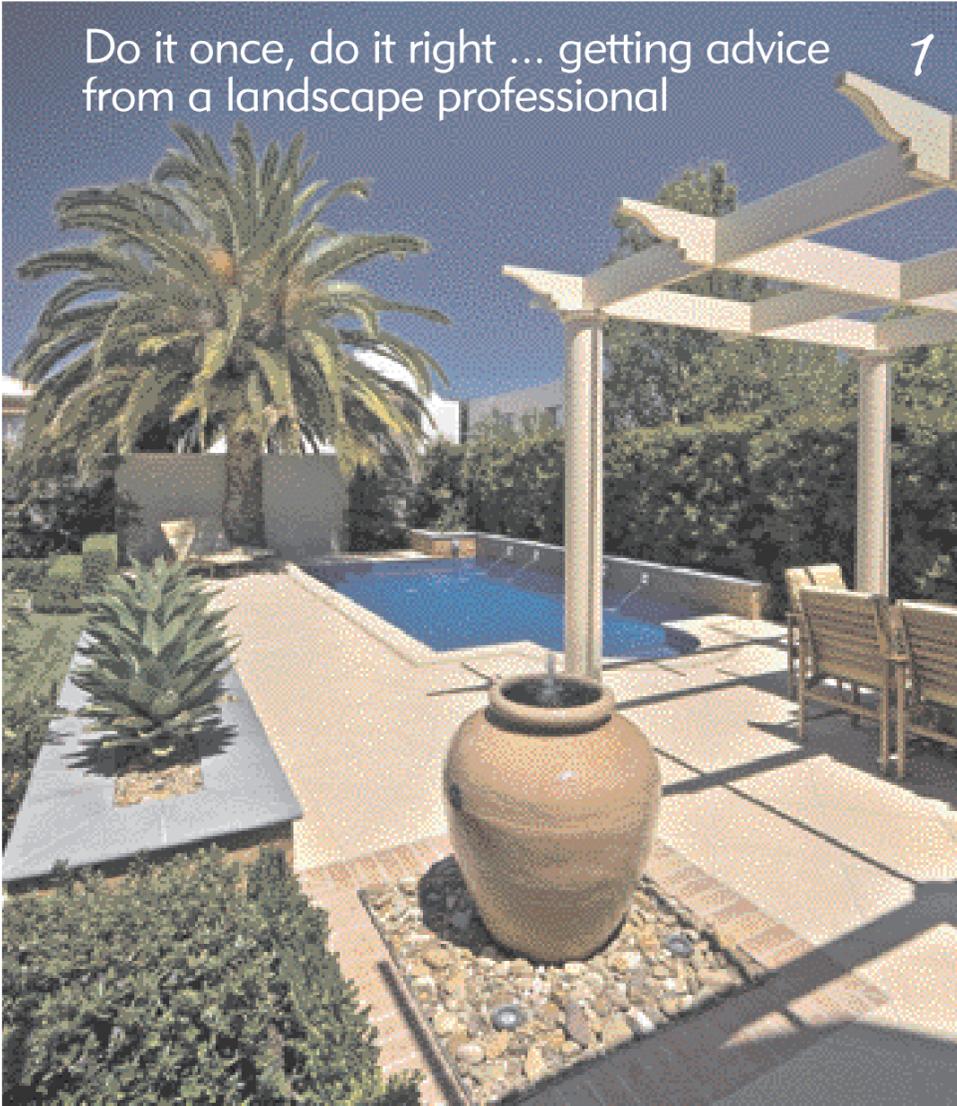


Getting it RIGHT

Do it once, do it right ... getting advice from a landscape professional

7



and other practical features such as drainage, irrigation, rainwater tanks, microclimate, aspect and utility services. The end result of having all these things considered together is the seamless integration of the indoor and outdoor living areas.

How broad is their knowledge?

The expertise and experience of a landscape designer can guide you through the landscape construction process. Someone with horticultural knowledge will be able to give you information about how to maintain the plants in your garden so it continues to deliver the exact outdoor experience you envisaged.

