

Landscaping Your Home

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At

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Landscaping Your Home

Creating Your Own Personal Landscape Design

Landscaping Your Home

Over one hundred years ago the commissioner of agriculture, Horace Capon, in his report to the president, U.S. Grant, wrote:

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"Landscape gardening is a comprehensive art, combining the genius of the landscape painter with the art of practical gardener; the exact knowledge of the engineer with the poetical imagination of the artist."

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"The professor of this art should also possess a competent knowledge of the general principles of botany, architecture, geology, hydraulics, hydrostatics, mechanics, laws of heat and ventilation, pomology, and vegetable physiology."

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Combining the skills of painters, architects, artists, and horticulturists seems like an impossible task. These and many other areas of expertise help in establishing the landscape garden

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As difficult as this task may seem successful landscape is largely matter of creating a simple design and planting the right plant in the right place

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Introduction to the Design Process

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Your goal is to create a landscape that is uniquely yours

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Careful planning, design, installation, and care make an attractive, functional, and enjoyable landscape

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Failure to plant and care for the landscape leads to frustration, costly mistakes, and poorly maintained plantings

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Everyone will not designs and installs their own landscape but you should have input into the design

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This is important whether the design is a do it yourself, nursery designed landscape contractor or landscape architect

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You must clearly define and install those features of the landscape that are important to you

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Landscape design creates functional landscape for the users. All materials, both plants and non-plants, are blended and combined to provide an attractive landscape

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Undertake landscape renovation only if it increases the functional uses and beauty of the landscape

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For a couple of moments, close your eyes and imagine the most beautiful natural spot that you have ever been. Do not think of the most spectacular view like the Grand Canyon but think of a place that made you feel peaceful, relaxed and serene

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Moving heaven and earth to create your ideal garden might seem like a good idea, but it is not practical or desirable

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Finding a way to recreate the feelings you enjoy so much is part of the joy of gardening

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Natural factors

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Before planning your landscape,
analyze all natural assets and liabilities

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List the physical aspects of your property including soils, climate, orientation of the home, topography, and existing vegetation

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Using these to the best advantage is the key to successful landscaping

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Soils

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Utah soils are usually naturally alkaline

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With new homes, most topsoil has been removed or buried and considerable improvement is needed to get soil that will grow an attractive landscape

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Few landscapes have perfect loam soils. Soils usually have too much clay or too much sand, depending on their location

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Adding organic matter improves the soil and makes it better for growing plants

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Amend the soil in large areas, not just in planting holes

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Information on soil testing and improvement is available from Utah state university extension service offices

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Climate

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Utah is mostly a high mountain desert

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Such generalizations do not describe the variation in rain and snowfall, wind, high and low temperatures and when those temperatures occur

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Frost free growing seasons range from 30 days or less in high mountain valleys to 200+ days in lower elevations

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Temperatures range from -40F. Or lower to over 110F

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Plant hardiness zone maps are based on minimum lows and maximum highs. The United States Department of Agriculture recently updated its hardiness zone map and it is available at

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Utah state university also publishes specific climatic data in Utah climate

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Sunset western garden book also publishes a separate own hardiness zone map

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All are useful in determining what plants are likely to survive in your area but the zones are not interchangeable. This often creates confusion when choosing plants

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Orientation of the Home

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When building a new home, check the placement of the home very carefully in relation to the sun and prevailing winds

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Minor changes in design and construction make a substantial difference in the comfort and livability of the home and landscape

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When landscaping an existing home, chose plants that shade areas that are exposed to intense sun

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In our climate, properly placed shade trees can reduce summer room temperatures by as much as 20F.

