

## WINTER LANDSCAPE PLANNING

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Winter is a good time to begin planning and designing your landscape projects. Landscape planning means creating a plan to make the best use of the space available in the most attractive way. It means shaping the land to make the most of the site's natural advantages. Considering building such necessary structures as fences, walls and patios. Finally, it means selecting and planting the plants that best fit the design. The function of landscape architecture is not only to create and preserve beauty but also to make the surroundings more functional. Other considerations such as conserving water and drought tolerant plants should be in the plan. The smaller the home grounds, the greater the need for proper planning, since every square foot of space and every dollar spent is more critical.

Successful landscape planning involves three considerations. First, consider your land area as a cube of space, very much like a room. Next, when you are looking out each window of the house what do you want to see? Finally, consider the design from outside the house as viewed by you and by others. Establish what goals you consider important. Such as screening the ally, or having garden, flowerbeds, protection from winter winds, summer shade.

When you are remodeling a landscape, carefully study the walk and driveway for convenience, decide which plantings should be saved, and evaluate established activity areas for appropriateness. Do not allow existing developments to prejudice your evaluation. A good approach is to visualize your property as if it had nothing on it. List what you would like to have and what issues must be solved. Determine what you have that helps you achieve your goal. *Do not keep something simply because it is there. If what you have does not work, get rid of it unless the cost is out of your budget!*

Sunshine, rain, snow, wind and cold will influence your landscape design. Consider plantings that give protection from summer sun and allow warmth from the winter sun, such as deciduous trees. Plan so rain and melted snow move away from the house and into the landscape.

An inventory of your family activities will help you in planning the overall layout and use of your land. Allow space for outdoor living needs, the children's play area and the service area. If your family does not want to spend much time working in the yard, keep the design simple and the plantings of the type that do not need much care. Base the planning efforts on how much time you can give to your garden and how much money you can spend to develop your property. Think about maintenance and use design curves and circles into walkways and grass areas to ease mowing.

It is not necessary for you to complete your total design all at once. Your first job is to put on paper what your plan will include when it is completed. Then, as money is available to finish different sections, these sections will fit into the total picture. Completing the entire plan could take several years. Items needed for your landscaping design would make good gifts for holidays and special occasions. By incorporating some small trees, shrubs and perennials into your design the cost is considerably less so you can fill in a larger area, and you will be surprised on how fast they will grow.

The important thing to remember is that once you have begun to plan, your landscape design becomes easier to imagine by breaking the plan down into separate areas and periods for completion. This makes the process less overwhelming!

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