

garden

REACH Roger

Do You Need a Facelift? Of Your Landscaping – That Is!

As landscapes age, they can lose their appeal. Much like people, the older they get, the less attractive they become, and yes they too must be replaced! I hear so many clients voice the same concern; “this plant was beautiful 5 or 10 years ago, but now, I hate it! Can you suggest something else?”

There is or was nothing wrong with the plant selection; it just has outgrown its usefulness, becoming too large or overbearing, showing some bald spots, or is diseased. Sound familiar?

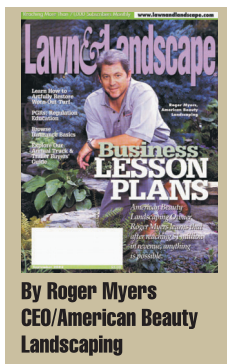
If you plan to tackle the “face-lift” yourself, here are some things to consider:

By removing the most troublesome plants, and leaving all the others, you may create an awkward imbalance with the replacements. Nursery stock and 12-20 year old mature plants are considerably different in size. With the new relationship of young and old, large and small, the planting never really achieves “harmony”. As years pass, and other plants are replaced one by one, the problem perpetuates.

What to do? Like replacing all worn carpet, all the old wallpaper, all the old roofing shingles: you should replace all your old shrubs!

One advantage to doing the face-lift is that your soil should be very fertile, after years of organic matter building in your beds.

Just a few yards of new topsoil and compost, thorough cultivation, and you’re ready to re-plant.



Don't forget to remove any large roots or stumps, which may interfere with your new plantings.

If you're not sure what to plant and where to plant it, you may consider calling a landscape designer, or architect to provide a plan for you.

If you're feeling strong and adventuresome and you thrive on challenges, then by all means go for it! Do it yourself. Here are a few tips to help you achieve success:

1. Orientation – Which side of your house is sunny or in shadow – how long? Choose plants that require the light conditions that you have.
2. Soil type – Wet, dry, organic, or inorganic. Again choose those plants that prevail in the soil conditions that you have. (You may also alter your soil conditions to accept the plants you want.)
3. Space – select plants that will not outgrow the space you have for the next 10-20 years, or whenever you want to start over again. This is the most difficult problem you face. The tendency is to purchase larger plants so that they look good now. However, they may be rapid growers, which is why they are larger at a young age. Though you may not like it, choose the right plant for the space; that may mean a smaller specimen that does not mature too large. If it sounds confusing, it's not. Smaller now means smaller later – read the label. If you need a large, fast growing shade tree, then choose accordingly.
4. And last but not least, BEWARE of Bargain Plants. Remember the old saying – if the deal is too good to be true, it probably isn't. Cheap plants are generally rapid growers, require more maintenance, and can be seen almost everywhere. If you like unique – you'll need to spend a little for it. Be careful not to get too “unique”. You may be purchasing a plant not suited for our climatic zone.

Good luck, and good planting.

Enthusiastically,

Roger Myers

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