only provides great amusement, but it can also be helpful as you try to figure out what you would like to do about your landscape.

Landscape architects can be very helpful. They can help you determine feasibility and show you how to best utilize a space for beauty and function. However, these services do not come with a hefty price tag. An argument can be made for saving money in the long run, but unless you have a massive project undertaking, the services of a landscape architect are rarely completely necessary.

You can sketch out your own ideas, or you can make use of software. And, as the average do-it-yourselfer does not often participate in a complete landscape overhaul, he or she is more than qualified to design for his or her own small landscape improvement projects.

Landscape Designs

Landscape designs can be planned out in many different ways. There is no right or wrong way to design your very own landscape. It is all about your dreams of a perfect landscape view. You do not have to be a professional designer to design a breathtaking landscape. Take a chance and be as creative as you can with your design.

Tips for starting your landscape designs

A beautiful landscape can be achieved with some imagination and a lot of planning. The one thing that you want to make sure is that you lay out the design of your landscape. Draw the project out on paper before you start breaking ground on it. This way you do not cause yourself more work than intended by later ripping out or rearranging your ideas.

Coordinate your design

Whenever you are planning your new front or backyard, the one thing that you want to do is make sure that all of the plants, shrubs or trees compliment each other. The last thing you want is for your landscape to look like a collection of mismatched creations. You do not want to decrease the value of your landscape by doing this.

Get a focal point

One important factor in a great landscape is something that catches everyone's attention. This will be your focal point in your design. You may want something that is extraordinary or something simple, but eye catching. Pick something that gives your garden or landscape a warm and inviting feel.

Keep your landscape functional

Another important part of your landscape is accessibility. Remember what your intent for the space is and keep that in mind when you are designing your new look. If you are someone who uses that space a lot for family gatherings, then you want to keep the space open for your guests. If the space you are creating is used for you as your peaceful getaway, then your design can include less space and more soothing features like plants or even a water garden or pond.

Adding the peacefulness of a water feature

Ponds and water gardens are a great way to bring attention and peacefulness to any property. If you are looking to install one of these magnificent eye catchers, then you may want to shop around and find the best idea that fits your situation. There are plenty of places to find the help you need in choosing the one that suits you best.

Places to find great ideas

When you are searching for the perfect accent or layout for your personal space, you may decide to look in magazines, books or even on the Internet. Some people even ride around their neighborhood and surrounding communities searching for models of landscapes that they can capture in a picture and redesign for their own landscape sanctuary.

Remember if you are doing the planning yourself, leave yourself lots of time to create. You want your landscape to be a place that you can not only enjoy, but show with the pride of knowing you created it.

Choose the Landscaping Company That Will do the Best Work for You

In this day of the information age it has never been easier to find out what you need to know in order to hire the right landscaping company for the job. No matter if your job is a small one of a large one you still need to make sure that the landscaping company that you choose is

reliable and trustworthy and that they actually know what they are doing.

You should start by finding out how long this landscaping company has been in business, the longer the better. If they have been in business for 20 some odd years then there is a much better chance that they are good at what they do. Of course there are exceptions to this rule but it is a pretty good rule of thumb. If they were so bad they would probably not have been able to stay working for so many years.

Your checking up should not end there however. You still need to find out just how well run a landscaping company they are. Look at it this way: most landscaping companies are small business and they only have a few people working there. The owners have to do the bulk of the work on their own. That is why they are not always as reliable as they should be.

Like other contractors they have a lot on their plate and they can at times get overwhelmed and not show up for a job when they were supposed to. While I do not excuse it I can understand it. They have a lot of people demanding certain things from them. The owners of the landscaping company will generally have to do all of the free estimates themselves, take the appointments, get to the appointments, do the books and then do the actual landscaping company work. Wow, that is enough to run anyone into the ground.

That is why you should find out how many clients a potential landscaping company has at the time you are going to hire them. If they sound as if they will be too busy then you might want to choose another landscaping company, one that will have the time that you need. You need to choose a landscaping company that will be dedicated to the work that you are getting done, you are paying for a service and you deserve for it to be as good as it can be.

Choosing the Right Landscaping Contractor for the Job

It is vitally important that you do your best to choose the perfect landscaping contractor to work on your yard or project. You cannot afford to choose randomly from the Yellow Pages when looking for a good landscaping contractor because with this method you have no way of actually knowing if they are any good at all. And you need your landscaping contractor to be good, very good.

You can talk to the landscaping contractors that you see in the phone book but do not choose one before you have talked to them and seen some of what the landscaping contractor can do for you. You may be able to get them to actually take you to some of their previous projects, this is the best way to see what they can do for your yard. There are other ways of course such as pictures. You can have them show you a portfolio of their past work as well. This too is a good way to help you make your final decision as to which landscaping contractor to choose.