Giving major savings in air conditioning costs

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Some homes are built to gain winter solar radiation. Choose plant materials carefully so they will not cover solar collecting equipment

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Topography

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The natural contours of your lot influence landscape design and choice of plant materials

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Slopes add interest and create unusual landscape possibilities. Streams, slopes, rocks add interest to landscapes

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Features that seem liabilities at first
may turn into tremendous assets

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Slopes are steep and difficult to mow but terraces, rock gardens, and ground covers are beautiful alternatives

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Designing the Public, Service, and Living Areas

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Successful landscapes contain three basic areas. Define these carefully to prevent them from becoming overrun and confusing

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Public areas show the house to viewer

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Traditional public designs accent the home, but in some situations, the public design is a screen or barrier

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Service areas are utility areas that facilitate functional living

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Living areas are extensions of the indoor living area that complement the interior and exterior design of the house

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The Public Area

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The public area is the most visible, but does not always lend itself to family activities

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Think of this area as a welcoming area that says to friends and neighbor that friendly people live here

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It frames the home and emphasizes the focal point

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It blends the house with the surroundings to give a natural look

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The strong horizontal lines of the ground must combine with the vertical lines of the structure to visually blend the landscape and home

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The public area designs maintain open vistas to the home, soften the architectural lines of pavement and other structures and frames the building with plants

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Your house is usually the most expensive purchase you make

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The doorway of the house usually serves as the focal point; landscape plants should draw the eye to that focal point

Landscaping Your Home

Trees in the public landscape should not bisect the house. The best designs are simple, easily maintained, landscapes without frills and distractions

Landscaping Your Home

Make certain the designs are balance and proportional to enhance the formal or informal architecture of the home

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The Service Area

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Service areas contain the unmentionables so acknowledge the need for this area and design it accordingly

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Clothes lines, garbage cans, firewood, compost piles, vegetable gardens, fruit trees, and utilities are all part of the service area

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Add storage for lawnmowers, snow blowers, garden tools, fertilizers, outdoor furniture, recreational vehicles and equipment

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Service areas need screening from public views and need to be convenient

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Avoid the temptation to make them too large! Possessions usually expand to fill the available space

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Some service functions can be located in other areas if they are skillfully designed

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Include vegetables in attractive flower and border plantings

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Fruit trees can double as landscape
ornamentals if the design is done
carefully

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Play equipment may go into either area but play areas for small children should be easily viewed from the house

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The Living Area

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The landscape living area is an extension of the home

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Create a personal design that reflects the habits, needs, and desires of the family

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Define living spaces by creating and emphasizing the walls, ceilings, floors, and windows of the outdoor rooms you design

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Plan and use focal points carefully including selected trees or shrubs, statuary, fountains, garden structures, or picturesque views

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The floor of the outdoor room is generally turf although groundcovers are becoming more popular

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Paving surfaces in patios and decks and walkways are part of these floors

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The walls are structures and plants that form the borders of the living area

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The first walls are usually fences but as landscapes grow and mature, fences are enhanced with plants

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Plant walls grow higher and create beautiful, appealing living areas. Plant materials also screen undesirable views

Landscaping Your Home

The ceiling of the outdoor room is mostly sky but the sky is softened, blended and supplemented by the overhead canopy of patio covers and tree branches

Landscaping Your Home

Windows are views that frame and enhance

Landscaping Your Home

Consider the family needs and desires before designing the living area

Landscaping Your Home

Include recreational equipment,
relaxation and cooking areas and
specialty water features or gardens

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Living areas are dynamic. As the ages and interests of the family change, landscapes also change

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Play equipment and sandboxes get replaced with decks and flowerbeds as family interests change

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Designing the Base Map

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A simple map is the first step in turning ideas into a good landscape

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It provides close an analysis of the site and changes are easily made with pencil and eraser instead of crowbar, shovel, and wheelbarrow

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Create the base map by drawing in accurate and clearly defined property boundaries on graph paper

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Include your home and all permanent hard surfaced areas

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Include the location of windows and doors, utility connections, water faucets, overhead wires, and all permanent features

Landscaping Your Home

Add contours for slopes to indicate drainage patterns

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Inventory and map existing plantings if you are going to keep them

Landscaping Your Home

Make special notes of views to frame or make more attractive and viewable and those to screen

Landscaping Your Home

Place compass directions of the on the map and include notes about microclimates such as sun, shade, windy areas, or other problems

