

Plan Landscaping To Suit Your Home And Lifestyle

How's your landscaping these days? Does it complement your house? Does it suit you and your life style?

Are you sitting in a lovely new house which is sitting on a blank empty lot, or are you living in an older house that is getting lost in a tangle of overgrown shrubbery? In either case you need some new landscaping and now is the time to make some plans.

THE FIRST STEP is to decide what kind of yard you'd like to have. Then consider whether what you would like to have is suitable for the needs of your family. Also, can your yard be developed into what you'd like to have. Is it physically and economically feasible.

One of the decisions to be made is the quality of your landscaping. Are you going to aim just for a pretty decoration for your house, which is what so many people settle for, or are you going to use plants and paving and other man-made features to organize the area around your house into a series of usable outdoor spaces.

It can be a place where people gather and linger a bit when they are arriving or departing. Wide steps and a broad paved area near the front door can help give a feeling of welcome. A generously wide front walk will give this feeling, too. On the other hand, narrow steps and a narrow-walk detract from the feeling of welcome.

The front yard landscaping can be pressed into service to solve some other problems, too. Trees and shrubs can help with climate control.

If your house faces west, the afternoon sun may create an unpleasant glare in your living room or kitchen. A low-branched flowering tree can be placed where it will block the sun and at the same time provide something beautiful to look at from inside the house. Also, a large tree with branches that hang over the roof will act like an air conditioner and keep these rooms much cooler in summer.

In the back yard, the landscaping can make your garden a private outdoor living room. Plan a patio that

is convenient to get to from the back door. Paving or some firm surface underfoot is necessary to take the hard, intensive wear that such an area will get. Make it amply large to accommodate family dining, games and entertaining.

AFTERNOON SHADE is needed in summer. A trellis roof with vines can make a pleasant light-dappled shade for the patio. Sometimes, the house or garage roof can be extended to cover all or part of the patio.

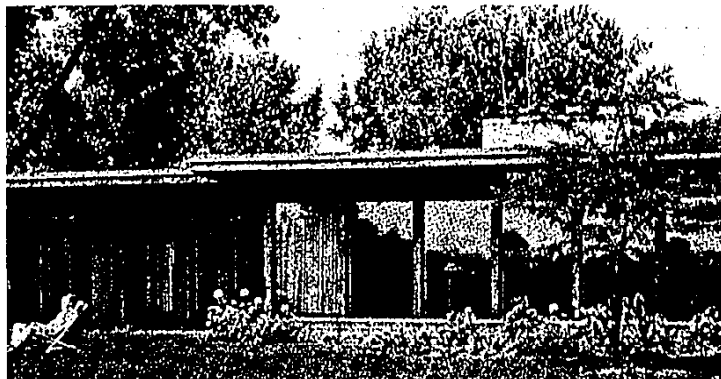
A well-placed tree or two can provide enough shade for summer comfort. If you are planning brand new landscaping it might pay to splurge here and buy a fairly large tree. Or, if you are remodeling old landscaping and have a mature tree, it may be a good idea to locate the patio where it can benefit from the shade of this existing tree. Patios don't have to be right next to the house.

Privacy can be provided in several ways including putting a fence or border of shrubs around the entire back yard. If this is not desirable or feasible, the patio can be screened by a section of fencing, or some trees and shrubs can be strategically located so this crucial area is private and the rest of the yard is not enclosed.

When planning steps, walls, fences and patios, keep in mind the materials of the house. Don't choose materials that are of a different character or mood than those already present. Try to repeat what has already been used, or choose something that will blend. Remember that steps should be sturdy or they will be unsafe.

Finally, plan a pleasant view to be seen from the windows of your house and from your back patio. Place shrubs and trees to screen undesirable features such as your neighbor's trash cans, and arrange the plantings to frame and accent good views.

There are many other things your yard can do, and many ways it can be used. Before you buy any plants, study your house and grounds and make a plan. Then you will be able to develop landscaping that will be beautiful and useful and meaningful.



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