This landscaping contractor will be the one to come up with the design of your entire yard perhaps in the front and the back yards. You want your landscaping contractor needs to be creative and full to brimming with all kinds of fantastic ideas. So when you have your meeting with the landscaping contractor, have them come over to your home.

He or she, or the whole team should come over and go over your yard with you. They should also give you some top ideas for how they can transform your yard into a wonderland of awe.

There are many ways in which the landscaping contractor can do this. They can use slopes and hills or they can use color and texture. The landscaping contractor that you choose will have their own ways of doing things and making an impression, you just need to make sure that this impression will be one that you want to make as well. You do not want to get stuck with a yard that looks like crap do you? That is why you need to see some samples of what this landscaping contractor can do for you.

The Key to Landscaping Design

If you want to incorporate only the best landscaping design then you need to start thinking along the lines of unity. This is key to your landscaping design success and it will need to be applied to your entire yard, all around your home. Your entire property will need to have a similar feel and look, if you have this your home will have a balanced look of symmetry and this will add all kinds of beauty to your home.

You can create a wonderful sense of unity to your landscaping design in a few different ways. The most common way of bringing harmony to your landscaping design is with similar types of plants and trees. This is easy to do and it will look fantastic. There is another way to get unity to be a basic part of your landscaping design and this is with heights. By having even different plants and trees of the same or similar height you will be bringing the whole design of your yard together like you never knew you could. It will look wonderful and it will be so easy!

Your landscaping design should make use of much more than just plants and trees. Flowers look great but they generally only bloom for part of the year so you need to find some other landscaping design elements that will look perfect all year round. To do this you will want to look at landscaping stones and rocks, or even wood chips just to name a couple of things. You can even use granite and marble in your landscaping design. You can have nice little stepping stones, some statues or displays in your landscaping design or you can just have pretty rocks.

A theme can go a long way towards making your landscaping design gorgeous. If you love butterflies or hummingbirds then choose plants and flowers that will attract them to your yard and garden. This is a glorious way to showcase your design and you will always have something pretty to look at. You can talk to those at your local plant store about which type of plants and flowers will work best for this where you live.

In the end your landscaping design needs to be balanced and whole looking. You can do anything you want with your landscaping design, you can design it yourself or you can use a landscaping design that you have seen in real or in a book. No matter what you decide to do, as long as there is unity your landscaping design will look perfect.

Where to Find the Best Landscaping Idea Picture

Here is nothing that is more useful to someone trying to create a new look and feel in their yard than a good landscaping idea picture. With a landscaping idea picture you will not only get inspired you will learn so much. Yes, I said learn, you can learn a lot by looking at a landscaping idea picture. You can learn what look fab and you can learn what does not look so hot. All that from a little tiny landscaping idea picture. Don't you think that it is time that you go out and got yourself on?

Where can you find a landscaping idea picture you ask? You can get a wonderful landscaping idea picture from many different places. Your best bet is to get as many as you can and take notes about which ideas you liked and which you really didn't like. This way when it comes time to start work you will know exactly what you want.

You can even show your landscaper the landscaping idea pictures so that he or she can see exactly what you are talking about. This kind of communication is very important because the landscaping contractor may not know what you are talking about otherwise. This way he will see it for himself.

You can get a great landscaping idea picture from the library; in fact, you can get hundreds of them there. Visit your library and find the landscaping and gardening section, if you are having trouble then ask the librarian, they are there to help you. Explain that you are after a landscaping idea picture or two and you need help. They might even have some books of that kind in a different section as well, who knows?

You can then photocopy any landscaping idea picture that you think may be of help to you. Bring a folder with you so that the landscaping idea picture will be protected and then go home and start making the things that you like in each landscaping idea picture and the things that you hate. If you do not want to write right on the landscaping idea picture then write on the back. This is good because if you were to write about the landscaping idea picture on a different page you could get things confused, this is easy to do if you are dealing with all kinds of landscaping idea pictures.

Coming Up With Your Own Landscaping Idea

It is not all that easy to always come up with your own landscaping idea. In fact, most people are going to need a little help with their landscaping, it is a good thing that it is easy to find a landscaping idea to use.

There are a few places that you can get some fantastic landscaping ideas and probably the best place is the Internet. You will find hundreds of sites on the Internet that will all have a great landscaping idea or two for you to take and make your own. It is important that you put a lot of though and consideration into the landscaping of your yard in the front and in the back so finding the perfect landscaping idea is essential to your success.

