

Wave Outdoors Landscape + Design provides landscape design and construction in Mount Prospect. Use these planning questions to prepare a project conversation.

Planning considerations

If you have ever tried to overhaul a yard with a shovel, a bag of seed, and a weekend, you know landscaping spans far beyond planting a few shrubs. Professional companies straddle design, construction, horticulture, irrigation, drainage, and ongoing care. They coordinate trades, manage permits, and bring materials in the right sequence so the patio does not undermine the drainage and the new maple does not die from soggy roots. This guide walks through the major service categories, what a landscaper actually does, how to choose one, and where the real value sits.

The scope of landscaping, in plain terms

When people ask what is included in landscaping services, they usually imagine mowing, edging, and maybe planting a tree. That is only one slice. Most firms organize their work into three main parts of a landscape project: design, build, and maintenance. Under those headings, you will see dozens of specialties, from walkway installation and garden bed installation to irrigation repair and outdoor lighting. High quality companies weave these pieces into a plan that addresses how water flows, how people move, what plants thrive on your site, and how the whole thing will be maintained.

A residential landscaper might be trimming hedges on Tuesday, managing a drainage installation on Wednesday, and setting low voltage lighting on Thursday. Commercial crews might be scheduling smart irrigation zones across a campus and laying permeable pavers in a parking court. The variety is the point. A yard is a small ecosystem with engineering and biology intertwined.

Design services: turning ideas into a buildable plan

Design is not just a pretty drawing. It is problem solving on paper so you do not pay to fix mistakes in the field. A complete landscape plan often includes a scaled site plan, planting design with botanical names and sizes, hardscape layout, pathway design, grading and drainage notes, an irrigation plan, and a lighting plan. Good designers also detail materials and provide quantities so you can compare bids accurately.

Designers bring experience to questions like how to come up with a landscape plan for a sloped, shaded yard, or how to apply the golden ratio in landscaping without making it feel contrived. Proportions matter, but so do sightlines to your neighbor's window and snow storage along the driveway. The best design balances function, safety, and character.

Site work and grading: starting from the ground down

Everything rests on soil and drainage. If you ignore this, plants struggle and hardscapes fail. A solid firm begins with grading, soil amendment, and water management. Yard drainage might involve surface drainage swales, a french drain along a foundation, a catch basin at a low point, or a dry well for roof leaders. The right drainage system depends on soil type, slope, and where water comes from.

Hardscapes: drives, walkways, and structures

Driveway installation spans materials and performance. A paver driveway offers reparability and pattern options. Driveway pavers with permeable pavers can handle stormwater on site, relieving gutters and municipal systems. Concrete driveway construction is durable and cost effective, though cracks are inevitable over time. The best driveway design factors turning radii, drainage fall, snow plow methods, and the visual cue you want for the entrance design.

Walkway installation can range from a simple garden path using stepping stones to a precise paver walkway with soldier course borders. Stone walkway choices include flagstone walkway slabs set on compacted base or mortared on a concrete slab. A concrete walkway can be broom finished for traction. Pathway design matters. If the sidewalk from the driveway to the front door is too narrow for two people walking side by side, guests step into beds and you will replace crushed perennials. A four foot path reads welcoming and functions well for most homes.

Raised garden beds and planter installation add structure and ergonomic planting heights. Proper construction with rot resistant lumber or masonry blocks, geotextile liner, and a blended soil mix prevents sagging and nutrient problems. For low walls and steps, compliance with local codes for height and handrails may come into play.

Planting: the living architecture

Plant selection can make or break maintenance effort and long term success. Landscape planting is more than grabbing whatever looks good at the nursery. A complete planting design balances evergreen structure, seasonal interest, and ecological value. Native plant landscaping supports pollinators and usually needs less water and fertilizer once established. Ornamental grasses add movement and winter form. Perennial gardens supply repeat blooms if you stagger early, mid, and late season varieties. Annual flowers punch color near entryways, containers, and focal beds.

