

Texas Landscapes

Guide to Landscape Success



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TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
COMMISSIONER SID MILLER



Homeowners across Texas strive to find the best ways to take care of their landscapes. This guide will show you seven easy steps to achieve landscape success. Inside, you will find tips on planning and design, improving your soil, turf areas, plant selection, irrigation, mulching and maintenance.

Looking for Texas plants for your landscape? Incorporating the right landscaping principles can help homeowners and landscapers conserve water. This involves choosing the right grass, having good soil depth, and understanding good management and watering practices. In this brochure, you will find tips to help you maintain a healthy landscape throughout the year.



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STEP 1 The first steps to a beautiful landscape are **proper planning and design**. There are four simple questions to answer before you begin.

- 1 How will the space be used? Is it for family fun, or do you want to create specialty gardens to attract birds, butterflies and other natural visitors?
- 2 Who will use the space? Kids? Pets?
- 3 When will the space be used? Seasonally? Daily?
- 4 How much maintenance do you want to do? Very little? Every Day? Weekends only?

Answering these questions will help create the landscape that is best for you. Once these questions are answered, you can consider what kind of professional partners you need.

STEP 2 Starting your project with the **right soil mixture** will get you one step closer to a beautiful landscape. Testing and improving your soil is the second step. It will reveal:

- 1 What types of soils you are working with.
- 2 Potential need for soil amendments.
- 3 Types of plants best suited for the area.
- 4 Texture, pH, and fertility levels in the soil.

STEP 3 Next, you need to plant practical turf-areas with the **right turfgrass**. Consider the following when deciding what type of turf to plant:

- 1 What type of foot traffic will you have? Pets? Kids?
- 2 How much light exposure is there?
- 3 What is the soil type?
- 4 Will ground cover work better than turf?

STEP 4 This begins after you analyze the soil and decide what areas will have plants and what areas will have turfgrass. Making the **appropriate plant selection** is important. Here are a few things to consider when selecting plants:

- 1 Does the appearance of the plant fit the setting?
- 2 What are the light requirements of the plant? Sun, shade or partial shade?

- 3 What are the plant's soil, water and nutrition requirements?
- 4 Is the plant pest and disease resistant?
- 5 Is the plant native or well-adapted to the area?
- 6 Consider planting Texas Superstars, EarthKind™ Roses and other plants that have undergone extensive evaluation.
- 7 Look for the GO TEXAN mark to find Texas grown plants.

STEP 5 Water availability continues to be a concern in Texas. Whether you are planning or maintaining your landscape, **efficient irrigation** is important. The following tips will help you get the most of every drop:

- 1 Identify low, medium and high water use areas.
- 2 Group plants according to water needs.
- 3 Use a licensed irrigator.
- 4 Use drip or soaker hoses when possible.
- 5 Water early in the morning.

STEP 6 **Mulches** play an important role in the success of a landscape. They serve as a protective ground covering that saves water, reduces evaporation, prevents erosion, controls weeds and, in the case of organic mulches, enriches the soil. When using mulch around a tree, keep it from touching the base. Mulches help:

- 1 Moderate soil temperatures.
- 2 Support root development.
- 3 Add organic matter.

STEP 7 The most beautiful landscapes in Texas use **smart maintenance practices**. Here are a few tips for maintaining your landscape:

- 1 Keep weeds down. They compete with plants for water and nutrients.
- 2 Check your irrigation system for leaks.
- 3 Inspect plants weekly and take any observed changes in plants to a certified nursery/landscape professional for diagnosis.
- 4 Fertilize plants only as needed.
- 5 Water plants when they show signs of stress. Long, deep and infrequent watering is best.
- 6 Mow turfgrass frequently and to its recommended height.
- 7 Do not remove clippings after mowing.

Resources

TEXAS NURSERY AND LANDSCAPE ASSOCIATION

Your yard and garden are major financial investments as well as a reflection of you and your home. To assure the highest quality nursery and landscaping products and services, look for the professional certification logo of the Texas Nursery & Landscape Association. To find a certified landscape, contractor or retail outlet to help you with your landscape and gardening needs, visit landscapetexas.org.

For more information on the Texas Nursery and Landscape Association's Certified Professional Program, contact:



Texas Nursery and Landscape Association
7730 South IH 35
Austin, Texas 78745
(512) 280-5182
tnlaonline.org

Photos for this brochure were provided by the Texas Nursery and Landscape "Texas Excellence In Landscaping" award program.

TEXAS DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

By registering and inspecting Texas nursery and floral establishments, the Texas Department of Agriculture's Nursery Floral Licensing Program ensures customers receive high quality, pest-free plants. Licensees range from producers and distributors of a vast variety of plants like trees, shrubs, bedding plants, ornamentals, turf, floral, foliage and tropicals, as well as sidewalk flower vendors. A nursery floral license is required at each business location where nursery and/or floral items are sold; offered or grown for sale or lease; distributed; or offered to promote the sales or lease of other items. Look for the Texas Department of Agriculture Nursery Floral License when you shop for your landscape plants.

For questions about a nursery floral license, contact:



Texas Department of Agriculture
P.O. Box 12847
Austin, Texas 78711
(512) 463-7476
(800) TELL-TDA (835-5832)
TexasAgriculture.gov





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P.O. Box 12847,
Austin, Texas 78711
(877) 99-GOTEX

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