

# Home Landscape Questions

(Reprinted from *Home Landscape: Understanding the basics of landscape design*, PM 2004.  
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## Analyze the site

A thorough site analysis tells you what you have to work with on the site and helps you develop a plan to enhance or maintain your property's beauty and sustainability.

A site analysis also can help you evaluate an existing landscape before beginning a renovation project. A comprehensive understanding of your site identifies existing light, moisture, and soil conditions. This information helps create a landscape that is easier to sustain.

### *Soil, slope, drainage*

Describe the soil type:

Does soil type vary in different areas of the property?

Describe any elevation differences:

Are retaining walls needed?  
If so, where?

Describe any soggy areas:

Where does water drain?

Is a French drain needed?  
If so, where?

### *Sun*

Describe sun exposure in public areas:

Describe sun exposure in private areas:

Is summer shading needed?  
If so, where?

### *Wind*

What is the prevailing wind direction in summer?

What is the prevailing wind direction in winter?

Are windscreens needed?  
If so, where?

### *House*

Describe location:

Describe the color:

Describe the architectural style:

Describe any unique features:

Describe the most desirable views:

Describe any undesirable views:

Describe location of utilities:

### *Other existing structures*

Describe location of garage and/or other buildings:

Describe condition of garage and/or other buildings:

Describe location of patio, deck, play structure, fences, water features, and/or other structures:

Describe condition of patio, deck, play structure, fences, water features, and/or other structures:

Are existing structures in the best location?

Describe location of existing walks:  
Describe condition of existing walks:

Are walkways in the right places?

Describe location of driveway or parking strip:

Describe condition of driveway or parking strip:

### *Existing Plants*

Describe location of existing trees, shrubs, and surface roots:

Describe condition of existing trees and shrubs:

Describe location of flower and/or vegetable garden areas:

Describe condition of flower or vegetable garden areas:

### *Other considerations*

Describe your preferred level of maintenance:

Are sound buffers needed?  
If so, where?

Describe other conditions that affect use of yard area:

... and justice for all

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## Home Landscape Questions, part 2

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### Analyze family needs and wants

Answering these questions help determine how outdoor spaces are used. Identifying as many facts/wants/needs increases the likelihood that the resulting landscape is a success. Even if you work with a professional designer to develop your landscape plan, considering these questions will help you do a better job of telling that person what you want/need.

#### Yard Use

- Who will use the yard?
- Adults
- Children (ages)
- Elderly
- Pets (describe)

When is the yard used?

- Spring
- Summer
- Fall
- Winter

Are you satisfied with the front door/public entry space? If not, how could it be improved?

Are you satisfied with the back door/family entry space? If not, how could it be improved?

Are you satisfied with the transition between indoor and outdoor living areas? If not, how could it be improved?

Are you satisfied with the way existing walkways connect parts of the yard? If not, how could it be improved?

Are you satisfied with the current amount and type of outdoor lighting? If not, how could it be improved?

What outdoor structures/features would you like to add?

- Patio or deck
- 2 to 4 people

- 4 to 8 people
- 8 to 12 people
- 12+ people
- Shade cover for patio/deck
- Children's play area
- Cooking/grilling area
- Fenced vegetable garden
- Raised planters
- Dog pen/run
- Storage shed
- Gazebo
- 2 to 4 people
- 4 to 8 people
- 8 to 12 people
- 12+ people
- Clothesline
- Fence(s)
- Swimming pool
- Spa/hot tub
- Sculpture
- Fire pit
- Boulders
- Dry creek
- Mounds/berms
- Pond
- Bench
- Fountain
- Waterfall/stream
- Greenhouse
- Putting green
- Rain barrel
- Off-street parking
  - for guests
  - for RVs
  - for boats
- Irrigation system
- Other

What items need storage space?

- Garden equipment
- Garbage cans
- Bicycles
- Outdoor toys
- Sports equipment
- Lawn furniture/cushions
- Other

#### Maintenance considerations

How much time do family members have for yard care?

Is hiring outside help an option?

#### Design considerations

What is your preferred design style?

- Formal
- Semiformal
- Informal

What themes/styles do you want reflected in your outdoor space?

- European
- Asian
- Natural
- Other

What is your preferred shape (for lawns, walkways, decks)?

- Rectangles
- 45° angles
- Circles
- Curving/free-form
- Combination
- Don't care

List your favorite colors:

List your least favorite colors:

Describe any special considerations (wheelchair access, etc):

#### Plant choices

What types of plants do you prefer?

- Evergreens trees/shrubs
- Deciduous trees/shrubs
- Flowering trees/shrubs
- Fruit trees/shrubs
- Vines
- Annual flowers
- Perennial flowers
- Vegetables
- Herbs
- Fragrant plants
- Wildlife/native
- Other

Do any family members have specific plan allergies? (List plants)

Are deer a problem?