You should start by taking a walk around your property in order to get a good sense of what can be done. See how the drainage is and check out the slopes and levels of your property. This way you will be able to tell which landscaping idea is right for you right off the bat. The more you notice the easier things will be. It would be terrible to choose a landscaping idea and then start work only to find that it cannot be completed halfway through due to some aspect of your property. This is why you need to find out all that you can about each landscaping idea that you are contemplating using.

And before you choose the final landscaping idea that you are going to use take a little extra time to learn the basics of landscaping. This is imperative if you have never done any work like this before. If you re new to the whole world of landscaping then you might want to take out a book or two from the library. This way you do not have to pay for them and you will still get all that they have to offer. There is a lot of be gained from reading some good landscaping books, you might even find a landscaping idea in them.

If you know that you want to change the landscaping in your front yard and your back yard then you need to use a landscaping idea that will incorporate both of these. Your front and back yards should flow together, this will give you the best possible design so look at a landscaping idea that will give you this kind of harmony and you will have a better yard for it.

Find Yourself a Great Landscaping Picture

If you can find yourself a wonderful landscaping picture you will be that much closer to designing your yard, just like that. This landscaping picture will give you all of the inspiration that you need to come up with the most gorgeous and eye catching ideas around. It is hard to think of all of the best landscaping ideas on your own, especially if you have never taken on a project like this before. So if you are new, do not worry, use a landscaping picture to help you come up with some fabulous ideas, in fact use a few!

Even if you choose to work with a professional landscaper for your yard you should make sure that they show you a landscaping picture. This landscaping picture should show you what they expect your home to look like once it has been completed.

This is important as it will help you to choose the right landscaper for the job. The landscaping picture that they show you will tell you a lot about the landscaper. The landscaping picture will tell you how much imagination the landscaper has as well as how much work they actually plan on doing. So never, choose a landscaper until you see some kind of landscaping picture.

This is not the only landscaping picture that your landscaper should show you either. You should also ask that he show you at least one landscaping picture of a job he has completed in the past. The best landscapers usually have more than on landscaping picture, they usually have a portfolio that they will let you flip through. This is so useful because you will see exactly the kind of service you will be getting if you choose this company.

It is important to take care with all of the decisions like this. This is the entire look of your home. When people walk by your house you want them to notice it for how gorgeous and

wonderful it looks, not how run down. Having a lovely garden can make all of the different so start thinking about getting in a professional landscaper today. Just make sure that you have him show you a good landscaping picture first and you will be way ahead of the game.

What Does Your Landscaping Plan Need?

There are a few different things that any good landscaping plan will need to be successful. First you should know what a successful landscaping plan is. To be successful a landscaping plan needs to be well thought out and all issues must be dealt with and accounted for.

This means taking into consideration the amount of sun each are of the yard will get as well as how much water it will receive and where the water will sit. Drainage is imperative to any well thought out landscaping plan. You need to have the right kind of irrigation if you want anything to grow and flourish in your landscaping plan.

You should take close stock of what is already around before you start any kind of landscaping plan. All of the best ones will use the natural beauties that are already a part of any yard. Most yards will have something going for them so find this and use it to make your landscaping plan stunning.

For example there may be some gorgeous flowers or trees, or some great rock formations. Why rip these out only to plant another thing, that is just a waste of living things in some cases and totally unacceptable. Use what is there and your landscaping plan will look that much more natural and gorgeous every single time.

Examine all aspects of the yard to be landscaped. Will you need to level or hill up any areas? Are the angles good as they are or do they need a little help? These kinds of things matter and will have some part of the drainage aspect mentioned above when it comes to your landscaping plan.

Most people do not have a million or so dollars to spend so you will have to take this into consideration when you are coming up with your landscaping plan. You need to know how much you will be able to afford before you go all out designing this amazing, yet expensive landscaping plan. You will probably not be able to afford to change the whole slope of your yard even if you wanted to so try to stay within the scope of your money and your ideas.

Make sure that your landscaping plan has taken everything into consideration and the and only then should you start putting this plan into motion.

Not All Landscaping Software is Created Equal

There are some fantastic landscaping software programs that will help you to design the backyard of your dreams but there are also some landscaping software programs that are a complete waste of money. The trick is to find out which landscaping software programs are

good before you purchase them.

Many of the landscaping software programs that are on the market for the regular consumer are not really very good. Some of them are just plain awful and to buy them is to throw your money down the drain. They will have terrible cartoonish drawings that are not clear and that will not do you any good at all. On the other hand there are some of the more expensive commercial grade landscaping software programs that will blow you away with their capabilities.

