

GREEN PERSPECTIVES

LANDSCAPE DESIGN

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PAGE 1 OF 2

Thinking About Your Garden & Frequently Asked Questions

Thinking About Your Garden

These questions will help you prepare for your first meeting with a designer.

1. What uses will you make of your garden?

- Creating a beautiful view from inside the house
- Creating curb appeal from the street
- Growing herbs, vegetables, fruit, or flowers for cutting
- Sitting outside, especially in a sunny or shady spot
- Cooking and entertaining
- Enjoying a pool or hot tub
- Providing a place for kids or pets to play
- Providing privacy from neighbors

2. How would you describe yourself as a gardener?

- I like to work in the garden every chance I get
- I enjoy gardening occasionally, but not all the time
- I would put some effort into edibles, but not much else
- I enjoy light gardening as a stress reliever, but don't care for regular maintenance
- I like looking at my garden, but have no desire to work in it
- I don't pay much attention to the garden, one way or the other

3. How do you want the garden to feel?

- Traditional or modern
- Whimsical and lively or serene and meditative
- Manicured or natural

4. Here are some distinctive garden types. Which of these appeal to you?

- A four-season garden (interest year-round)
- A native plants garden
- A "deer-proof" garden
- A garden for children
- A garden for entertaining
- A low-allergen garden
- A container or rooftop garden
- A garden that emphasizes a particular climate, geography, or time period:
 - Mediterranean, English Cottage, Tropical, or Japanese

5. How will you install your garden?

- In one complete installation
- In several smaller installations, spread over one to five years
- Using a landscape contractor for all of the installation
- Doing some of the work yourself

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Why should I work with a designer?

A designer can help you identify goals and uses for your landscape, choose a style of garden that complements your home's architecture, and solve problems that your property may have. A designer can help you select the most appropri-

continues on page 2

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PAGE 2 OF 2

Frequently Asked Questions, continued

ate materials and plants for your site, and find the best people in the landscape industry to work with. By spending the time to work through the details of a design, you will save money during the installation phase (it's better to change your mind on paper than after something has been installed!). Through sketches, preliminary plans, and budget estimates, you can see what your landscape will look like and make informed decisions about the process. A designer can also provide quality control on a project during installation.

2. How much do you charge to do a design?

My fees are based on the individual project. I take into consideration the size of the yard and the complexity of the design. Do you want a simple sitting garden or five separate garden areas including a pool, outdoor kitchen, water feature, and vegetable garden? The latter would be a more expensive design. After I visit your site, I give you a fixed bid. Typically, fees for suburban properties range from \$2,000 and up. See Services and Fees for more details on the process.

3. How long does it take to get a design?

A simple project could take a few days and a complex one several months. One of the biggest factors is how frequently you can meet and how involved you want to be in the design process. If you have a special event coming up that you want the garden to be ready for, let me know and I can work with you to meet your deadline.

4. What if I don't like something you suggest?

My first role is to listen to what you want and help you develop a plan to achieve that vision. I often make a variety of suggestions and draw up several different versions of an idea. The goal is to find the best solution—and that means throwing out ideas. The process is collaborative. I don't have a single "look" that I impose on clients.

5. What happens when the design is ready to be installed?

I can help you locate a single landscape contractor or a team of specialty contractors (if the design involves complex elements). I can help you evaluate bids and negotiate details, if needed. As part of my design fee, I meet the contractor, go over the design, and walk the site to answer any questions. I also am available during the installation process for specific questions. In some cases, my clients prefer that I handle the installation fully, and in that case, I prepare an additional bid to serve as a project manager.

6. What happens after a design is finished and installed?

As your designer, I am happy to remain on call for questions that may arise about specific plants or features of a new landscape as it settles in. For most clients, a landscape is a major investment, and one they want to develop and extend over time. Landscapes are also dynamic and ever changing (as are my clients' lives). I am happy to provide follow-up consultations, help clients select and purchase individual plants to add to their landscape, or assist in the case of a real estate sale or purchase. I view each design as the beginning of a long-term relationship, one that builds and deepens over time.