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After making this base map, get copies or blue prints to draw on as you experiment with your landscape designs

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If you change your mind or want to make extensive changes, simply start over with a new, clean copy, rather than redrawing everything on graph paper

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Landscaping Principles

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Four basic landscaping principles ensure good design and continuity

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When designing landscapes check to make certain these principles are followed in your design

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Those principles need to be considered throughout the life of the landscape

Landscaping Your Home

As plants grow and develop, they must still fit design principles

Landscaping Your Home

Beauty means the landscape fits together in one piece rather than disjointed structures, plants, and accents

Landscaping Your Home

No element stands out by itself, instead all parts blend together harmoniously

Landscaping Your Home

Strong, observable lines and repetition of various shapes bring unity to the landscape

Landscaping Your Home

Harmonious colors and limited sizes, shapes and textures of plants blend together

Landscaping Your Home

Landscapes work best if the unified background is designed first

Landscaping Your Home

Trees, lawns, fences, patios, are a blank canvas so assemble the landscape elements against this canvas as background

Landscaping Your Home

Just as mixing colors becomes more difficult as you add more colors, assembling landscapes becomes more difficult as by adding more and different plants

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Proportion

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Well-designed landscapes have the structural and plant elements are in scale with one another

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The house largely determines the proportion of the landscape

Landscaping Your Home

Trees and shrubs need to be proportional to the size of the home when they are mature

Landscaping Your Home

This is a major problem as landscapes mature

Landscaping Your Home

Plants are small and proportional for the first few years, but overgrow the area for which they were intended

Landscaping Your Home

It is vital to look at mature specimens and consider plant height and width before including them in the landscape

Landscaping Your Home

Flowerbeds, fences, sidewalks, driveways, should be in proportion with the house

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Tall, two story colonial homes are proportional to large, spreading trees but disproportionate to small tree

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A low, single-story home may be disproportionate to a tall, spreading tree

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Traditional plantings are often crushed next to the home and are short lived because they outgrow the area where they are planted

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A better solution is to move planting areas away from the home and create additional growing room for the plants

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This simple step adds years to the life of the landscape and reduces the need for extensive, garden remodeling

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Balance

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Landscapes are balanced using mass, form, or color to create equal visual weight on either side of the center of interest

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Balance is critical in the landscape

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Symmetrical balance means that one side of the landscape is a mirror image of the other side

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The same trees, shrubs, and others features are placed in even numbers to give this symmetry

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Asymmetrical balance is more popular and easier to maintain and is used in most informal landscaping

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Asymmetrical balance uses differences in size, colors, textures, and plant placement to create balance, instead of the rigid lines of symmetrical balance

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Variety

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Variety is an excellent way to add interest and flow to the landscape

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In a monotype planting, there is no variety, so no emphasis is placed

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Variety creates focal points whether it be unusual trees, differences in sizes of the plant materials, different textures, or different colors

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Careful use of variety allows emphasis to be placed where it is desired. Notice how your eye is drawn to the tall conifer

Landscaping Your Home

That becomes the focal point in the landscape. Add variety from a piece of statuary, an outstanding garden plant, garden bench or other structure

Landscaping Your Home

Too little variety causes monotony

Landscaping Your Home

There is a place for monotony in the landscape

Landscaping Your Home

For area that you prefer people not look at, use plants that create very little visual interest

Landscaping Your Home

Hedges are used as screens for this reason

Landscaping Your Home

Too much variety causes visual confusion

Landscaping Your Home

Your garden is not an arboretum

Landscaping Your Home

Use fewer kinds of plant materials and blend them together

Landscaping Your Home

Too many different plants create confusion particularly in the public landscape

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Landscaping Your Home

Unity

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Unity and variety go together to create a beautiful landscape

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In areas where you like emphasis, variety will help create that

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In areas where no emphasis is desired, lack of variety keeps the eye from being drawn to that area

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Foundation Plantings

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Foundation plantings are placed against the base of the building to blend the vertical lines of the house to the horizontal lines of the soil

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Foundation plantings must be carefully designed

