

Remember, a healthy landscape starts with a plan! Gather ideas you like from other landscapes that you see. Get ideas from your neighborhood, from commercial landscapes, public gardens and books. Take notes and photos of things you like in the gardens you see.

As you start your landscaping design consider the house. Is it formal? Consider the size, shape and style of your home when planning your yard. Your landscaping should harmonize with the house, not overwhelm, obstruct or contradict the style of your home. You can connect your home to your yard by repeating design details, making smooth transitions between the inside and out and emphasizing inside views.

Don't get sticker shock! You wouldn't buy cheap materials for the actual construction of your home, so don't buy cheap materials for your landscaping. Look for good quality plants, pavers, mulches, edging, etc., and shop around at various nurseries and suppliers to compare prices.

And, don't take on too much. Choose plants, structures and features that demand no more care or time than you are able to give. Research plants beforehand to determine if they are right for your lifestyle.



For more information on landscaping, check out the following books:

***Gizmo Creation's
Home Landscaping Manual***

Our own home landscaping manual that we have written to help walk you through the process of designing your landscaping. Includes how to draw a base map and information about landscape design concepts, as well as practical information on plants, mulches and money saving tips.

Landscaping Makes Cents

Helps you to make sure that the money you invest in your landscaping add long term value to your property.

Designing Your Gardens and Landscapes

Presents a practical approach to landscape design and 12 successful tips for landscape planning.

Tips for Carefree Landscapes

Several hundred practical tips on creative, sensible and time saving suggestions for working in your yard.

Shady Retreats

An excellent resource guide for those of us who have lots of shade in their yard

These books and landscape titles can be ordered on-line at www.gizmocreations.com/books.html

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Landscape Design Tips

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Landscaping can add beauty, value and functionality to a home. However, before you start buying plants or digging into your yard, it is essential that you take a look at your yard and think about what you need to do and what you want to accomplish with your landscaping. Start out by answering the following questions:



1. Are there problems with the yard, house, etc. that need correcting—problems such as drainage, erosion or where the sun beats down in areas that need to be shaded.
2. Do you have specific needs and priorities? Are you looking for a place for a flower bed or for a vegetable garden or just a patio sitting area for relaxing. Other considerations may be if you have children or pets or if you want an area for outdoor entertaining.
3. Consider the style of your house and the size of your yard. A small house can be overpowered by using big trees, but a large house and yard can be empty without them.



4. What is already existing in the yard. Do the existing trees provide much needed shade or are they old and in need of pruning or perhaps even need to be removed. Are

- there specimen plants you want to keep? Or do you have large, overgrown shrubs and perennials that need pruned, removed and perhaps moved to a different location in the yard.
5. How much light do you have to work with? Certain plants require almost full sun while others thrive in the shade.
 6. What is your budget? Can you do your landscaping over several seasons or do you have projects that need to be completed all at once.
 7. Are there significant features that can be emphasized or need to be hidden; things such as rock outcroppings you may want to highlight; there are other items such as phone poles, sheds and trash receptacles you probably want to hide.

Before your begin.....

Begin by planning your landscape. Planning serves several functions. You can determine if you need to hire additional help, such as contractors, electrician, etc. or decide if you can you do all of the work yourself.

Work can be organized in an efficient sequence; start at the back of your lot and work forward—don't cross your work!

By planning you can subdivide the entire landscape tasks into pieces, steps or phases, so you can get a sense of progress as each phase of your landscaping is completed.

What to do before work begins:

1. Haul away trash, debris and unwanted structures. Get any junk out of the way before it blends in with the landscape.
2. Prune overgrown brushes, trees and vines.
3. Pull weeds and remove any dead or dying plants.
4. Proceed with any major projects, such as earth moving or grading, that require the use of heavy equipment. Big machines can do a tremendous amount of damage. Therefore, this work should be done before doing any plantings that can be crushed by the use of heavy equipment.
5. Stabilize bare or disturbed soil before it turns into mud or dust. If necessary use a cover crop that can later be replaced with permanent plantings or structures.
6. Don't be caught off guard. Check with your city, county, township, etc. to learn the local codes and ordinances.
7. Have your utilities thoroughly marked.