What you need to remember when you are using a landscaping software program is that it is not going to do anything for you, it is only a tool for you to use to make your ideas a reality. So if you are wanting to buy some landscaping software so that you can have your yard designed for you then do not even bother. If on the other hand you have some great ideas and you want to get them laid out so that you can see if they are really as good as they seem then a good landscaping software program might be for you after all.

Before you commit to buying any landscaping software try to get a demo. This will let you try out the program to see if it can even help you in what you want to achieve. You should try to choose a landscaping software program that has good graphics.

The better the graphics are on your landscaping software the easier it will be for you to visualize the end result of all your hard work. Remember that this is the goal of any landscaping software program. If the landscaping software is crap then you might be better off using the drawing programs that are already on your computer.

By getting a demo you will also be able to directly compare the different programs in terms of price. Lets face it, if there are two landscaping software programs and they look the same and they both have the tools that you need but one is cheaper, which one are you going to choose? The cheaper one of course. So check out the prices.

Landscaping Software

Landscaping software is the perfect way to learn new ideas about landscaping. If you are someone who wants to get ideas on what to do for your landscaping project, then you may be able to find what you are looking for with the software. If you are someone who wants to show off the ideas that you have either done or want to do, then creating your own software is the best way to get your landscaping idea out there.

Need some help with your landscape?

If you need to get some great ideas about yard landscaping, then you should think about getting some landscaping software. With the software, you will be able to see the landscapes first hand like they were actually right in front of you. By watching the software, you will be able to watch different landscape ideas just like you would as if you were watching a movie.

Step by step instructions for your landscape

With landscape software, most of them offer directions for how to do different projects. They will provide all the directions on how to do your landscape from start to finish. If you are someone who needs to see something done in front of you before you are able to do it yourself, then this is the right choice for you.

Make your own software for your ideas

In order to sell anything, you need a good sells pitch. Creating your own software for your landscaping imagination is perfect for showing others your wonderful work. Making your own software is the best way for to sell your ideas. You can sell the software yourself if that is what you want to do. You can build your own software right in your own home. There are many techniques to this which you will find in any computer store or even online.

Where to find the software you need

There are many places to find the software that you are looking for to help you with your landscaping ideas. You can look in any computer store or electronics outlet. You can even order your software online or from books or catalogs. Prices for the software can vary, but obviously the better ones are going to be more expensive.

Remember whether you are buying or selling, landscaping software is the best way to get ideas or sell them. There is only so much a picture can tell you, but with the software you will get so much more.

Using Landscape Design Software

One option for would-be landscapers is to plan out their design on landscape software. Most of the time this software has great features that can help you decide where to put different plants, and how different features would look in a yard. The great thing about landscape design software is that you pay for it once, and then you can use it over and over again. While it cannot completely take the place of a landscape architect, it does allow the improver to get a good idea of what is possible.

Most software programs meant to help you design landscapes come with graphics that look like a variety of plants. These images often include flowers, shrubs, trees, and even vegetables. Additionally, some programs also include information on common garden pests as well as how different plant diseases look. Tips on how to prevent diseases, and sometimes even how to treat them often accompany this information about garden blights. This can save you time and money as you more effectively take care of your own garden needs.

Other features that come with some landscape design programs include already laid out garden designs. So, if you do not know where to begin, you can receive inspiration by looking at ideas suggested in the computer program. Additionally, some programs provide easy to follow suggestions on how to properly plant the garden or build some small landscape features. There

are plenty of ideas present that you can either use straight from the program or even that you can modify a little bit to better fit your ideas of what you would like.

One of the best features available with landscape design software is the fact that you can scan digital photos into the computer and work with those. Rather rely on a graphic image of something that looks sort of close to what your house looks like or its situation, you can use a picture from a digital camera so that you can create a design based around what your yard looks like now, and then you can see what it could look like with a little difference in the landscape.

In addition to showing what your home would like at the current season with certain plants and trees and flowers, there are programs that also take you through the seasons. Therefore, you could see what your yard would likely look like when the plants that change colors enjoy a seasonal change of leaf, or how it would look in early spring, just prior to blooming. This can help you plan to move in plants that have different blooming times, and plants that still look attractive even after they are done blooming.

Not only do many programs show what your yard could look like, but they could also help you find the right plants for your garden and climate conditions. You enter in your soil conditions, and the area in which you live, and the program can help you run a search for the plants that would most likely flourish in your particular landscape.

Then, using the click and drag method, you can set these potential plants into your virtual landscape and see how they would look. With the possible plant varieties before you, you can move them to various points in the yard until you are satisfied with the result. When you are ready to get started, you can use the program to work out a plan of action to help you bring your landscape creation out of the virtual world and into the real world.

Landscape design software can actually help you save money in the long run. Most programs for personal computer run between \$25 and \$75. You can purchase a program and then instead of spending hundreds of dollars to have a stranger design your landscape, you can design your own.