A company will handle plant installation with attention to root flare height, soil amendment around trees and shrubs, and mulch installation. Too much mulch suffocates roots. Ground cover installation can knit slopes together and suppress weeds. When clients ask what is included in a landscape plan, expect a plant schedule that lists botanical and common names, container sizes, quantities, and spacing. Tree planting should include staking only when needed, correct hole width, and a watering schedule for the first two years.

Container gardens brighten hardscape zones and can be refreshed seasonally. For vegetable and cutting gardens, raised garden beds and drip irrigation make care far easier and more efficient than hand watering.

Irrigation and water management

Irrigation installation ties into plant health and water bills. A good irrigation system groups zones by plant needs and sun exposure. Turf zones, shrub beds, and shade beds rarely want the same schedule. Drip irrigation is efficient for garden beds and foundation plantings, delivering water to the root zone with little evaporation. A sprinkler system covers lawns, but nozzle selection and head layout affect uniformity and efficiency.

Smart irrigation controllers read weather data and adjust schedules. They save real dollars over a season, especially in regions with variable rainfall. Irrigation repair is a steady need, from fixing a cut wire to replacing a leaking valve. Water management extends beyond irrigation into rain harvesting, permeable hardscape, and routing downspouts away from foundations.

Drainage solutions that prevent headaches

Standing water kills lawn and plant roots and can undermine patios. Drainage installation should come early in any outdoor renovation. For a soggy side yard, a french drain captures subsurface water in a gravel trench with perforated pipe. For low spots that collect roof runoff, a catch basin tied to solid piping can move water to a dry well. Surface drainage relies on regrading and swales to direct flow. Drainage system choices depend on soil percolation. On tight clay, you need more surface conveyance and storage. On sandy loam, infiltration is your friend.

A quick rule of thumb: if you install a paver walkway or paver driveway without considering where adjacent water flows, joints will stay saturated and frost heave will lift edges. The fix costs more than doing it right the first time.

Lighting: function and mood after dark

Outdoor lighting extends the hours you enjoy the landscape and improves safety. Landscape lighting techniques include path lights for walkways, downlighting from trees to mimic moonlight, and accents on focal trees or architectural details. Low voltage lighting is safe and flexible. LEDs cut maintenance and energy costs. The best lighting plans avoid runway vibes by placing fixtures thoughtfully, shielding glare, and balancing light levels. A small number of well placed fixtures beats a row of dots every time.

Seasonal services and cleanup

What does a fall cleanup consist of? Usually leaf removal from lawn and beds, cutting back perennials that flop or harbor disease, final lawn mowing, and possibly a winter fertilizer application. Some plants, like ornamental grasses and seed heads on coneflowers, can be left for winter interest and wildlife. Spring often brings bed redefining, mulch refreshing, pruning of winter damage, and irrigation start-up. Many companies offer seasonal packages that roll these tasks into predictable visits.

Sustainable and low maintenance approaches

Defensive landscaping, common near high fire risk areas or for security concerns, arranges plants and hardscape to reduce hazards. That might mean maintaining clear zones near structures, using gravel bands, and choosing plants with higher moisture content. In urban settings, it can also mean pruning for sight lines and selecting thorny shrubs below [landscape designer mount prospect il](#) vulnerable windows.

What residential landscapers do day to day

What does a landscaper do on site? A foreman reads plans, checks elevations, and sequences tasks so crews are not stepping on each other. Laborers and specialists install base materials, cut pavers, set edging, amend soil, plant, stake, mulch, and clean up. An irrigation tech pressure tests and tunes zones. A lighting tech sets transformers and adjusts aim. In maintenance, crews scout for pest issues, adjust mow height with the season, and keep edges sharp. A professional landscaper is often called a landscape contractor or landscape designer, depending on license and focus. Larger companies have both under one roof.

How to choose a good landscape designer or contractor

Hiring the right firm makes the difference between a yard that works and one that frustrates you. Ask to see similar projects and speak with past clients after one winter and one summer. That is when flaws show up. Clarify what is included in landscaping services for your contract. Are permits included? Will they handle irrigation installation, or is that subcontracted? Who is responsible for plant warranty and irrigation repair?

