

Services Guide

Landscape Contractors and Designers

**NOTE 1: This information is pulled from credible sources. This information is a guide. Any information used from this guide must be re-contextualized (no copying and pasting). Re-contextualize information incorporating SEO and business specifics.*

**NOTE 2: For MCP websites, stick to general information and avoid specifics.*

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1. LANDSCAPE CONTRACTORS AND DESIGNERS OVERVIEW

1.1 SEO

KEYWORDS (FIRST ROW - BEST, LAST ROW - LEAST)			
• Landscape	• Patio	• Pergola	• Gazebo
• Sod	• Backyard Ideas	• Fencing	• Irrigation
• Deck	• Landscape Architecture	• Landscaping	• Landscaper
• Fountain	• Landscaping Ideas	• Retaining Wall	• Artificial Grass
• Planters	• Landscape Design	• Outdoor Kitchen	• Outdoor Lighting
• Fence	• Stonework	• Hardscaping	• Vinyl Decking

1.2 PROCESS

*List the sources here that were used for this information.

<http://scarlettslandscaping.com/hardscape-vs-softscape-the-difference/>

Steps	Description
1. Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Before you put shovel to dirt, make sure you have a vision for how the finished product will look. You'll need a step-by-step plan and realistic budget for every stage of your landscaping project.
2. Preparation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Don't start installing anything new until you've taken care of any problems with your yard. Some things to address are drainage, leveling, tree roots, stumps, debris, and grading. Grading involves forming a level base or one with a specified slope for construction work such as a foundation.
3. Hardscaping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ With hardscaping, you install the permanent features like retaining walls, patios, and walkways. Hardscaping provides the framework upon which all your plants and smaller items will depend.
4. Softscaping	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ With softscaping, you'll add shrubbery, flowers, other plants, and smaller landscaping items. Softscaping allows you to sculpt around the larger hardscaping elements and give your yard a finished look.

1.3 LANDSCAPING SERVICES

Landscaping Services:

Type	Description	Benefits
Landscape Design	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Start with an idea and an honest assessment, repair any existing issues and play with layout before you begin working○ Take the time to choose your plants wisely, based on environmental conditions and your own tastes.○ Work with a professional landscaper that you trust	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ A professional landscape designer can give your residential or commercial property a cohesive, functional, and beautiful design.
Residential	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Residential landscaping involves a number of different elements (eg. Paving, planters, water features), and serves to provide you, your family, and your guests with a comfortable, functional, and beautiful outdoor space.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Improve the look and functionality of your home's outdoor space
Commercial	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Commercial landscaping makes your business look professional, welcoming, and appealing.○ Commercial landscaping often includes trees, shrubs, flowers, stonework, walkways, water features, and lawn maintenance.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ With professional landscaping, you can make a good first impression to both your clients and your employees.

2. LANDSCAPE DESIGN

General:

For tips, the latest landscaping trends, how-tos and more, visit <https://trustedpros.ca/articles/landscaping>

*List the sources here that were used for this information.

<https://trustedpros.ca/articles/landscaping/how-to-do-a-landscape-design-from-scratch>

2.1 DREAM AND ASSESS

- First, what do you want from your yard? Will this be a place for your family to

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hang out and play, or do you strictly want to improve the view from inside? Are you interested in controlling your heating and cooling costs with trees or would you rather allow natural light to filter in?

- These questions help to define the basic theme of your landscape plan, and give you a goal. Move on to the assessment stage with that end goal in mind and look honestly at the current state of your property.
- Jot down the size of your yard, including length and width, as well as any major changes in grade. Note the location of existing landscaping features, such as patios, sheds, pools, gardens, trees, play structures, and fences. It helps to sketch out your property on paper, omitting any features that you are willing to get rid of or move.

2.2 PLAN TO FIX AND REPAIR

*List the sources here that were used for this information.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grading_%28engineering%29

- Some areas of your yard must be repaired or altered before the work moves forward. Common challenges include:
 - Grading: if your yard isn't level, grading can create a more even foundation for your project.
 - Soil consistency: Heavy clay makes it difficult to establish flower beds, while sandy soil limits the type of trees and flowers
 - Tree location: Transplanting trees to another location may help to open up your yard
 - Water or drainage issues: Check for stubborn puddles after a rain storm and make note of any areas that seem particularly dry
 - Lack of privacy: Many modern suburbs are wide open and creating a private oasis in your yard may seem almost impossible
 - Too much wind: Environmental conditions like excessive wind or glaring sun can keep you from enjoying time out in the yard
- Once you identify the challenges, look for solutions. Grading issues can often be solved with retaining walls or by hiring an excavation company to bring in or take out soil. The latter method also helps to improve soil conditions and could help with drainage issues.
- Hire a landscape company to transplant larger trees and consider planting coniferous trees or building a fence to improve privacy and help cut down on wind.
- Talk to friends and neighbors about how they have handled landscaping challenges.

