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## Landscape Design: 20 Mistakes to Avoid

**Eye-catching and beautiful home landscape design is certainly attainable for do-it-yourselfers**, but there are some common "misjudgments" that should be avoided if all-around satisfaction is desired. Therefore, below is a list of 20 mistakes to be avoided in home landscape design. The mistakes covered here range from oversights that have practical ramifications to more subtle errors that negatively impact your enjoyment (or even your neighbors' enjoyment) of your home landscape design.

### 1. Failure to have a plan.

Ideally, it's best to start from scratch, draw a plan for the whole yard, and stick to it. Short of that, try at least to sketch a rough plan for one large area of your yard, and put all your energy into implementing that plan this year.

### 2. Straight walkways and planting beds.

A curving walkway provides more visual interest and softens the boxy shape of your home and property. Planting beds with curved borders gently guide the eye around the yard and look more natural and inviting.

### 3. Having a lawn because you think you should.

For those not attracted to the "green carpet" look or who dislike having to mow grass every week, it's important to know that other acceptable options exist, especially for small spaces.



### 4. No theme.

It helps to pick a theme which suits the architecture of your home and the sun exposure of your yard. When you select plants at the nursery, place them next to each other for visual compatibility.

### 5. No overall color scheme.

Use tried-and-true color schemes. Monochromatic: select one color and its variations, such as purple, and blend lilac, pale purple and eggplant-colored flowers together.

Analogous: plant related colors,

such as yellows, golds, oranges and reds. Complementary: select colors opposite each other on the color wheel, such as purple and yellow or blue and orange. Remember to select colors which harmonize with your home's paint color.

### 6. Insufficient fall color.

The fall season holds enormous promise for those landscaping enthusiasts willing to plan for it. Don't allow your home landscape design to miss out on the colors offered by autumn's beauty!



### 7. Lack of winter interest.

If you live in the North, it is precisely in wintertime that we most need a yard decor that will bring us cheer.

### 8. Hanging onto scraggly, unhealthy or overgrown plants.

Brown leaves, and sparse foliage do not add beauty to your landscape. Overgrown junipers and yews

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## Your lawn, and how you take care of it, can help the environment!

Healthy grass provides feeding ground for birds, who find it a rich source of insects, worms, and other food. Thick grass prevents soil erosion, filters contaminants from rainwater and absorbs many types of airborne pollutants, like dust and soot. Grass is also highly efficient at converting carbon dioxide to oxygen, a process that helps clean the air.

Caring for your lawn properly can both enhance its appearance and contribute to its environmental benefits. This means creating conditions for grass to thrive and resist damage from weeds, disease, and insect pests. If you choose to use pesticides or fertilizers, it means using them with extreme care so as to get the most benefit and reduce any risks.

Caring for your lawn in an environmentally sensible way can have a bigger impact than you might think. Your lawn may only be a small piece of land, but all the lawns across the country cover a lot of ground. That means you and your lawn-care activities, along with everyone else's, can make a difference to the environment. And that's why taking care of the environment begins in our own backyards.

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planted years ago can dominate your yard and give it a dated look. Remove offenders and replace with appropriate plantings. Group or cluster plants, with the tallest toward the rear and those of lesser height in front.

**9. Failure to irrigate.**

There's a lot tied up in your home landscape design, both in terms of money and sentimental value. Consider installing an automatic irrigation system in your home landscape design.

**10. Shrubs and trees blocking passage.**

Your home will look more inviting and well-maintained if you trim overgrown shrubs.

**11. Planting on an eroding hillside.**

Build a retaining wall first, then do your planting afterwards.



**12. Failure to work with what you have.**

Sometimes you can successfully fight the terrain you inherit in your yard. Other times, instead of fighting it, it's better to go with the flow and work with what you have. The key is to know what you're up against and what options you have.

**13. Topping trees.**

Don't get sold on the erroneous notion that cutting off the tops of trees spurs growth. The fact is, removing all or part of a treetop encourages rapid decay, weakens the branches and makes them susceptible to disease and breakage.

**14. Dangerous walkways and paths.**

Repair uneven sections of cement and loose bricks. You'll make it safe for your visitors and your yard will look well-maintained.

**15. Failure to plant deer-resistant plants.**

Don't want all of your hard work turned to shreds? Ask a garden professional to recommend plantings that aren't on your neighborhood deer's menu.

**16. House number problems.**

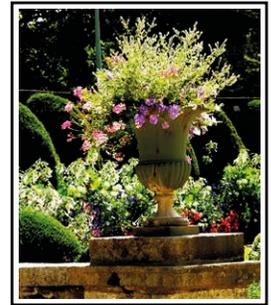
Place your house numbers in one or two prominent locations. Invest in large-sized (5" to 8") numbers and position them horizontally or vertically.

**17. Lawn tools simply can't be found.**

What you need is a storage shed. The longer you put off getting adequate storage, the longer you'll be disorganized - and the further you'll fall behind in your yard work.

**18. No personality.**

The gardens that have the most sparkle and creative touches express the character of the inhabitants. Display a sculpture piece or ornament, place one or two unusual plants in your yard, or arrange some antique furniture on your front porch. Place yard ornaments, such as bird baths or sundials amongst one or two of the groupings.

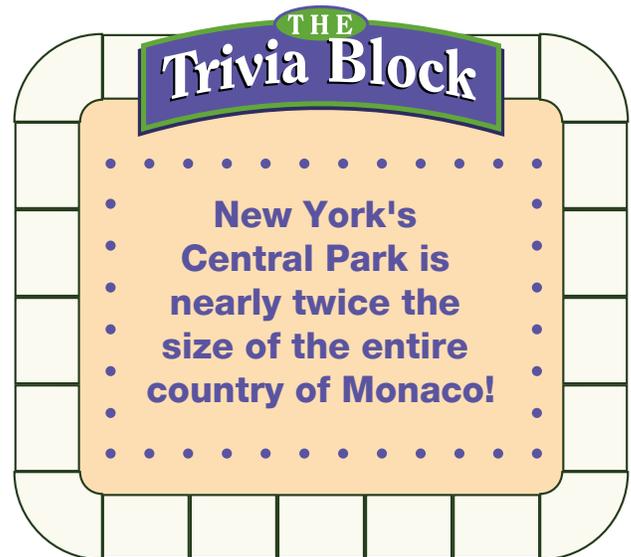


**19. Forgetting functionality.**

Functionality takes precedence over aesthetics. Home landscape design should always be safe, convenient and usable.

**20. Covering your yard with red lava or white quartz rocks.**

If you have this in your yard, get rid of it, and if you're thinking of putting it in, don't!



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