Timelines, costs, and what to expect

Is a landscaping company a good idea? For projects beyond a weekend planting, yes, if you value time, warranty, and expertise. Are landscaping companies worth the cost? On average, professional installation reduces rework and extends the life of the investment. A botched patio or failing retaining wall costs more to fix than to build well. Is it worth spending money on landscaping? If resale matters, what landscaping adds the most value to a home is curb appeal that matches the neighborhood, a usable patio, and mature but tidy plantings. In backyards, what adds the most value to a backyard tends to be a well proportioned patio, a paver walkway or garden path that links zones, quality lighting, and simple, healthy lawn areas. The type of landscaping that adds value feels turnkey for the next owner, not custom to your quirks.

What to expect when hiring a landscaper: a site visit, a measured base plan, a concept with budget ranges, refinements, then a final scope and schedule. How long do landscapers usually take? A small front yard planting might be one to three days. A full outdoor renovation with driveway installation, pathways, irrigation system, planting, and lighting can run three to eight weeks depending on weather and complexity.

Maintenance realities and trade-offs

What is the difference between landscaping and lawn service? Landscaping covers design and construction of outdoor spaces. Lawn service or yard maintenance focuses on recurring care, like mowing and pruning. Both matter. If you install a complex perennial garden but only pay for mow and blow visits, you will not get the editing and staking those beds need in year one.

How often should you have landscaping done? Treat it like dental care: frequent small visits prevent big problems. Spring and fall checks, plus mid-season edits for plantings, keep things on track. A gardener who knows your yard can spot irrigation overspray, thin turf spots that need overseeding, or shrubs that want a lighter hand on pruning. The disadvantages of landscaping usually come from mismatch: plants that outgrow spaces, hardscapes that fight drainage, or features that demand more upkeep than you want to provide. An example of bad landscaping is a concrete walkway pitched toward the house and flower beds mounded above the foundation. Water intrudes, mulch floats into the lawn, and plants suffer. The fix costs far more than designing it correctly.

Sequencing: the right order to do landscaping

Projects fail when steps happen out of order. The right order to do landscaping generally goes like this: survey and site analysis, concept and budget, demolition and rough grading, drainage installation, conduit runs for lighting and irrigation, base prep, hardscape install, fine grading and topsoil installation, irrigation system install and test, plant installation, mulch, landscape lighting aim and programming, final cleanup, then maintenance handoff. If you plant before heavy hardscape, you will trample beds and compact soil. If you pour a concrete driveway without considering irrigation or lighting sleeves, you will be cutting fresh concrete to get utilities across later.

Seasonal timing and regional nuance

Is it better to do landscaping in fall or spring? Both have merits. Fall planting in many climates allows roots to establish in cool soil and winter moisture, leading to strong spring growth. Spring offers wider plant availability and instant gratification but demands more watering into summer. The best time of year to landscape depends on your region. In hot, arid zones, fall wins for perennials and shrubs. In cold climates, aim for late spring after

soil dries and before heat spikes. The best time to do landscaping heavy hardscape is when freeze-thaw cycles are minimal and rain is not constant, often late spring through early fall.

Value, rules of thumb, and simple design guidance

Start with water. Map downspouts, puddles, and slopes. Choose drainage solutions before you choose pavers. Set the bones. Size patios and walkways generously for real furniture and traffic. Add conduit for lighting, even if you install fixtures later. Match plants to site, not just style. Sun, wind, and soil first, color second. Favor natives where they fit. Right-size maintenance. If weekly care is unlikely, choose drip irrigation, mulch, and plant communities that knit together. Phase smartly. Build infrastructure once, then layer plants and features over seasons as budget allows.

Answers to common homeowner questions

Should you spend money on landscaping? If you plan to stay, invest in function and low maintenance. If you plan to sell within a few years, prioritize curb appeal and fix obvious flaws like uneven paths and patchy lawn. Is it worth paying for landscaping? When the scope includes drainage, grading, or hardscape tied to your home, yes. DIY is great for planting and small bed refreshes. What are the benefits of hiring a professional landscaper? Better sequencing, correct base prep, proper plant installation, and warranties. Why hire a professional landscaper? Time, expertise, and accountability.