2.3 PLAY WITH DIFFERENT LAYOUTS

- Larger features anchor your landscape plan. Think of your yard as a room in your home and the landscape features as furniture or décor items. Place each feature in the best location for traffic flow, privacy and soil conditions.

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- Even if your yard is oddly shaped, imperfections can make things more interesting. When landscaping a rear yard that's tiny, narrow, sloped or not quite symmetrical, embrace its quirks and use creative design tricks to accentuate or work around its unusual shape or situation.

2.4 SET A BUDGET

- Once you have an idea what your needs and wants are, you should come up with a realistic budget for your project. Take a look at your finances and look into financing options if needed.
- Have a budget in mind before you bring in any landscape designers for estimates.

2.5 PLAN THE STAGES

- Each step should build on the last. Think of the project in layers, and map out a plan that includes the tasks in each layer, projected cost and tentative timeline.

2.6 CHOOSE YOUR PLANTS WISELY

- Keep in mind which hardiness zone you're in and consider your maintenance habits and overall taste.
- Keep all 4 seasons in mind. Make sure you have some spring-blooming flowers, some summer plants, and some evergreen so your garden will look great all year long.

3. LANDSCAPING

3.1 WATER FEATURES

General:

- Water features add life and movement to your yard.
- You can use a rainwater barrel to collect water during rainy seasons and use it later to keep your plants green all summer long.
- A fountain can create a fun place for children to play in summer.

Types of Water Features:

- Fountains
- Ponds
- Waterfalls
- Streams
- Bird baths

3.2 PLANTERS

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- Planters can be constructed of cedar, stone, or man-made materials
- Planters can be made in all shapes and sizes, and using planters of different heights can add dimension to your yard.

3.3 FIRE FEATURES

General:

- Add warmth to your backyard during cool evenings

Types of Fire Features:

- Fire pits
- Fire tables
- Outdoor fireplaces

3.4 SOD

*List the sources here that were used for this information.

<http://www.artsnursery.com/page/turf>

General:

- Also called turf
- Made of grass and the part of the soil beneath it held together by the roots or a piece of thin material
- Usually comes in large rolls that are laid out flat on ploughed earth
- Great for areas with droughts and water restrictions in the summer

Information about Sod:

- When planting, always purchase a few extra rolls to ensure you have enough to finish the job. Any extras can always be used to patch up troubled areas of your existing lawn.
- Turf is highly perishable. Once cut, the average roll must be planted within 3 days or should be thrown out.
- Sod-laying instructions:
 - Till and level the area where sod will be laid
 - Moisten the soil 1 or 2 days in advance of planting
 - Rake the top soil for a final leveling
 - Start laying sod in a straight line ensuring each piece is firmly abutted to its neighbour.
 - Stagger each new row to ensure the connecting area do not form a straight line
 - Once you have completed laying all the sod, use a lawn roller to ensure firm contact between the soil and sod roots.
 - Water the lawn regularly and deeply. Daily for new plantings, less often as the sod matures and begins to establish itself.
 - Do not mow the lawn for at least 3-4 weeks

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- Apply fertilizer during the growing seasons, fall and spring. Newly established sod can benefit from starter fertilizers that have more phosphorus

3.5 ARTIFICIAL TURF

*List the sources here that were used for this information.

<http://scarlettslandscaping.com/services/artificial-turf/>

General:

- Synthetic fibres that look and feel like real grass.
- Great for areas with droughts and water restrictions in the summer

Features of Artificial Turf:

- Looks and feels real
- It is tough and sturdy
- It is almost maintenance free
- It is environmentally friendly
- Safe for children
- Pet friendly
- Outstanding return on investment

3.6 RETAINING WALLS

*List the sources here that were used for this information.

<http://scarlettslandscaping.com/services/walls/>

<http://www.aboutcivil.org/retaining-wall-definition-types-uses-retaining-walls.html>

<http://www.allanblock.com/what-is-a-retaining-wall.aspx>

General:

- A retaining wall is a structure that retains (holds back) any material (usually earth) and prevents it from sliding or eroding away.
- Can be installed in a wide variety of colours, sizes, and textures.
- Can incorporate straight or curved lines, steps, and corners.
- Ideal for slope support and widening areas that would otherwise be unusable.
- Retaining walls are often used for grade changes, widening driveways, or creating more space in a patio outdoor area.

