

LANDON'S
GREENHOUSE & NURSERY
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Adding Color to Your Life

LANDSCAPING 101

BASIC LANDSCAPE DESIGN

1. General principles:
 - Front yard generally is public space. This is what is seen by the general public and is usually treated more formally. The front of your house makes a statement whether you like it or not. (My cars are the most important thing; I'm hiding and don't want to be disturbed so go away; I'm the biggest and best; I don't like yard work). If the statement you want to make is "welcome to our beautiful home" here are some General Guidelines for your front yard:
 - a. *Frame the house with the landscaping*
 - b. *Don't hide the entry or put big plants that split the house*
 - c. *Size plants to lead the view to the entry, from larger to smaller near entry.*
 - d. *Make a nice wide inviting entry pathway that makes it obvious where guests should go from the spot where a guest will park to the entry.*
 - e. *Use color to lead the guest to the entry. Dwarf evergreens are nice in winter, annual flowers are great in summer.*
 - f. *Use plants to "ground" the house (foundation plantings).*
 - g. *Use edging, weed barrier, mulch, and irrigation systems to define spaces, and reduce maintenance.*
 - Backyard is private space to do with as you please.
 - a. This is the area to express yourself. This is an outdoor living space that is an extension of your home. A few examples.
 - i. A green lawn to mow, water, rake, fertilize, aerate, and enjoy.
 - ii. A playground for the kids, or grandkids, with playground equipment, area to throw the ball around, a pool to splash in, a tree fort, a secret garden, etc.
 - iii. A garden spot including a kitchen herb garden, vegetable garden, a perennial, annual, rock, cut flower, rose, English garden, Japanese garden etc.
 - iv. A barbecue patio area for entertaining with a shade structure, built in fireplace, furniture, wet bar, etc.
 - v. An area to relax, with water feature, hot tub spa
 - vi. A putting green
 - vii. A miniature railroad
 - viii. An area to work on the car and store junk????
2. Some General Tips

- You can use a “*bubble diagram*” to help yourself plan the elements of the landscape you want to create, or you can simply start with what is existing and add elements to create your plan. *Foundation plantings, trees, water feature, hot tub, perennial garden, patio with pergola,*
 - Landscaping traditionally starts with the lawn and plants, but patios, decks, hot tubs, water features, barbecues, retaining walls, play areas, statuary, bird houses, walks, driveways, gazebos, trellises, pools, etc are all a part of the landscape.
 - Straight lines for walks, and borders are the most formal, diagonals are a little less formal, circles are still fairly formal, sweeping curves are informal, and rough edges are the least formal of all.
 - Xeric gardening simply means low water use, and generally low maintenance. It does not mean no water and no maintenance.
 - Use borders, irrigation systems, weed barrier, mulches, etc to ease maintenance and create definition.
 - A good rule of thumb is you don’t need a walking surface unless you are seeing wear spots in your lawn.
 - Start small with gardens, and add more space each year. Once you get the hang of what it takes to maintain a garden you will find it doesn’t take that much time, and is very relaxing and enjoyable. But if you start with a large plot it can overwhelm and discourage. *Lasagne gardening works great.*
 - Site a water feature where you spend most of your outdoor time, usually close to the back patio or deck for maximum enjoyment. Don’t expect a water feature to draw you clear to the back 40. Remember that a water feature in the front yard is for the public, and will you really enjoy sitting in the public eye enjoying it?
3. Practical considerations
- Maintenance -- Consider how much you want to do.
 - Cost -- Consider budget and sequencing, but don’t let initial budget preclude a master plan, and remember that landscaping is one of the best investments you can make. Not only does it improve the value of your home, the plants grow, compounding your investment.
 - Water -- Consider your access to good water, and check your water prior to relying on a well for your landscaping.
 - Environment – Consider the environmental conditions you are starting with before finalizing your design. You can have a tropical paradise complete with bananas, but it is going to require a huge investment in an arboretum or a move. You can invest a small fortune in plants but make sure the plants you pick are suited, or plan on modifying the environment to make the landscape work. Some examples: Plant sun-loving plants in the sun, and shade tolerant plants in the shade. Make sure to use plants that are zoned for our area. Use deer resistant plants or take measures to keep deer away from them. Use plants that tolerate the soil conditions you have if possible.
 - Establishing any plant material requires extra maintenance until well established. Some plants will always require careful handling, others establish quickly and require little maintenance.
4. Tools to make your plan

- Graph Paper
 - Measuring Tape
 - Pencils, erasers, calculator
 - Special tools – Templates, architectural ruler, or engineering ruler, flexible ruler, compass, triangles, computer program
 - References: Pictorial guide to perennials, Internet, Guides to trees and shrubs
- Start your plan with a site plan that shows what exists now.