

# Top 10 Tips for Great Landscaping for Do-It-Yourselfers

Many people ask us what would make their yard look best when they are maintaining it themselves. It is a very broad question with many variables such as budget, gardening skills, local climate, personal choices, how much time will be spent in the yard, the level of commitment to sustainable landscaping practices, etc.

The tips below are a good start to keeping your garden landscape looking great.

## **1. Invest in a good landscape plan for a low maintenance garden.**

Whether beautiful or not, most of you may resent your garden if it causes too much work and takes too much time to maintain. Having a proper landscape design in the first place is the key. You can spend a lot of time reading to create a design yourself or consult a professional landscaper experienced in sustainable gardens to create a plan for you.

Try to incorporate drought tolerant plants, automatic & water efficient irrigation systems with drip emitters for plants, lawn alternatives, deer tolerant plants, rock gardens for low maintenance, and/or mulch to reduce weed growth in your design. An effective design will cut down your energy costs dramatically.

Well placed trees protect your home from winter wind and summer sun, reduce consumption of resources like water, pesticides and fuel for landscaping and lawn maintenance and help to control noise and air pollution.

## **2. Do away with that front lawn if you don't use it.**

We always suggest customers to give up lawn in the front yard if it is only for ornamental purpose as it is high maintenance in terms of time and resources. See our [lawn alternatives](#) in portfolio section.

## **3. Choose a mixture of plants that provide year-round interest.**

Make sure to include plants which provide year round interest for all 4-seasons. You can look up our [Plant Resource Guide](#) for ideas. The goal is to have flowering trees and/or shrubs throughout spring and summer, fall foliage in autumn and good structure in winter.

## **4. Create Layering in your planting beds.**

Plan your planting beds to have 3 rows of plants: a back row with the tallest plants, a middle row with medium height, and a front row with ground cover or shortest plants. Incorporate some architectural plants. Use the principles of repetition, both in the planting bed and elsewhere in your yard to have structure with freedom.

## **5. Incorporate hardscape and use the same materials consistently.**

Your hardscape material should always be constructed from the same type of material or matching whether you are doing pathways, patios, retaining walls or outdoor spaces so that you tie all the items together and not look out of place. For low traffic areas, you can even create walkways with flagstone stepping stones set in gold fines or with ground covers in between to create interest.



### **6. Invest in good soil and effective mulch.**

Good soil preparation and incorporating healthy organic soil and compost is a good investment for having healthy lush looking landscaping. Adding 2-4" thick layer of mulch over layers of newspaper or cardboard or weed fabric provides a barrier for nasty weeds and cuts down your time spent on weeding. This is one thing that you should try not to cut down costs as it is the starting point for creating stunning looks in your garden

### **7. Use annuals and seasonal bulbs to supplement perennial color.**

Though Perennial flowers add wonderful color to your planting beds, but they bloom only for certain time. By incorporating annuals and seasonal bulbs into a do-it-yourself landscaping plan, you will have year round color.

### **8. Add statuary, pots, bird baths and water features to create focal points.**

Good landscape designs are anchored by focal points. Using statuary and potted plants in between beds create architecture and visual interest. Having bird baths attracts wild life to your yard. The latest trend is to use water features as focal points. Water features are not only visually appealing, but provide soothing sounds, may be to mask that unwanted traffic noises in your neighborhood. Using pre-fab plastic liners, durable pumps, flexible tubing and cheap fountains, they are lot easier to install. Once you get creative you can move to the next step of creating simple waterfalls.

### **9. Add drama with foliage.**

Flowers are great, but you can use varying foliage textures and colors are used to spice up the yard with diversity. Evergreen plants like conifers, while lacking flowers altogether, have foliage that offers a myriad of different textures and colors. Moreover, not all evergreens are green! So replace plants that don't flower with eye-catching alternatives, like Newzealnd Flax, Philodendron selloum, or a cutleaf Japanese maple.

### **10. Cut back the jungle and consider new angles.**

Several everyday plants such as azaleas, forsythias, hollies and rhododendrons, will fill out with new growth season after a season, even if you hack them down to stumps. However be careful with cutting down yews and junipers, which won't grow new leaves on old wood and may need to be removed altogether if they're severely overgrown. Most yards have almost all the plants along the foundation and the property lines. But if you place yours throughout different parts of the property, you'll create a depth of field that makes your home look farther away from the road.