Types of Retaining Walls:

- Gravity wall
- Geogrid reinforced wall

Retaining Wall Materials:

Common retaining wall products include railroad ties or treated timbers as well as wall stones, natural stones, bricks and concrete block.

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- Wood
- Cast-in place (mortared retaining walls): veneers, bricks, flagstones
- Segmental retaining walls (SRW): mortarless blocks

3.7 LIGHTING

*List the sources here that were used for this information.

<http://universitiesprinklers.com/landscape-lighting/>

General:

- Landscape lighting lets you enjoy the beauty of your outdoor setting during the evening hours,
- Increases safety and security
- Can significantly expand your living space while extending your time for recreation, relaxation, and entertaining outdoors

Examples of Lighting:

1. Path lights
2. Deck lights
3. Pond lights
4. Spotlights

3.8 IRRIGATION

*List the sources here that were used for this information.

<http://universitiesprinklers.com/irrigation-systems-installation/>

<http://togetherweconserve/landscape.com/Garden-Resources/IrrigationType.php>

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Drip_irrigation

Benefits:

- An efficient irrigation system cuts water usage
- Frees up your time
- Great investment
- Programmable for when you're away

Types of Irrigation:

Type	Description	Benefits
Low Flow	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Low flow systems refer to micro spray, drip emitters, or drip lines.○ Drip irrigation is preferable for most parts of the garden except lawns.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Saves water and fertilizer and minimizes evaporation

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High Flow	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ High flow systems are fixed spray, rotor, impact, bubbler, and soaker hose	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Delivers a uniform amount of water across each square foot of an irrigated area
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3.9 PERGOLAS

*List the sources here that were used for this information.

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pergola>

<http://www.paradisedecks.com/services/gazebos-pergolas/>

General:

- Pergolas are partially roofed structures forming a shaded walkway, passageway, or sitting area of vertical posts or pillars that usually support cross-beams and a sturdy open lattice, often upon which woody vines are trained.
- A small pergola can serve as an entrance to your yard, while a larger one can be covered with climbing plants to serve as a cool and partially shaded retreat on hot summer days.
- If protection from sun and rain are not primary considerations, a pergola can also be used to define a formal outdoor area, with its partially roofed structure creating a light summery feeling.

3.10 GAZEBOS

*List the sources here that were used for this information.

<http://www.paradisedecks.com/services/gazebos-pergolas/>

<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gazebo>

General Information:

- In modern landscape design, a gazebo can be almost any shape or size, with usability becoming a more important consideration.
- A gazebo can be a perfect shelter for a hot tub, a natural play space for children, an outdoor office, or an exercise area.
- Gazebos are freestanding or attached to a garden wall, roofed, and open on all sides. They provide shade, shelter, ornamental features in a landscape, and a place to rest.

3.11 TRELLISES

*List the sources here that were used for this information.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Trellis_%28architecture%29

General:

- An architectural structure usually made from an open framework or lattice of interwoven or intersecting pieces of wood, bamboo or metal that is normally made to support and display climbing plants, especially shrubs.

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- Trellises are sometimes used to give privacy to your yard or patio area

3.12 PRIVACY SCREEN

*List the sources here that were used for this information.

<https://www.thisoldhouse.com/ideas/10-ways-to-add-privacy-to-your-yard>

General:

- Often installed next to a deck or patio, this is a visually-appealing element that gives you privacy from your neighbours while you enjoy your yard or entertain guests.
- There are myriad ways to add privacy in the landscape, from putting in perimeter plantings to building fences, stone walls, or garden structures.

3.13 FENCING

- See the fences vertical for information

3.14 DECKS

*List the sources here that were used for this information.

<http://www.decks.com/how-to/535/10-tips-for-designing-a-great-deck>

<http://www.popularmechanics.com/home/how-to-plans/how-to/a3490/4275113/>

<https://www.duradek.com/vinyl-decking-vs-composite-decking-is-the-price-worth-the-cost/>

<http://lancasterdeckbuilder.com/comparedeckmaterials.htm>

General:

- Decking materials include pressure-treated wood, cedar, composite materials, vinyl, and more

Deck Materials:

Type	Description	Pros	Cons
Pressure-Treated Lumber	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ No. 1 decking material sold today, and used in about 75% of all new decks	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Affordable, readily available, and easy to cut and fasten with nails or screws○ Chemically treated to resist rot, fungus and bugs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Has a tendency to crack, split and warp.○ Routine maintenance (powerwashing, staining) is necessary
Redwood and Cedar	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Redwood and red cedar are western softwoods,	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Not pumped full of chemicals or preservatives thanks to tannins and oils	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ More costly than PT○ Routine maintenance (powerwashing, stain, finish) is

