

LANDSCAPING DESIGN ESSENTIALS



Looking for a refuge? Seeking a place to watch wildlife and experience the change of seasons? Gardens are an important part of our lives today. We like to tame them and accentuate their best qualities so they can inspire us and cultivate the growth of our imagination.

Enhancing home landscapes can be a joyful experience for many homeowners who plan and design with the assistance of talented specialists. Although the landscape process often starts with great ideas, there are usually problems to work through as well in order to make the landscape function properly. Whether beginning from scratch or building on an existing landscape, consulting an experienced landscape designer will help you focus your attention where it is most needed while solving landscape issues. A professional can inspire you and help identify other areas you may want to explore whether you have a small entry renovation or acreage to develop.

When designing your outdoor spaces, there is so much to consider, so many directions to take and ideas to ponder. Let's concentrate on the essentials intrinsic to the creative process. Focusing in on an appropriate garden style for your home is a critical starting point for you to discuss with your designer. Many differing styles of landscape design are available to meet the architectural genre and elements of each home. Maintaining a sense of unifying elements will help build an award-winning landscape. Balancing visually powerful aspects married with quietly expressed gestures, will provide a foundation for a beautiful landscape – whether it is Contemporary, Infused Asian or Italian Wall Garden or something else.

Along with your designer, you are controlling the space and your designer can unite a series of ideas into a cohesive vision to complete a successful blueprint. The merging of your interests, ideas and personality can be fused into a plan that blossoms into wonderful results. Once you've established your vision, you'll want to start working with the spaces - framing views or creating focal points within your property. Consider ideas for creating a highlight within your landscape by grouping perennials or planting shrubs 'en masse' or tying portions of your yard together. Alternatively, strategic plant choices can also divide your spaces into smaller more intimate areas or rooms. Examine the usefulness of landscape items such as large rock boulder groupings, fire trough, stream or watercourse or pond. These types of elements don't necessarily require significant maintenance and can enhance your property's value. Contemplate building spaces that may provide a refuge

for spiritual solitude, a healing garden or a reading sanctuary such as in a Bohemian garden.

Throughout the design process, you may flirt with creating sinuous pathways or lines of desire that will lead you from room to room and cause movement further into your gardens. Connecting elements may also become a focus and a resting place itself such as a unique bench, a moss covered rock cored as a water feature, weathered furniture or even an artful sculpture piece. Grade changes can be accommodated with a sunken fire-pit patio, cantilevered concrete 'lookout' or stonewall to make the transition with poise.

Building an appropriate space for features like a dining pergola, an outdoor kitchen and bar or a cabana for your pool or hot tub can provide a sense of belonging and anchor the feature into the

"One of the most delightful things about a garden is the anticipation it provides."

— W. E. Johns



landscape. If planned thoughtfully, it can also become a destination to explore adding interest and mystery to enhance your outdoor entertaining.

Ensuring your outdoor design is congruent with your home architecture will unify the landscape. In the big picture, the choices you make in consultation with your landscape designer will directly affect your budget and your results and must ensure your outdoor space work with your interior style and exterior home materials. Color is an important aspect of design playing very intimately with your personality and character whether it is strong and bold, or peaceful and muted. Texture and size of foliage either robust or dainty form and soft or aggressive shapes all influence the composition. As well, one should plan for sensory interest focusing on touch, taste, sound, sight and fragrance. A vast array of differing elements and combinations from will create an outdoor space, a garden room, a style, and a landscape.

Helping you navigate this territory, your landscape design consultant can ease the burden by creating your space based on the information gathered during the consultation process. Your consultant will also work with you

to develop working gardens, entertaining and play spaces, foundation and feature plantings, and assist with choices for furniture, planting containers or accessories.

Additionally, another important consideration in your plan is the sustainability of your landscape. Your choices will impact the environment around you. Current technology provides greater options for reducing the amount of energy consumption and carbon footprint. Your consultant should be able to advise you of your best options and provide research on products to achieve your goals within the constraints of your particular environment.

Garden styles can be as unique as each homeowner and a seasoned designer can determine the information needed to suit your home's character and your personality. Whether showcasing your home or creating a subtle and elegant entry to your property, your designer will compile the factors that impact your landscape and deliver the story of your budding and evolving property. Your landscape is an ever-changing and growing viewport. In a sense, it's a journey, a transition of indoor to outdoor - views, vistas and destinations that draw your eye through the spaces before you.

Main photo at beginning of article by Bob Hewitt
All other photos by Duane Ensing



duane ensing landscape design
103-891 Attree Avenue, Victoria, BC V9B 0A6
Phone 250.881.0706
Email: info@landscapesolutions.bc.ca