



BUILDING YOUR DREAM YARD:

10 THINGS TO GET RIGHT BEFORE YOU BUILD

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1. MAKE A LIST OF HOW YOU WOULD LIKE TO USE YOUR YARD

General notes and ideas of how you plan to use your yard day to day is where you should start. For example; you want to entertain large groups late into the evening, dine with your family on summer nights, have a place for the kids & pets to run & play, grow some vegetables for cooking, or just feel like you are on vacation every day...whatever it is, list it out!

2. MAKE A LIST OF THE ELEMENTS YOU WANT INCLUDED IN THE YARD

Now that you know how you want to use your yard you should narrow down some of the elements that must be included. Will you want a firepit for warmth on those late nights, a large dining table and some outdoor kitchen space to create the perfect space for family meals, a large area of grass for running & playing, some raised vegetable beds so you don't have to bend over when gardening, and a waterfall to recreate the sights and sounds of being on vacation?

3. RESEARCH AND SAVE SOME IMAGES OF STYLES AND SPACES THAT YOU LIKE

You are moving right along in organizing your perfect outdoor space...but what should it look like? Do some research via web searches, exploring contractor websites, magazines. etc. and save some imagery that captures the styles you are going for. This can be specific like a firepit that sparks joy or more general with full yard pictures that encapsulate a vibe.

4. IDENTIFY PLANTS YOU LIKE OR DISLIKE

It's not a bad idea to talk about some plants and ones you like or don't like. You don't need to be an expert (that is for your designer who should have a background in horticulture). If you are an expert that is great, but if not, just start by being general; "we like the tall grasses, purple flowers are my favourite, I don't like trees with needles, some fruit would be nice, not a fan of the colour orange".



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5. PRICE OUT YOUR DREAM PROJECT AHEAD OF TIME & COME UP WITH A BUDGET

We all want everything and we want it to be in our price range, however, that might not always be possible! Start by doing some budgeting to come up with a number you are willing to spend. Some very cool things can be done with \$10k or \$100k, you might just need to be more specific with which items get priority. We have a free [Price Your Project](#) page on our website that can make this step super easy!

6. WORK WITH A CERTIFIED DESIGN-TO-BUILD TEAM TO START CREATING A PLAN

You have done your homework and organized your thoughts, wishes, style, and budget but how does it all fit together and flow? Enter a design-to-build team. Do some research in your local market in order to identify some designers and companies you may be interested in working with. You should look to see if the designer is certified and if they provide design-to-build services. They might make beautiful designs, but, there might be a disconnect with actual construction methods and your design may be unbuildable. Do they have experience designing and solving problems that might be unique to your yard? Is their portfolio resonating with you? Does their design process and deliverable design materials give you confidence in what you will be getting? In the end you are investing in a yard that is meant to last forever so a cheap design could mean lackluster results. Check out our [Landscape Design](#) services if you want an example of what to look for.

7. WORK WITH YOUR DESIGNER TO SELECT THE MATERIALS FOR THE SPACE

Your designer will organize and create your wishes into a space and style that fulfills all of your yard goals. They should also work with you to narrow down the final material selections your space will be built with; what type and colour of brick or walls, what type of groundcover material, what light fixtures, etc. The materials should be suggested by the designer and honed in with you to ensure they are the right materials aesthetically and structurally for your job. That way it is guaranteed to be beautiful, buildable, and durable.

8. REVISE AND PRICE OUT THE PLAN THROUGH A COUPLE OF DRAFTS

Your design might take a couple drafts to get just right. That is ok and should be expected. A one and done design sometimes happens but your designer should be ballpark pricing your project out for you with each draft. This way you can work together with them to make sure you are reducing or adding scope where necessary to hit your final budget. Again, this is why we recommend design-to-build teams because the design is directly connected to the build so all of your pricing comes from actual installation costs.



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9. ASK QUESTIONS ABOUT ANYTHING AND EVERYTHING

Make sure to ask questions if you are nervous about anything or need more information. Your designer and build team should be well versed in construction and be up to date on industry standards while being certified in construction methods. This way you know you are getting answers that are grounded in real build practices and that solve your issues or answer your fears. The last thing you want is to leave a question unasked and then something you thought was included in your build costs was never included in the price.

10. AGREE TO THE FINAL SCOPE OF WORK AND PAYMENT TERMS AHEAD OF TIME

Once the design is complete you should be agreeing on the final build scope before any demolition or construction begins. Likewise, you should agree on clear payment terms whether those be staged or through financing like we offer. The last thing you want is a lack of clarity on what is being built and how it is being paid for because that usually means hidden build costs are added at the end of the project or items are missed. You can always ask for a change during the project and those pre-agreed upon build costs, payment terms, and build scope are then your compass for knowing whether you are adding scope or removing scope. This is powerful because then you know if you should be getting billed more or getting billed less depending on what you are changing.

BONUS - 11. IF YOU FOLLOW THESE GUIDELINES YOU ARE ON THE RIGHT TRACK TO ENSURE YOUR DREAM YARD BECOMES A REALITY.

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