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	prized for their rich color and natural beauty.	that make them naturally resistant to rot, decay and insects.	necessary <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The level of weather- and bug-resistance is directly related to the amount of heartwood (from the center of the tree).
Tropical Hardwoods	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Tropical hardwoods available for decking include: massaranduba, cumaru, red tauari, tigerwood, ipe, and Philippine mahogany 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ These exotic, rich-grained woods are extremely hard, very durable and naturally resistant to rot and insects. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Because these woods are so dense, they're heavy and difficult to cut and drill. ○ More costly than PT. ○ So dense they don't accept stains well. ○ Most will weather to a soft silvery color if they're not stained
Plastic and Composite Materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Available in a wide range of colours. ○ Composite decking is made of wood fibres and recycled plastic. ○ Plastic lumber is 100% plastic 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Weather- and stain-resistant and won't splinter, warp, rot or split. ○ Low-maintenance with no need to sand, refinish or stain 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Can get mold and mildew ○ Some composites can show decay since they are partly wood ○ Not everyone likes manmade decking ○ More expensive than PT
Aluminum	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Have interlocking edges, which create gap-free, watertight decks ○ Built-in, self-draining channels collect and dispose of rainwater 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Bug-, rot-, rust-, warp-, splinter-, crack-, weather-, mold- and slip-resistant ○ Recyclable ○ Long-lasting powder-coated finish will never peel or blister ○ 3 to 4 times lighter, yet 2 to 3 times stronger than other decking. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ By far, aluminum is the most expensive of the decking options, costing about \$9 per linear foot for a 1 x 6-in. plank.

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Can be cut with the same saws and carbide-tipped blades used to cut wood ○ Stays cooler in the sun than most other decking types due to its heat-dissipation properties 	
Vinyl Membrane	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ The deck is built with a solid wood foundation, and then protected by a vinyl membrane. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Virtually eliminates the issue of wood rot ○ Protects the area underneath the deck ○ Won't cause splinters. ○ Resist insects, mould, stains and scratches ○ Comes in a variety of colours 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ More costly than PT or Cedar. ○ Railing products may be subject to more long term flex, expansion, and contraction than wood or composite materials ○ Not everyone likes manmade decking.

3.15 STONEMWORK AND PAVING

Main Types of Stonework and Paving:

- Interlocking – driveways, parking pads, walkways, pool decks, patios, retaining walls, porches, stairs, window wells, basement walkouts
- Natural – porches, walkways, driveways, stair treads, retaining walls, pool decks, garden rockery
- Concrete – driveways, walkways, porches, garage floors, stairs, shed pads, French curbing

Examples of Stonework and Paving:

*List the sources here that were used for this information.

<http://www.stoneworkslandscape.ca/services.html>

<http://www.landscapingnetwork.com/patios/>

<https://genstone.com/blog/diy-project-ideas/6-ways-faux-stone-can-upgrade-homes-exterior>

Type	Description	Benefits
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Patios	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Paved area adjacent to your house, usually accessible through a French door or sliding glass door○ Often constructed with concrete, flagstone, pavers, brick, tile, cobblestone and permeable paving	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Can expand your living space outdoors by adding an entertaining and dining area
Walkways	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Often constructed with pavers, bricks, gravel, concrete, and other stonework options	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Adds interest to your yard○ When installed in areas you normally walk on in your yard, paved walkways cut down on mud and keep your grass from being trodden down.
Retaining Walls	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Structure that retains (holds back) any material (usually earth) and prevents it from sliding or eroding away.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Ideal for slope support, often used for grade changes and for other functional reasons such as widening driveways, walkways, or creating more space in a patio outdoor area.
Stone Veneer and Siding	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Can be used as an accent for your home, or can be applied to your entire home to give it a face-lift.○ Sometimes faux stone may be used for cost savings.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ May give added support to your foundation.○ Improves the curb appeal of your home.

3.16 OUTDOOR KITCHENS

General:

- Ideal for the summer months when it is too hot to cook inside
- Built-in gas grills, outdoor kitchen islands and refrigerators all come together to create a stylish and functional space during those months when you want to move the heart of your home outside.

*List the sources here that were used for this information.

<http://www.homedepot.com/b/Outdoors-Grills-Grill-Accessories-Outdoor-Kitchens/N-5yc1vZc4po>

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http://www.bbqguys.com/content_content_17738.html

Benefits of Outdoor Kitchens:

- Great way to entertain
- Adds value to your home
- Makes cooking easier
- Extends the living space of your home
- Healthy cooking on the grill