

## Landscape and Garden Design— Do It Yourself or Have it Done for You?

By: Beth Zwinak

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Whether you are re-vamping an existing landscape or installing a brand new one, landscaping your home, townhome or condo is one of the best investments you can make for your home. A garden design or landscape can be as simple as arranging beautiful container gardens on your patio, or planting a corner perennial garden, or as complex as having a Landscape Professional install a new landscape, complete with plants, lighting, outdoor kitchen, firepit, patio, paths and play areas for children and pets. Whatever you chose to do, the benefits are rewarding emotionally as well as financially.

Here are some statistics from the American Nursery and Landscape Association ([www.alna.org](http://www.alna.org)):

- Landscaping can add between 7 and 15 percent to a home's value. (Source: *The Gallup Organization*.)
- Homes with "excellent" landscaping can expect a sale price about 6 to 7 percent higher than equivalent houses with "good" landscaping, while improving landscaping from "average" to "good" can result in a 4 to 5 percent increase. (Source: *Clemson University*.)
- Landscaping can bring a recovery value of 100 to 200 percent at selling time. (Source: *Money Magazine*.)
- In one study, 99% of real estate appraisers concurred that landscaping enhances the sales appeal of real estate. (Source: *Trend-nomics, National Gardening Association*.)
- In one study, 83% of Realtors believe that mature trees have a "strong or moderate impact" on the salability of homes listed for under \$150,000; on homes over \$250,000, this perception increases to 98%. (Source: *American Forests, Arbor National Mortgage*.)
- Landscaping can reduce air conditioning costs by up to 50 percent, by shading the windows and walls of a home. (Source: *American Public Power Association*.)

As you can see, there are many reasons to add trees, plants and container gardens as well as garden paths, decks and patios and other landscape improvements to your home.

But how do you start? Shall you do it yourself, or enlist the help of a professional?

It may seem overwhelming to new homeowners or those undertaking a large refurbishing of their landscape. Just take it one step at a time and the task will be easy—and fun! Pick up some magazines—**Fine Gardening, Garden Design, Better Homes & Gardens** are just a few that will give you some great ideas...also visit your local library, bookstore or garden center—great landscape idea books abound! They'll help you with planning and considerations such as your sun exposure, existing plants and structures, and many other tips.

You can do many landscaping projects yourself—learn how by visiting the library or local garden centers and nurseries—they often

offer how-to classes and other information. If you think you might need some help, you can visit the Association of Landscape Contractors of Colorado (ALCC) website [www.alcc.com](http://www.alcc.com) and find a list of member businesses in your area who adhere to the high standards required by this organization.

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To get a great introduction to garden design, Tagawa Gardens in Centennial has teamed up with ALCC Board Member Carole Kastler of Camelot Design, and has made available a one-hour landscape consultation for an area of your front or back

yard, at Tagawa Gardens. This package is a great value. It can help you make the decision to begin right away yourself with the sketch you receive at the consultation, or help you in the decision to have a landscape professional help you. Carole Kastler also offers classes at Tagawa Gardens on landscaping and other design topics.

In any case, you will find that being in your outdoor home environment will be fun, relaxing and very rewarding! According to the American Demographics, Roper Report, the top reasons that people garden are: To be outdoors (44%); to be around beautiful things (42%); to relax and escape the pressures of everyday life (39%); to stay active and get exercise (35%). What great reasons to get out and enjoy your landscape today!

*Beth Zwinak is the Manager of Tagawa Gardens, which is celebrating 25 years of providing purr-fectly beautiful gardens for the community, and was voted Top Garden Center in the Rocky Mountain News 2006/7. Carole Kastler is the Recommended Landscape Designer for Tagawa Gardens. She is a landscape architect/designer and owner of Camelot Design in Littleton, and serves on the Board of the Association of Landscape Contractors.*

