

Do-it-Yourself Landscape Design Tips

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- ❖ Beware of expert advice. Just because someone works at a nursery or has maintained lawns for years doesn't mean they are well-informed about plant names and characteristics, etc.
- ❖ Plan to read several articles and books to acquire comprehensive insights that might be applied to your site. Beware of lists of tips, because they cannot reflect variables that are particular to your site.
- ❖ Consider all activities for the space's potential use.
- ❖ Design the entire site at once and install sections in phases to spread the time, energy, and cost over several years.
- ❖ Choose a theme or choose eclecticism. Do not do a partial theme, such as oriental with medieval European highlights, or you likely will sow aesthetic discord.
- ❖ Accentuate areas of focus, such as the front entrance.
- ❖ Know your scientific plant names. There is no one "red" azalea or "yellow" camellia.
- ❖ Decide whether you are creating a museum or an outdoor room. People go to botanical gardens and museums to view individual items. The background is there to focus attention on the art, screen areas, etc.
- ❖ Place right plant in the right place. Know the ultimate size, growth rate, light requirements, moisture needs, etc. of each plant. Don't plant trees and shrubs too close to buildings, patios, walkways, etc.
- ❖ Make sure plants are not under your eaves, to take advantage of rainfall.
- ❖ Make sure plants have room at their ultimate size to allow airflow between them and your house.
- ❖ Be sensitive about tree selection near buildings, walks, and septic systems. Even though one tree species may be planted safely away from an area of concern, another tree species may have aggressive root systems that can be disruptive.
- ❖ Be discerning when selecting hardscape elements (gates, fences, walls, trellises, pergolas, bird feeders, patio materials, etc.). Consider the architecture of your home and / or the theme you have chosen to direct your choices.
- ❖ If you're not confident about designing your entire site, enlist a landscape architect to design a well integrated and functional site layout, before you spend money on select areas, to avoid the extra expense of removing a recent installation that can't be well integrated with other site requirements.