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Unfortunately, they are generally overplanted and are often short lived because they get too crowded

Landscaping Your Home

The best foundation plantings have plant materials that get about 1/2 of the height of the house to the eaves or roofline

Landscaping Your Home

Far too many foundation plantings quickly get out of bounds because the plants grow too large and must be pruned incorrectly keep them functional

Landscaping Your Home

Foundation plantings can solve architectural problems

Landscaping Your Home

If the house looks too narrow for its height, foundation plantings that extend beyond the sides of the home create a feeling of greater width

Landscaping Your Home

Use plants that are easy to care for and do not detract from the house

Landscaping Your Home

Avoid using too many kinds of plants.
They should blend rather than stand out
individually

Landscaping Your Home

Foundation plantings draw the eye toward the focal point that is usually the front door

Landscaping Your Home

They are easily designed on symmetrical homes, but are equally effective on asymmetrical homes

Landscaping Your Home

Do not plant right next to the foundation of the home

Landscaping Your Home

Avoid continuous straight lines of plants across the front of the house

Landscaping Your Home

Avoid plants that grow and cover the windows

Landscaping Your Home

Avoid plants that are too close the foundation

Landscaping Your Home

Avoid plants that bisect the house

Landscaping Your Home

Avoid trying to cover the entire foundation all at once and avoid too many different bright colors or unusual foliage types that detract from the focal point

Landscaping Your Home

Cute baby blue spruces in one-gallon cans soon outgrow their area and must be removed

Landscaping Your Home

Allow sufficient room for the plants to grow to a natural size and shape

Landscaping Your Home

Small plants do not fill the area at first, but in a few years they are the right size and look good for many years

Landscaping Your Home

Select plants that the height is limited genetically, not by pruning shears

Landscaping Your Home

Pruning plants extensively, year after year is a maintenance nightmare and a drudgery

Landscaping Your Home

Shearing usually destroys the natural plant form and beauty. Foundation plantings may not last a lifetime, and some plants may need replacement after 15-20 years

Landscaping Your Home

Create a three dimensional effect for the landscape. Landscaping needs height, width, and depth

Landscaping Your Home

Avoid crushing all the plants up against the house or fence but use attractive, free forms to create and lead the eye toward the focal point

Landscaping Your Home

Provide attractive freeform shrubs in group plantings and allow shrubs to grow to a natural free form

Landscaping Your Home

Avoid trimming with hedge clippers on one or two sides to make them fit the wrong place

Landscaping Your Home

Free form shrubs are always the most attractive unless the entire landscape is dedicated to a formal, highly maintained area

Landscaping Your Home

Choose small growing plants that emphasize focal points

Landscaping Your Home

Small, well-chosen plants lead the eye toward the focal point and emphasize it

Landscaping Your Home

They should not detract from it nor interfere with the form and function of the landscape

Landscaping Your Home

Select plant materials with a mature height of 1/2 the height of the eaves of the home. These plant materials frame the home and are functional for many years

Landscaping Your Home

Taller plants require much more maintenance in the form of pruning

Landscaping Your Home

Place lower plants next to the door to draw the eye to the focal point and create a warm, eye-appealing look

Landscaping Your Home

Avoid These

Landscaping Your Home

Do not clutter the lawn. Lawn generally adds perspective and depth to the landscape

Landscaping Your Home

Breaking up the lawn into many small, individual areas is not aesthetically pleasing

Landscaping Your Home

It is a maintenance nightmare as it is necessary to trim and mow around so many individual plants

Landscaping Your Home

Do not frame windows

Landscaping Your Home

Framing each individual window bisects the home and detracts from the focal point of the front door

Landscaping Your Home

Choose small spreading shrubs. As these plants grow larger, the condition becomes worse and the landscape becomes less attractive

Landscaping Your Home

Do not put large plants under windows

Landscaping Your Home

Constant trimming to keep plants away from windows is not fun and greatly increases maintenance times and costs

