



Landscape and Outdoor Living Planning

Having a landscape plan for your property will ensure that all of the parts of your landscape and outdoor areas are considered, taken care of and work seamlessly together. With a good landscape plan, it is easier to set priorities, budgets and allow for projects to be integrated smoother. Through careful and detailed planning now, you can look forward to a beautiful and healthy landscape that improves the value of your home or property for years to come.

First, set your priorities. Make two lists: one for what you want (Want List) and one for what you need (Requirement List). The Requirement List is just as important, if not more, since it is best to resolve issues such as drainage problems, irrigation needs, retaining walls or diseased plants before spending time and money on your Want List (outdoor construction projects, water features or new garden areas). Regardless of what you are looking for, a part of your budget should go toward your Requirement List since these items protect your property and are practical for setting the right foundation for your Want List.

You may also want to consider creating a Seasonal Want and Requirement List. These lists may be smaller but can be just as beneficial since they will prepare you for the upcoming months. Remember, everything on your Requirement List does not need to be address before you can work on your Want List. Just be mindful of each as you plan. An example of Fall lists may look like:

Fall "Want" List	Fall "Requirement" List
1. New Seasonal Color in Front and Backyards	1. Check Soil Content, Clean Out Beds & Add New Mulch
2. Outdoor Kitchen and Living Area for the Holidays	2. Replace Aging Deck and Cracked Stonework
3. Water Feature in Backyard	3. Irrigation System Repair or Upgrade
4. New Outdoor Lighting	4. Tree and Shrub Trimming

Next, have a comprehensive plan designed that includes but is not limited to elements such as architectural features, irrigation, lighting, trees and plants, water features and recreational items. Ask yourself the following questions to get your started:

- What is the most important thing that I want to have done?
- What is the one thing that I most dislike about the space?
- How am I going to use this space?
- What is my budget?
- Do I want my project completed at one time or am I willing to work in phases to achieve my goals?
- What style and functionality am I trying to achieve?

Finally, think long term. As much as you want to get started and see the final results, sometimes a space or budget can limit what we initially had in mind. If this is the case, there is no need to get frustrated or give up. Just go back to your two lists and rethink your priorities. There is always a solution and a way to make your landscape and outdoor living dreams a reality! Having a good plan (and a little patience) will pay off in the end.