

Triangle

JUNE/JULY 2020

HOME

DESIGN & DECOR®

IN LIVING
Color

PLUS:
GRANDMILLENNIAL
STYLE

MAKING AN
ENTRANCE





BACKYARD BUDGETING

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Photography by Chip Henderson

Layer-in landscaping one line item at a time.

Just as setting a budget is helpful in running a household, an annual landscaping budget is a handy tool to ensure your outdoor-living plan proceeds efficiently and effectively. Homeowners should compose a yearly budget to address outdoor living needs, which may change from year to year as a family grows or children leave the nest. Landscaped spaces around a home are living, breathing entities, and, like families' dynamic lifestyles, should be assessed yearly to evaluate progress toward outdoor design goals.

I recommend a creative budgeting strategy for those who are primarily focused on adding or upgrading outdoor-living components. Once an annual budget is decided, allocate *all* of it to *one* outdoor living area. The money doesn't have to be spent all at once just because it is prioritized for one recreational area.





Incremental spending throughout the year on that one living space enables layering of components in a more controlled and cost-effective manner. After first using equipment to transport necessary larger plantings, install hardscaping and move on to a layering process such as this one:

- Install green privacy screening with shrubs and trees to block neighboring views.
- Plant layers of plants in various heights, colors, and textures in front of the screening and around other parts of the outdoor area.
- Add heat-tolerant perennials and annuals for summer blooms and to anchor the space and make it more of a “room.”
- Consider masses of potted plants for additional color, and mulch to tie all features together.

There are wonderful benefits to layering budget spending over the course of a full year. Landscaping projects are by their nature easier to schedule in stages, providing a chance to orchestrate the process so the homeowner can be present on specific installation days. Outdoor-living design is a collaborative effort between professional and homeowner, so it is imperative that homeowners have the opportunity to remain on-site. Plus, focusing all of the budget on one outdoor area at a time can greatly impact the visual and entertainment pleasure of each space.

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It is wise to involve a landscape contractor in the budgeting process. The contractor will have knowledge about the current cost of materials and the ability to set a realistic, achievable goal with the funds available. Landscape contractors are well versed in scheduling and determining the logical layering process of a project. It is often more comfortable for the homeowner to work through an outdoor-living project in a step-by-step manner throughout the year, where the budget is established early in the process and then broken into manageable chunks of time and payments. By the end of the year, a completed outdoor-entertainment area will simply need a small maintenance budget in subsequent years to keep it functioning well and looking vibrant and new. ♦

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