Landscaping Your Home

Select plants that stay within the bounds that they are intended for

Landscaping Your Home

Avoid large trees next to homes

Landscaping Your Home

The classic mistake is tiny, one-gallon blue spruces planted next to the home

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For a few years these grow and are acceptable, but soon must be removed and the removal often destroys the home landscape

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Large trees next to the home also damage shingles, siding and foundations in some cases

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Avoid a zigzag pattern across the front of the home

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Zigzag patterns make a cold, harsh look in front of the home and interfere with the enframement of the home and drawing the eye to the focal point

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Plants next to the door should be smaller than corner plantings

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Landscape Designs

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Landscapes Are
Either Formal or
Informal

Landscaping Your Home

Landscape Designs

Formal

Vs

Informal

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Formal landscapes are balanced, with geometric patterns, straight lines and perfect symmetry

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They include fountains, pools, sculptures and plants are often sheared to formal hedges or topiary

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Architecture with formal facades, centered entryways and symmetrical windows lend themselves to this style of landscaping

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Formal landscapes require more maintenance

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Informal are usually lower maintenance

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They are asymmetrical and include more curves and random features but the design still follows basic landscape principles

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Many homes are asymmetrical and lend themselves to an informal style

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Well Done Landscapes often contain a blend of the two designs with some formal symmetry as well as informal plantings

Landscaping Your Home

Mix both types for overall appeal but
don't to overdo it

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Small gardens using both elements are effective

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Avoid radical style changes in small areas

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Design for beauty and ease of maintenance

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Chose accessories carefully to avoid design conflicts

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Gardens are also stylized after their geographical origins

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There are endless variations of different styles of gardens but prominent major styles include:

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Formal or European

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Formal gardens are patterned after medieval knot gardens

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Small, rectangular plots are enclosed by clipped hedges of boxwood or other plants

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Walkways are generally brick or gravel

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These picture-perfect gardens are high maintenance, but are suitable for small areas as accents or focal points

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Oriental Gardens

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Oriental gardens emphasize stones, trees, and shrubs and rely upon unusual shapes and textures to create interests

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Most oriental gardens also include water features

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Oriental gardens are well defined and have few flower beds and limited turfgrass areas

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Wild or Woodland Gardens

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These gardens suggest alpine slopes or meadows, woodlands or desert areas according to plant selection

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Informal flowers including wildflowers and natural plants make these areas very attractive

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Natural stone, wood, and water features are appropriate in such settings

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Cottage or English Gardens

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These gardens feature an abundance of annual and perennial flowers

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Flowerbeds are often backed with formal or informal hedges that are laid out asymmetrically with curves and calculated randomness

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An abundance of different plants, and weathered wood or stone as walkways or borders give these gardens their special appeal

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Spanish or Mediterranean Gardens

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These lend themselves southwestern landscapes, but are also effective with many traditional home styles

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Walls, wrought iron, large paving stones, and small fountains and pools work well in these areas

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Landscape plants including flowers are drought tolerant and able to withstand hostile sites

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They are well balanced symmetrically
and are formal in design

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Contemporary Gardens

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These plantings include raised flower beds, planters, paved areas, decks or patios, and outdoor cooking areas

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Plantings are usually informal and low maintenance

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Turfgrass is an important part of most of these landscapes because it is used as an activity surface, but turfgrass can be replaced with other materials in areas where it is not necessary

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Landscaping adds useable living area,
increases property values and
beautifies the home

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A well designed landscape creates an aesthetic environment that is well worth the time, money and effort invested

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Landscape Design Is Not Just Planting Plants

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Pleasing landscapes follow the same principles used in designing the interior of your home

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Plants are great problem solvers to blend architectural features and natural features

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Personal landscapes make creative statements that reflect your likes and dislikes

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No two individuals are alike, and no two landscapes should be exactly alike

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Add living beauty to your home through plants and related accessories

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Landscaping Is a Great Investment

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Good landscaping enhances the property value of your home if you decide to sell it

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Beautiful landscapes give a positive first impression to give a faster sell

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Surveys show that a well-designed landscape will raise the property value between 10-30 percent

