

Backyard Landscape Design Guidelines

- Backyard Theme: Themes are a personal choice and way to many to list, so choose one that pleases you. Themes can be based on your senses color, sight, smell and touch. There are structure themes that can come from a focal point. Other themes: Southwest, Cottage, or a Japanese garden.
- Focal Points: Unique Plants or Trees, Arbors, Gazebos, Water features, Pools. Most Backyards need only 1 or maybe 2 focal points depending on the size of your yard. I find it much easier to do a design once I have a focal point chosen, I can build the design from there.
- Colors: By landscaping with the colors you like you will reduce the number of plants that you have to consider and your finished landscape will be more pleasing to you.
- Natural Light: This is critical in plant selection by choosing the right plant for sun or shade you are insuring good growth of that plant.
- Surface Drainage: If installing retaining walls, berms, large areas of concrete or stone or any other form of altering your existing ground area you must consider the drainage of water. Make sure that the water will flow away from your house and low lying areas in your backyard.
- Soil: Good soil promotes great plants get your soil right for the plants. Most County Extensions will do a soil test for you if not you can go online and send your soil off to be tested.
- Hardiness Zone: This is also very important in choosing the right plant. All most all plants will have a tag that will tell you the hardiness zone. A good plant encyclopedia will also tell you the hardiness of plants.
- Maintenance: Low maintenance landscapes are the most preferred. Why create a landscape that you constantly have to be maintaining.
- Plants: Know your plants before you go shopping. A good plant encyclopedia will help you in all aspects from color, texture, foliage, growing habits, form and size.
- Landscape Lighting: If you are planning on lighting put it in the design now. Then when you start to install your plants and hardscapes you can run your wires easier.
- Codes: Check for any City or State building codes and know your property boundaries. Also check any Home Association Rules.
- Plant for all Four Seasons: Many landscapes will look spectacular during the growing season but when Fall or winter comes there is hardly anything left to see. Choose some plants that won't lose their foliage or when the foliage is gone the structure of the plant or tree leaves you a interesting look.

Remember there is no one backyard landscape design that fits all landscapes, you want your backyard to be pleasing to you.

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