Additionally, with programs that help you set out the garden, you might even bet a GPS device that help you more precisely survey your yard and more accurately position your plants and other features. Additionally, with a plan developed to help you accurately gauge what you need, you will have less waste when you go to start your landscaping.

Landscaping Ideas

Landscaping ideas come from your heart, and from your mind. Anyone can make their front or backyard look like a professional gardener came in and completely renovated their property. It does not take a lot of skill to make all your landscaping dreams come true. All you really have to have is a little imagination and the will to get your hands dirty.

Take your time with your landscape

One very important part of landscaping is planning. The best thing to do when you are adding or fixing the landscape in your yard is to put it all down on paper first. Lay it out on paper so that you can see what you are doing and that you have enough space for what you have in mind. Take your time and think about what you are looking for in your yard.

Remember to plan around large unmovable items like trees and outside buildings like sheds or garages. You are not going to be able to move these things so you want to make them fit in with your landscaping design.

Get Ideas from Everywhere

If you are not sure how to get started with your landscaping ideas, you can rely on many things to get you started. You can gather ideas from garden magazines, local gardening stores or outlets. You may even find a little inspiration by taking a drive in the country and looking at other people's landscaping. This is a great way to visualize these ideas in your own backyard.

Choosing the right landscaping materials

When you are deciding on the perfect landscape for your yard, you need to take into consideration the space of the area you are landscaping. For example, does the space receive full or part sun? Do you have an area that receives only shade and no sun at all? You also want to be aware of any drainage or watering issues. You do not want to plant flowers and then find out that they are not able to grow in the conditions in which you have planted them.

Using man made materials

There are all sorts of materials that you can use to make artificial walls and borders for your landscape design. There are many ways to add layers to a flat landscape or even emphasize the beauty of an already existing hump or yard that is sloped for the most part. You can use lumber, railroad ties, cement blocks, stones, or even rocks that you find in your yard already. These are great creative ideas that do not cost a lot and anyone can do himself or herself.

Maintaining your new landscape

Whatever the landscape you decide on, whether it be with plants or with shrubs, or with lumber or stone, you need to make sure that you have the tools and the knowledge of how to maintain the new design. If you are landscaping with plants or flowers, make sure that you feed and water them accordingly.

You do not want your time and efforts to be wasted by having your plants turning brown or dying off. Make sure that you weed your new landscape and keep it looking fresh and maintained. If you have designed a landscape out of lumber or rock, you still need to keep it clean and protect it so that it looks good for many years to come.

With a little creative imagination and a lot of effort and hard work, your new landscaped yard will be one that everyone can appreciate and enjoy for many years.

Landscaping Plans

Your landscaping plans are one of the most important parts of the whole process. It is smart to lay out your entire design before you start digging and planting. By doing this, you will eliminate the chance of having to move items later or running into any problems. You will be able to come up with your own landscaping plans on your own. It just takes a little time and imagination.

There are no quick fixes

Remember to take your time and figure out what you are looking for in your landscape and what you will need to achieve the look. Make sure that you have all the materials that you need before you start. That way you do not have to stop in the middle of your work to get last minute items.

Take your time and do the work right. You do not want your creation to look messy and thrown together. Remember your yard is a reflection of your personality and usually the first impression people get from you. It is always a good idea to start a landscaping project in the spring. That way your new addition will be ready to enjoy in the summer months.

Gather ideas and designs for your landscape plans

In order to get ideas on what you want for your yard, you can look in magazines and books. You will usually find something that will fit your personality and the how to for doing the work. Some of the articles will give you step-by-step instructions.

Plants and flowers

It is a good idea to make a list of the plants that you like and want to use in your design. Figure out the conditions of your soil and atmosphere and decide what plants will grow best. Make note of how much sunlight your yard gets and what the drainage conditions are. Pick plants and flowers that compliment each other and enhance your yard.

Getting enough help with your landscape

When it comes time to do your project, make sure that you have help with the heavier items. This is especially a good idea if you are moving items in your yard to make room for your new landscape plans. If your landscape plans are large, then you may want the additional help to get the job done a little faster.

Once you have the right location, all the materials that you need, and some additional help if needed, you will then be on your way to adding a great improvement and investment to your property. Your new creation will be a landscape that your entire will enjoy for years to come.

Making the Most of a Small Yard

A small yard does not have to be devoid of landscaping elements. There are plenty of things that can be done with a small yard to help it look nice, while not encroaching too much on usable space. The key is to plan well, and to choose plants and designs that are not too overpowering.

