



Create a budget-friendly home landscape

Homeowners understandably envy the award-worthy photo spreads in lawn and garden magazines, wanting to emulate those same looks on their own properties. Scores of designers and landscape architects are involved in the process of creating those amazing lush lawns and perfectly placed plantings. Although not every homeowner has the budget to create lavish landscape designs, it's still possible for homeowners to create lawns they can be proud of.

- Establish your budget. The first step in any project is to determine how much money you can devote to the job. Once you have established the budget, all other factors can be built around it.
- Find an inspiration piece. Great landscapes are inspired by many things, whether it's a memorable piece of art or a landscape layout in a lawn and gardening magazine. Use photos of other gardens or neighbors' yards as inspiration and build off of them. As long as the theme is cohesive, it will look pleasing to the eye.

- Consider the space and how you want to use it. Understanding the space will help you better allocate your budget. If your yard is more of a retreat, look for ways to create privacy and a vacation feel. If you have kids and entertaining friends is a main priority, focus on recreational aspects, such as a pool, playset and some durable plants. Understanding how to allocate your budget will help you to avoid spending money frivolously.

- Think about reclaimed or repurposed materials. Brand new items can quickly eat up a budget. However, repurposing salvaged or inexpensive items can stretch that budget while adding some unique flair to a landscape. See if you can find an outdoor patio set that someone is giving away or selling for a lower price. All it takes is a coat of paint and some new cushions to make it look like new. Discarded

bricks or stones can be worked into a patio space or used to create raised garden beds. Purchase inexpensive flower pots and then paint them to make them look like stone or another desired material.

- Buy native plants. Native plants, shrubs, trees, and flowers will fare better than non-native, exotic plants. That means you'll have to spend less time and money nurturing them into health, and less money having to replace plants that cannot withstand your climate.

- Consider perennial plants. Perennials may cost more at the outset, but the savings will be realized in the years to come.

- Hire a professional. It may seem counterintuitive to spend money on a landscaping professional when you've established a strict budget, but that's one way to save money. Landscape artists or garden designers have the

experience to guide you in the right direction and help you avoid potentially costly mistakes.

- Use gravel in spots where plants don't thrive. Gravel is an inexpensive landscaping material that can fill in voids where plants or ground cover simply do not flourish. Those working on limited budgets may be happy to learn gravel is typically less expensive than concrete or pavers.

- Ask friends or family for clippings. Don't be shy about admiring the plantings of those you know. Flatter their good taste and ask if you can have some clippings to propagate yourself. These clippings can turn into lush plants in no time - with no additional spending required.

With some frugal spending, planning and budgeting, anyone can create a beautiful landscape.



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Air

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- English ivy: NASA researchers exploring the possibilities of long-term space habitation found that certain houseplants were more effective at cleaning air inside energy-efficient, non-ventilated buildings than others. One such plant was English ivy, which can effectively combat the formaldehyde found in certain household cleaning products.

- Bamboo palm: Bamboo palms also found their way onto NASA's list. Bamboo palm plants thrive indoors, where they are especially effective at filtering out the chemicals benzene and trichloroethylene.

Gardening has been proven to be a soothing hobby that can help gardeners reduce stress. But the health benefits of gardening can extend indoors as well.

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