Landscape professionals have practical experience as well as knowledge of design, horticulture, construction and your local council requirements. As well as selecting plants that will survive and thrive, specifying appropriate materials and devising space-maximising layouts, they can recommend good contractors and stage the installation process for budget requirements.

As with any home or landscaping project, your mantra should be "do it once and do it right". The extra time spent planning now will save you time and money in the future.

When to engage a landscape design professional?

You need to call in the landscape professionals as early as possible in the planning process. This means:

- at the concept planning stage of a renovation or construction, that is at the same time you engage the architect or building designer
- before you get quotes from a builder or pool builder
- when you buy a property, which means before starting cleaning up, demolition or structural work.

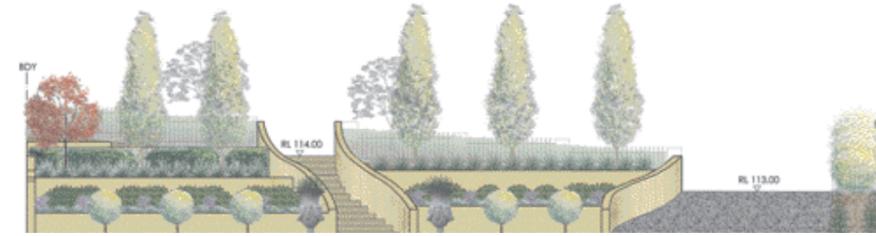
How long should the whole landscaping process take?

Depending on the size and complexity of the project, the answer might be:

- between three weeks and two months for the design development
- between three weeks and two months for a development application (DA) to go through council (DAs are required in most cases for retaining walls over 1m in height, pergolas, decks, swimming pools and tree removal)
- between four weeks and six months to construct the landscape.

Who can you go to for this professional advice?

Industry association members are bound by codes of ethics and work to professional standards. These practitioners are obliged to achieve a level of quality as measured by their



peers as a requirement of their membership. Members of the Australian Institute of Landscape Designers and Managers (AILDM) can professionally design your landscape, including applying for council approval for retaining walls, pergolas, paving and pools.

If no structural landscape work is needed, members of the Australian Institute of Horticulture (AIH) can provide planting plans as well as other horticultural services. Once you have your landscape plan, a member of one of the state-based professional landscape contractor associations can install your landscape for you.

What else might you need?

There are other things that must be considered before work can begin on your new landscape. You will need some or all of the following, depending on your situation:

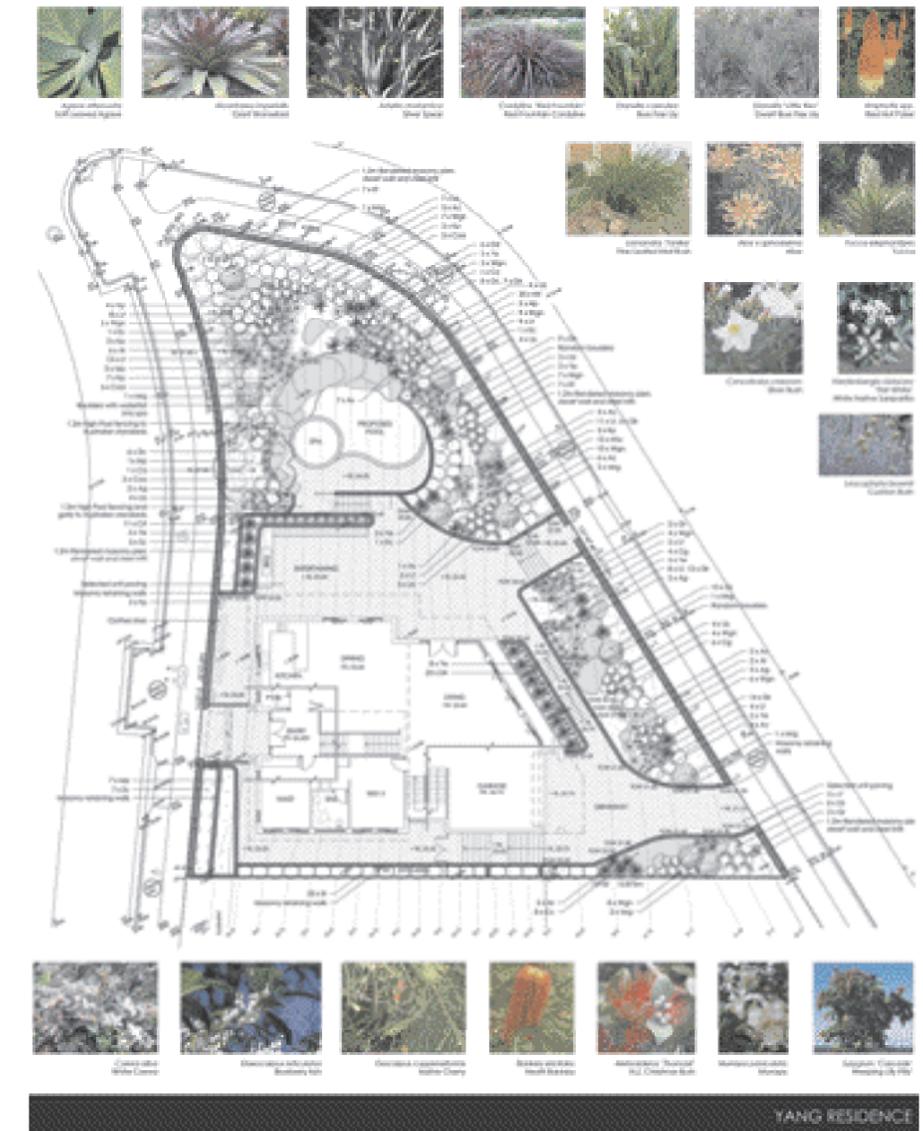
Detailed brief: This details the style of garden you want and the functional requirements. The more detail you can give, the closer the end result will be to what you envisage.