What is included in landscaping services? For full service firms, you can expect design, permitting support where needed, demolition, grading, drainage, hardscape, planting, irrigation, lighting, and maintenance. Some are design-build. Others design only and bid to contractors. What is the difference between lawn service and landscaping? One maintains, the other creates. Many companies do both and hand the project to their maintenance team for continuity.

What are the three stages of landscaping? Design, build, maintain. What are the four stages of landscape planning? Site analysis, concept, detailed design, and implementation, often with maintenance planning baked in. What are the services of landscape firms? Everything covered here, plus niche items like outdoor kitchens, fire features, pergolas, water features, and even small structure coordination. Outdoor renovation often bundles several of those.

What does a fall cleanup consist of? Leaves out of gutters and beds, perennials cut where appropriate, lawn final mow and edge, irrigation winterization, and a quick safety check of hardscape. How to come up with a landscape plan? Walk your site at different times of day, list what you do outside in each season, sketch circulation, and then layer features that support those uses. Bring a designer in to reality check grades and materials.

What is included in a landscape plan? Scaled drawings with dimensions, materials, plant list with sizes, details for edges and steps, notes for drainage and irrigation, and sometimes a phasing plan. What are the five basic elements of landscape design? Line, form, texture, color, and scale, applied with restraint and with function in mind.

Final thoughts from the field

After two decades walking muddy sites and revisiting jobs years later, one thread stands out. The landscapes that age well were planned with water and maintenance in mind. They have walkways calibrated to how feet move, not how catalogs look. They use planting communities that close ranks by year three. They light where people

need cues and leave the rest dark. They do not rely on plastic fabric under mulch to fight weeds. They capture roof water, move it safely, and let it soak in where soil allows.

If you are debating whether to hire or DIY, look at the risk and the repeat work. Planting beds and container gardens are forgiving. A concrete walkway pitch or a paver driveway base is not. A smart split is to pay for infrastructure and take on the seasonal color and small edits yourself. Build the bones once, then enjoy the yard for years.

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Landscape design and construction

Wave Outdoors Landscape + Design is located at 600 S Emerson St, Mt Prospect, IL 60056.

Wave Outdoors Landscape + Design uses the phone number (312) 772-2300.

Wave Outdoors Landscape + Design has the website <https://waveoutdoors.com/>.

Wave Outdoors Landscape + Design has a Google Maps listing for its Mount Prospect business.

Wave Outdoors Landscape + Design provides landscape design.

Wave Outdoors Landscape + Design provides landscape construction.

Wave Outdoors Landscape + Design offers 2D landscape design.

Wave Outdoors Landscape + Design offers custom 3D design as a paid add-on.

Wave Outdoors Landscape + Design designs outdoor living spaces.

Wave Outdoors Landscape + Design builds patios.

Wave Outdoors Landscape + Design provides hardscaping.

Wave Outdoors Landscape + Design installs plantings and flower beds.

Wave Outdoors Landscape + Design provides yard grading.

Wave Outdoors Landscape + Design installs stormwater and drainage systems.

Wave Outdoors Landscape + Design provides landscape lighting.

Wave Outdoors Landscape + Design handles consultation requests through its current office team.

Project planning questions

Where is the business based?

At 600 S Emerson St, Mt Prospect, IL 60056.

How can I discuss a landscape project?

Call (312) 772-2300 or request a consultation through the website.

Is landscape design offered?

Yes, Wave Outdoors Landscape + Design provides landscape design and construction.

Are 2D plans offered?

The company offers 2D landscape design.

Can I request a 3D design?

Custom 3D design is available as a paid add-on.

Can patios be part of a project?

Wave Outdoors Landscape + Design builds patios and hardscapes.

Can a project include planting?

Planting and flower-bed installation are offered.

Are drainage and grading offered?

The company provides yard grading and installs drainage and stormwater systems.

What should I bring to a design conversation?

Bring site photos, priorities, desired uses and questions about the proposed scope.

How can I compare design proposals?

Compare the stated drawings, materials, installation scope, exclusions and revision process.

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