

# garden

By Roger Myers

Roger Myers is the President and Founder of American Beauty Landscaping. Established in 1979, ABL is the Valley's industry leader with more than 100 national, state and local awards to its landscape design and build credit.



YO0808 Log # 488

## Plan To Succeed

When building or buying a new home, the landscaping is generally ignored. You're happy just to get the house! It's so unfortunate, because regardless of the size and quality of the home, it's the landscaping that adds charm and curb appeal. It's like the carpet paint and furniture to the interior. What statement would that make without furnishings?

So how do you create an attractive quality landscape, when the budget was exceeded on everything else?

Like all things, a quality job is not an inexpensive proposition; and getting your home professionally landscaped can cost as much or more than a new car. Of course that car could be a Yugo or a BMW, we all have different expectations!



Don't be in a hurry to do a poor job! If you can, wait a year if necessary, to do a better job. But, the secret to your success is contacting a company with a reputable designer, and have a plan drawn up for you. Be prepared to spend a few hundred dollars, but it will be the best investment you'll ever make.

You would not build a new home without a blueprint, nor can you create a beautiful landscape without a professional plan. Unless you are extremely talented in the field of Architecture and Botany, Engineering or Agronomy; HAVE A PLAN!

The long term success of your planting depends on your preparation before you buy one plant.

You must consider drainage, soil fertility and friability. Poor soil should be removed from the bed, at least six inches below grade. Good quality topsoil, screened and shredded is easy to work with, but it does "shrink" by at least 10 – 20%. Keep that in mind when you order. We like to add approximately 1/3 volume of leaf or mushroom compost for nutritional value, as well as preventing hard-pan, (when the soil turns to a concrete like condition).



Areas that hold water must be corrected, drainage must be improved – few plants can tolerate "wet feet." Often it is possible to tap into a nearby downspout, or build a french drain to help drain excess water from your plantings.

Be sure to power till your new soil and amendments so as to integrate it with the "parent material" in place. The new soil grade should be roughly 4 – 6" above existing grade, and the bed must be above walks, driveways, etc. You don't want to trap water in the beds.

This may be all your budget will allow for now. But you now have a well prepared planting bed that has been designed and constructed to give your new landscaping a fighting chance to thrive, not just survive. Correct planting, mulching, watering, choosing of mulch and its applications, weed barriers and fertilization will be your next challenge!

See you next month,  
Roger!