But, even though you may not be able to have large boulders or a sweeping flower garden, or a large pond, it is still possible to have a beautiful landscape that surrounds your home and helps you feel more comfortable in it.

One of the things to remember when you have a small space is that you can build up rather than building out. You can do this by building raised beds for your plants. This can be done yourself, allowing you to save money. In fact, if you have a small yard, your landscaping costs should be fewer anyway.

Building a raised bed allows you to create an attractive feature for your small yard without having to worry about taking up too much space. Some beds, if built on planks of wood, can be designed with wheels. Then you can move your landscape wherever you want; you have a moveable landscape!

Another method of maximizing small landscape space is to use containers for planting. Instead of marking out large sections of your yard for flowerbeds or vegetable patches, do a little container gardening. These types of gardens allow you to choose to plant various items in containers.

Plants in containers take up less space, and you can move them around as you need to. This also creates a moveable landscape that can be very convenient depending upon your use of the space for a certain day. The containers can be placed for ornamental effect while you are entertaining, or they can be moved out of the way for a rousing game of family flag-football.

Take into account the colors in your landscape. Cool colors (like blue) actually make a space look larger. Therefore, if you would like your yard to feel and look larger, choose the colors that make it look that way.

Plants like silver king and evergreens can give your yard a feeling of largeness. Blue spruce and Alberta pine are good examples of plants that add a decorative touch while helping your property look bigger. In fact, Alberta pines are rather small trees, so they do not take up very much space while at the same time conferring a feeling of maximum space.

Another idea for small landscape spaces is a small rock garden. A well-designed rock garden always makes an attractive feature. Make sure that it is in a place that will not be in the way when you mow the lawn. A little nook or corner of the property, or even up against the house on a raised bed, will do for a small rock garden.

Choose your rocks carefully to complement each other, and choose plants that go with the rocks and that will not spread too much. Hens and chicks are great plants for use in a small

rock garden. The rock garden draws the eye, but does not need to be sprawling.

Finally, if you want a water feature, it is possible to use a small one for limited landscape space. Small features similar to serenity fountains can be purchased for outdoor use. You can put them among your rock garden.

Even a small birdbath can add a feeling of elegance to the yard. And the great thing about buying a small water feature is that it costs much, much less than putting in a big pond or even a medium size waterfall. Water features come in a variety of types and designs, and it very likely that you can find one to fit the size and the look of your yard.

Even if your yard is small, it is possible to design a landscape that enlarges the space in an attractive manner. By carefully considering your design, using small features and cool colors, and by thinking about what would help give your yard a touch of elegance, you can have a very nicely landscaped and cozy surrounding for your home.

Planning and Laying Out a Flower Garden

A flower garden adds a great deal of variety and beauty to the landscape. Many people find that laying out flower gardens is a very rewarding task. And, while it is possible to create a very attractive flower garden without planning it out first, it is much more efficient, in the way of saving time and money, to make a plan for what you would like in your flower garden, and to have an idea of where you might like some of the different flowers.

Then when you are ready to lay the garden out, you have a pretty good idea of what to do, and you are not bothered with having to re-arrange things to account for something that you may not have realized before.

The first order of business to determine when planning out your flower garden is how many annuals and how many perennials you want. Annuals last only one growing season, and therefore have to be replanted each year. Perennials appear yearly on their own. If you have all annuals, you can change your garden layout as you wish every year, and with perennials you have the same layout (unless you wish to transplant all of your flowers).

However, it is possible to have a combination of the two, keeping the perennials where they are each year and varying the charm of the flower garden with a few different annuals in different placement.

Next, you should determine where you will likely place your flowers, taking into consideration the comparative heights of the plants, what time of the year they bloom, and what colors you will use. These things all contribute to an aesthetically pleasing look to your flower garden, and one that implies order and beauty rather than looking ill-planned with some plants looking wildly out of place.

Also to take into consideration when planning your flower garden: climate and sun exposure. Make sure that all of the plant you choose for your garden will flourish in your region, and that

your garden is placed in a location that will allow the flowers to receive a proper amount of light.

After you have determined what will go in your garden, it is time to prepare the flowerbed. You should mark of the dimensions of your proposed garden carefully. Using a garden hose to mark the boundaries is advisable, as it is heavy and will stay in place, but it also provides the flexibility needed to tweak the proposed shape of your garden. After you have determined on your boundaries, you need to strip the enclosed area down to the topsoil. This can be done using a shovel for smaller gardens and a sod cutter for the larger sections.

After getting down to the topsoil, you should loosen the dirt by prying up a section with a shovel and then turning over the dirt. This loosens the soil and provides a good place for flower roots to establish themselves. You can make improvements to the soil but adding organic materials such as peat moss, mulch, compost, or manure.