1. A landscape designer will ensure that your new garden not only fits your current lifestyle but that it can adapt as your family grows and needs change. The designer can also make plant, product and material suggestions you might not think of.

2. If you have trouble visualising things, working with a landscape designer can be an enormous help. By providing drawings (hand-rendered or CAD-generated) you can see what the finished result should look like. Drawing courtesy of ecodesign.

3. A landscape designer will present you with a detailed plan showing such things as the garden areas in relation to the house and the location of proposed structures, retaining walls, paths, paved areas, lawn and plants. Plan courtesy of ecodesign.

Financial budget: How much do you want to spend? The designer should know this up front so they can advise you on how best to invest your money in the landscape.



Contour survey: This must be prepared by a registered surveyor (especially if council approval is required).

Structural or hydraulic engineer: Consulting an engineer might be necessary if extensive built structures, paving or retaining walls are desired.

Arborist report: If there is concern for the condition of existing trees on site you will need a consulting arborist to prepare a report.

If you would like to find an AILDM member in your area, just visit the website (www.aildm.com.au) and search the Members Directory. ■

* This article was prepared by Jacki Brown and the team at ecodesign on behalf of the Australian Institute of Landscape Designers & Managers.

When planning a new garden, half the challenge is knowing where to start, which is why engaging a landscape design professional is the best way to create the garden you desire. Not only will a landscape designer have practical advice, he or she will also be able to give you a visual and conceptual idea of the new landscape before the construction work has even started.

Landscape construction is a long-term investment for your living environment. It will improve your quality of life and should be planned holistically. In the same way that a large public event needs to be planned in detail to ensure everyone has a safe and enjoyable experience without incident or disruption, your landscape should be carefully planned so it functions smoothly with all the elements tailored to your lifestyle. In this way, the garden can be enjoyed with minimal input from you.

Will it add value to your home?

As well as increasing your enjoyment, a designed landscape can increase the functionality of your space and, in time, your investment will pay off by increasing your real estate value. The practical element is crucial if you want a successful outcome.

Things like the layout of your landscape can help or hinder access and movement around your home, and plants that need more maintenance than you can supply will become untidy and messy. These are just a couple of examples of the types of problems landscape professionals have the experience to help you with.

The benefits of getting advice from a landscape professional are numerous. A landscape designer can integrate your house with your pool, gardens, pergola, driveway