



Tips To Landscape On A Budget

Professional advice to achieving your landscaping goals while not breaking the bank.

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As winter weather fades away, the spring gardening and landscaping season is upon us. Prepping your garden should be a fun and relaxing time for the whole family to enjoy, but the prices of achieving your goals for a beautiful landscape can lead to stressful situations. To ensure that this time of year is as peaceful as the birds singing outside, it is smart to know how to frugally upgrade your outdoor spaces.

Connie Ribera, the owner of City Escape Garden Center in Chicago, has a strong passion for helping anyone with a green thumb no matter what type of budget. She left her job as a CEO in the corporate engineering world to follow her passion for gardening and landscaping, ultimately opening City Escape in 2003. City Escape, which is located specifically in the Garfield Park area, helps all types of people with different budgets and garden access.

The main piece of advice Ribera gave was to plan early for achieving your end goal.

“You have to be realistic about what you want to do and people are usually unable to do an entire yard on a small budget,” she stated. “It is smarter to do a little every year to get what you really want in the end.”

The best way to form a solid and achievable plan is to do plenty of research before you start working. Whether that means talking with a professional landscaper or reading up on blogs and gardening websites, it is important to know what is achievable in your specific location.

“Many people have an idea of what they want but need to do the homework to know if those plants are prone to disease or will survive in the area they are being planted. It is never good to spend the money on new plants that will end up dying right away,” Ribera stated.

One way to ensure a successful plant is to determine the Plant Hardiness Zone in which it will thrive the best. The zones are determined by the average temperature of the location. Chicago, which is in a zone six, will have different plants that will thrive than in Florida, which is in zone 10. Although plants go into dormant during the winter, it needs to be able to still stay alive to bloom the next spring. For the Chicago area, Ribera recommends perennials and shrubs as solid choices for successful plants in the zone.

Another way to cut back on your budget is to garden during the fall rather than during the spring. While many people think spring is the best and only time to upgrade your landscape, many places have sales during the fall season, including City Escape. If you know which plants will survive the winter months, you can plant the discounted plants in the off-season.

“Updating your garden during the fall will require less maintenance than during the spring,” Ribera mentioned. “The plants will go dormant during the winter and then just require a nice layer of fertilizer in the spring to look good as new.”

No one should be frightened by the prices of landscaping, it is achievable with any budget. Like many things, it requires flexibility, hard work and extra research to achieve a great yard.