You should probably also roto-till the area to better mix the soil amendments in with the original soil. Next, use a rake to smooth out the soil without packing it down. Create your border with plastic edging, concrete, stones, or by digging around the edges, angling the soil down and creating a gap between flower garden and lawn.

After you have prepared the bed for the garden, acquire the flowers you would like to use. Seeds are less expensive, but you will not be able to see the final result until they spring up. If you purchase flowers in containers, set the containers, with their plants, in the places in the garden that they will inhabit.

Then you can get an idea of what the garden will look like. If you need to move the flowers around for greater attractiveness, it is simply a matter of moving the pot around until the garden looks as you wish it to. After you have settled that everything is in place, begin removing the flowers from their containers and placing them in the ground, beginning from the back and working up toward the front.

Questions to Ask Yourself When Designing a Landscape

There are quite a few things to take into consideration as you design your landscape. While creating your own design for your yard can be a very rewarding experience, it is important to carefully consider your plans before putting them in action.

Additionally, asking yourself a few questions and thoughtfully addressing the answers can help you make improvements to your design and can help you better plan to use the space around your home. When you think about what you are doing and make a plan, you are much more likely to enjoy a successful landscape experience as you design an improved environment to surround your house.

The first question you need to ask yourself has to do with budget. Can you afford to make all of your planned improvements at once? Or do you need to create a plan of phases that can help you reach your goals one at a time. You should know how much money you can spend on each

phase of your project, and you might even consider what you will do if you come in under budget. Will you buy a couple more plants? Add a more decorative retaining wall? But you need to set a total amount that can be used for your landscape and then stick to the budget.

A budget rule of thumb is as follows: costs of landscaping should be about 10 percent of the value of the home. This cost includes things like irrigation, fencing, decks, patios, ponds, and any other element you wish to include in the yard. There is no need to pay this all at once, however; it is much more reasonable to improve over the years with ready money in order to leave yourself less encumbered by debt.

Another thing that you need to ask yourself is what the space will be used for. You need to think about what activities will be taking place, and how you would like to use the space. Figure out how you and your family move through the landscape. This will help you determine where you walk most often, and allow you to accommodate for that.

You do not want to create a design that suddenly makes it more difficult to get to the mailbox or to get groceries from the car. Consider where you would like children to play, and think about how you will incorporate trees, fences, flower beds, and other elements into the space without damaging its utility.

How does sunlight cover your property? This is a very important question, as it will help you determine where to plant certain vegetation. You need to know whether certain sites receive full light (at least six hours a day of sunlight), partial shade (four to six hours, this is also called partial light) or full shade (less than four hours). Figure out which plants will go where according to how much light they will need.

Ask yourself what kinds of plants grow well in your area. You might really like how some succulents look, but if you live in a very wet area, they might drown in all the extra water. Make sure that you know what plants are native to your area, and what plants are native to areas with a similar climate. Along with this, you should be sure to find out your soil composition. It is very important that you know what plants will survive in the soil in which you plant them, or whether you will need to improve your soil with amendments such as crushed shells or organic compost.

Finally, ask yourself what you think would be attractive. You can do this by take a picture of your yard and then mentally adding plants. You can also sketch out what you think would work well, and decide whether it really does accomplish the look that you want. You also want to ensure that the new landscape design is convenient and doable, especially if you will be creating it yourself.

By taking care to ask yourself a few simple questions and honestly answer them, you will find that your landscape design plan can be carried out more efficiently, with regard to effort, time, and cost.

What to Look for in Landscape Maintenance Service

When you are in search of a landscape service for your home, there are quite a few things that you should keep in mind. After all, not all landscape services are created equal. Care for your yard should be something that you take seriously. After all, it provides enjoyment, beauty, and can even save you money on energy and food costs. If you decide to hire a landscape service, make sure you get the right one for you.

Different homeowners have different needs for their landscapes. Not everyone is looking for a landscape service that does everything. Some people simply want someone who will mow the lawn and fertilize it on occasion. Others want perfect yards with topiary shrubs and weed-free flowerbeds.

If all you are looking for is basic lawn mowing and maybe some leaf raking and debris clean up, then the neighborhood kid who mows lawns is probably landscape service enough for you. And that is just fine. It helps a young kid learn the value of working for her or his money, and you have an easier time of caring for your lawn. If you like to have a nice yard, but do not want to do anything with it yourself, then a more full-service operation is probably what you need in the way of landscape maintenance.

When choosing who will take care of your landscape maintenance needs, the first thing you should do is seek out a reputable company. A reputable company is one that has reliable references, and one that has a satisfied customer base. If you notice a certain company taking care of the landscape surrounding a house in your neighborhood, go ask your neighbor about the company. That will allow you to find out from someone you are acquainted with whether or not the service is a good one.