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Well-designed landscapes appreciate in value over the lifetime of the landscape and add significantly to the beauty, comfort, and financial return of the property

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Personalizing Your Landscape

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Like many accomplishments in life, the hardest part of landscaping the home is knowing where to get started

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Inspiration to find a starting point is often difficult

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There are many sources of inspiration to help you decide on how to design and personalize your landscape

Landscaping Your Home

Collect a scrapbook of ideas for
landscape designs

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Inspiration comes as you travel and take pictures of desirable landscapes

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Clip pictures or articles from magazines, newspapers, or other sources

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Collect and sort those according to various styles and determine what looks and feels right to you

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This collection is a dynamic process and continues long after you have designed your landscape as you consider remodeling your plantings

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An another good source of inspiration is artwork

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Sculpture, photographic art, paintings, and other kinds of artwork provide good design characteristics and wonderful blending of colors

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Look at advertisements that feature plant materials

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Advertisers go to a great deal of trouble to find beautiful backdrops for their subjects

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These are often private or public gardens

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Many public gardens are good sources of landscape design

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Although your garden will not be as large as these formal and attractive gardens, small segments or areas contain ideas to incorporate into your garden

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Parks, urban plazas, office buildings, shopping malls, and other kinds of professionally maintained landscapes also give ideas

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Individual homes also offer excellent ideas

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Snapping a quick picture gives you something to analyze and incorporate in your later designs

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Public Gardens to Visit

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Public gardens in the area worth visiting for inspiration in landscape design and plant materials include:

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Thanksgiving Gardens off exit 287 on
I-15 (admission charge)

Landscaping Your Home

Red Butte Gardens located at the mouth of red butte canyon (admission charge)

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Temple Square and the Church Office Building plaza (free tours by calling 801

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Jordan River Peace Gardens located at
1065 South 900 West

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Sugarhouse park located at 1300 East
2100 South

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State Capitol Building located at the top of State Street in Salt Lake City

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As you visit these gardens, notice the mature trees, flower beds, color combinations, and the design characteristics

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Incorporate some special memory
landscapes

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If favorite childhood memories of a grandmother's garden, or a woodland retreat appeal to you, incorporate that design into your landscape

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Analyze colors, materials, forms, and design to determine how to best to create your own garden

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Sources of Design Help

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Additional sources of help are available from many different landscape professionals

Landscaping Your Home

Landscape architects

have a degree in landscape architecture and must be licensed to practice in the state

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They provide comprehensive design assistance

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Many landscape architects specialize in commercial landscape projects, but some do outstanding residential designs

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They are very valuable particularly if you are developing property or building a home

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Landscape architects are in the telephone directory or contact the local office of the American society of landscape architects. Their fee is usually a percentage of a cost of the project

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Landscape contractors

are also licensed by the state after passing a test

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They install plant materials, related landscape structures, and do construction including terraces, walls, gazebos, pools, and sprinkler systems

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Landscape contractors can also design planting plans

Landscaping Your Home

Landscape designers
can also design planting plans

Landscaping Your Home

Landscape designers have no formal education or licensing requirement

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Landscape designers often do excellent designs. As with all of these professions, ask for references so you can see their work

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Some landscape designers will do some light duty planting and preparation work

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Nurseries and Garden Centers

Often have individuals that do
landscape designs

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Some will offer a visit to your site, other require you bring in your plot plan. They make a design for a small fee

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The fee is sometimes waived if you agree to buy your plants from them

Landscaping Your Home

Some do not design landscapes but offer valuable plant suggestions on where and how to use them

Landscaping Your Home

When using professional landscape design assistance, provide the designer with enough information to help personalize your design

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Otherwise, they will design a beautiful landscape that may or may not be the landscape you wanted

Landscaping Your Home

Share your likes and dislikes and information about the landscape style you desire

Landscaping Your Home

Their design is no better than the information you provide them. Spend the time and effort to do the necessary research before starting the design process

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Landscaping Your Home

Failure to Plan + Failure to Care = Frustration, Higher Costs, Poorly Maintained Plantings

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