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Elements of Successful Landscape Design

# Overview

A beautiful garden – weather large or small – can be a source of delight year round for you, your family, and visitors to your home. You can entertain guests on a patio or deck, watch birds and other wildlife, or just enjoy the view. If you are just starting to design your garden, this document will give you some ideas on how to get started.

# Landscape Design

When planning the design of your garden, you need to take into account stylistic preferences along with how you would like to use the garden. You may want to think about:

* Style
* Privacy
* Maintenance
* Specific landscaping features
* Cost

Let’s look at each of these in turn.

## Style

One thing to consider is the overall style of your garden. Do you like format gardens, with straight lines, geometric designs, and a certain amount of symmetry? Do you prefer casual “country” gardens, with winding paths, wildflowers, and perhaps a wooden arbor filled with vines? Would you like your garden to look natural, blending into scenery?

## Privacy

Another issue is privacy. Do you have issues with noise or nosy neighbors? Do you want to use hedges or fences to create a private space?

## Maintenance

A third variable is how much time you would like to spend maintaining your garden. Perhaps you love to garden and don’t mind weeding and tending lovingly to each of you plants. Or perhaps you don’t have time to spend gardening and want instead to admire your garden from the patio, with a cool drink and a good novel. In that case, you will want to design a garden that is low maintenance.

If you are concerned about water usage, you can look into xeriscaping. There are many drought-tolerant plants that need very little watering, yet they are hardy and beautiful.

## Specific Landscaping Features

When you design your garden, you have an opportunity to include your favorite landscape features, such as:

* Patios and decks
* Lawns
* Arbors and trellises
* Water features
* Flower beds

The following sections discuss each of these landscape features.

## Patios and Decks

If you like to spend a lot of time either relaxing or entertaining outdoors, then you may want to build a patio or a deck – or both. Patios and decks can extend your home by providing an outdoor space where you can work, play, and even cook. Trees or wooden structures can provide shade, or our patio or deck can bask in the sun.

## Lawns

Although lawns must be put in carefully, require a fair amount of water, and must be mowed regularly, some people feel a garden is not complete without a healthy green lawn. There are types of grass that are quite hardy and require less water, if that is a concern.

## Arbors and Trellises

Arbors and trellises add a lot of charm to a garden. With or without vines curving through them, they can be an interesting focal point and provide shade and privacy.

## Water Features

Have you always dreamed of waking up to the sound of flowing water? You could put in a fountain. Do you find it relaxing to sit by a body or water? Consider adding a small pond to your landscape design.

## Flower Beds

Flower beds add color and texture to your garden. Each flower has its season, and if you plan carefully, your garden can bloom all year round – or almost. When deciding how many of a certain plant to buy, remember that odd number of plants (3, 5, 7, etc.) tend to make the most attractive clusters.

## Cost

Last but not least, you probably have budget constraints that you need to take into account. We could have mentioned this at the beginning, but we wanted you to let your dreams guide you.

There are various ways to save money on landscaping. You can purchase the materials (plants, trees, etc.) at the discount nurseries. You can do a lot of the work yourself. Even on a restricted budget, perhaps you can implement your favorite features.

However, it is probably wise to leave certain tasks – such laying a patio or installing a sprinkler system – to experienced contractors, unless you plan to spend a lot of time learning about how to perform those tasks in a way that will not result in maintenance nightmares later on.

# Conclusion

Designing your garden gives you an opportunity to let your imagination run wild. You can transform even very small spaces into summer – and winter – wonderlands.