Another thing to look for in a landscape maintenance service is the equipment. Does it look to be in good shape? You want a company that takes good care of its equipment; that shows that they are more likely to take good care of your yard. Additionally, you want to make sure they are using the right equipment. Find out what they plan to use to perform various tasks in your yard. Even if you are not doing the yard work yourself, you should have at least a basic understanding of what your yard needs. That way you will be able to tell if you are being hoodwinked.

Do not necessarily go with the cheapest service. You can find out if various services offer to care for your yard for a week at a time to see how each service does. The cheapest may not always be the best deal. If you are habitually dissatisfied with the cheaper work, that may affect you in ways that make it worth it to pay an extra \$20 per month for landscape maintenance that is of higher quality.

Shop around and compare the work done by various companies. Then hire the best company that you can afford for your budget. You may not be able to afford the absolute best town, but you should hire the best that fits into your landscape budget. Get price quotes in writing so that when you decide to go with one company, and they hike your cost, you have a written quote to back you up.

Find a company that cares about customer service. Make sure you find out what their policy is on redoing work that does not meet your satisfaction. You want to be sure that your specifications are met. Make sure that your landscaping maintenance service is willing to fix mistakes and that they are willing to do a little extra pruning if they missed a few branches. Companies that do not care about customer service will probably not do a good job on your yard. You should look for a service that takes pride in its work.

If the company says it specializes in lawn care (creating a greener, lusher, healthier lawn) and offers fertilization services, make sure that you choose a company that offers a guarantee. You do not want one of their employees to over-fertilize the lawn and then leave you paying the bill for a dead lawn that needs to be replaced.

Five Questions to Ask When Hiring a Lawn Care Company

Are you one of those folks who want a lovely lawn but just don't have the time to care for it yourself? The answer for you could be a lawn care company. However, how do you know whom to choose? Below are five questions you should have answers to before hiring a lawn care company.

Price is something that should be looked at when hiring a lawn care company, but remember the old saying, "you get what you pay for?" Some companies may give you a lower rate but do they scrimp on materials or use low quality products? They also may be able to charge lower prices because they are not training their staff adequately. Ask your neighbors and friends whom they use.

A company with a good reputation will be promoted widely by word of mouth. Look at their lawns and ask them if they are happy with the lawn they have. Are they satisfied and well treated? Lower price can sometimes mean lower quality. Get a price quote and a quote for anything extra that may come up or is not already provided by their company. Check out several lawn care companies before you decide. Walk around your lawn and see what their suggestions are and if they sound genuinely interested in making your lawn the best it can be.

Look for companies that are professional and belong to lawn care organizations such as the Professional Lawn Care Association of America as well as state lawn care organizations. Lawn companies that are involved in these organizations usually are staying current with the latest in technology, safety regulations and have a professional pride in their business.

Ask what pesticide programs they provide. Are they organic or natural and those words won't always mean pesticide free. Ask detailed questions about the pesticides they use, are they allowable in the area where you live and ask if there are any environmental or health risks. Ask what products they use. A good company will be able to give you the names and product labels of all their seed blends, fertilizers and pest control products.

Another question to ask prospective lawn care companies is; what techniques do you use to improve the health of the soil and grass. This is an important part of any lawn care program and not all companies provide these services. Services should include over seeding,

topdressing, aeration, and hand weeding. Yes, some work still needs to be done by hand. Be sure to ask if these are extras or part of the service. If they don't do these extras, then ask for information so you can do them on your own to keep your lawn healthy. If these services are not offered, then be sure that their charges reflect what they are doing.

Is mowing a part of the service? What height do they cut the grass; do they leave clippings on the lawn, bag, or mulch? Will they adjust their mowing schedule according to the weather? More in the spring and less in the summer when it is needed less. Do they bag clippings and take them with them or do they leave them for the waste disposal people to pick up? Will you be responsible for providing bags for clippings?

Will they rake or mulch leaves in the fall? What about anything extra that might come up such as storm damage? Will they be available to help with that? You never know when a natural disaster will occur and you need the help to clear out the debris of limbs from your yard.

These questions are all important ones for you to consider when choosing a lawn care company. Your lawn and garden program will be effective if you have a partnership between you and your lawn care company. You should know what services your lawn care company provides.

They should know what your expectations are for your lawn and what you should do between visits to maintain your lawn properly. Between visits, it is up to you to watch out for insects and disease. If you are mowing, you need to do it on a regular schedule and water the lawn properly according to their instructions. Your lawn will look its best if you and your lawn care company understand each other and are both aware of what is expected from each side.

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