



Proper Landscaping Can Increase The Value Of Your Home

By Glenn Curtis

Undoubtedly, most of us can appreciate the fact that a successful landscape project can add significantly to the enjoyment of ones home and property by making it not only more attractive, but functional as well.

But did you know that properly designed and installed landscaping also represents a worthwhile investment that can actually add as much as 15% -20% to the overall resale value of your home?

In fact, a study conducted by "Money Magazine" reports that quality Landscaping yields the highest rate of return of any home improvement project, even more than remodelling a kitchen, bathroom, or the addition of a swimming pool.

Similarly, the magazine reported a recovery value of 100 to 200 percent in landscaping projects especially if they are "well designed, installed and harmonized with the surroundings nearby". In other words, a homeowner can at the very least expect to recover the funds invested in a landscape type project if the property is to ever to be sold.

In contrast, a kitchen remodeling was given a recovery rate of 75 to 125 percent, while a bathroom remodeling received a rate of 20 to 120 percent and a 20 to 50 percent rate was given for a swimming pool installation.

Furthermore, it must also be noted that a properly designed and installed landscape project, as with any wise investment, can quickly appreciate over time as the plant material increases in value as it continues to mature. Likewise, a skilfully installed patio, walkway, or retaining wall system for example, unlike cars or furnishing, can easily be expected to maintain their value over the years.

Nevertheless, the most important factor in creating any successful landscape project is to begin with a properly crafted landscape design or plan. And yet while many homeowners with some form of gardening experience are capable of creating and even installing their own

landscaping with fairly positive results, it is still advisable, especially with a large scale project, to first consult with a landscape architect or with a professional landscaping firm which also offer this service. It is suggested that at the very least, you request a consultation design or a set of finished design plans complete with a detailed plant list, and if necessary, construction details for your particular project.

These professionals, have extensive knowledge and training in the art of landscaping ranging from horticulture and creative design, to landscape construction and soil sciences, are able to effectively make the most of a given site or location while tailoring the final design to your particular needs, budget and preferences.

There are numerous advantages to this type of planning and all of which result in saving you valuable time and money by avoiding potentially costly mistakes and many unexpected expenses.

A good plan allows you to visualize and pre-approve the projects intended final results before any actual work begins. And should you require any changes, the modifications changes can easily be made upon the drawing rather than the costly alternative of altering the project on site after work is already in progress or perhaps even completed.

Should you decide to hire a landscape professional to realize your project, developing a plan allows your contractor to prepare more accurate price quotations based upon concrete job specifications that already have your approval, rather than submitting a quotation based upon speculation as to what the contractor believes you really would like to see when the project is finally completed.

And with costs always on the increase, budgeting is surely a major concern, especially for the first time homebuyer. Planning allows you to effectively divide the entire project into smaller and more manageable long-term stages or "mini projects".

In most cases, it is recommended to begin with the "hardscaping" or the construction phase of the project such as the installation of the driveway, walkways, patios etc, and to eventually complete the design with the "softscaping" including the planting of the various beds, shrubs, trees, and flowers, Therefore, the work can be done gradually as your budget permits to eventually achieve a fully landscaped property. In addition, with the aid of a good landscape design, you can avoid what I like to term as costly "double working". In other words, you would avoid installing the gardens and integrated flagstone walkway that is suggested within your plan for the sides of your property until such time as the proposed backyard patio and surrounding gardens have been fully installed, Otherwise not only would future access for construction equipment and material to the backyard area be severely limited, but the previously installed plantings and / or the sidewalk installation run the risk of being severely damaged and therefore would require rebuilding at additional expense.

By carefully investing into quality designed and installed landscaping, you will have taken perhaps one of the biggest steps towards maximizing not only the beauty and enjoyment of your home, but the value of your property as well.