

Mid-Shores Home Builders Association Inc.  
*Celebrating 15 Years! 1998-2013*



## Landscaping: *Interior Living . . . Outside*

As we celebrate National Home Remodeling Month, we cannot overlook the home's landscaping. There are so many components to consider when landscaping today. Many of the features you are used to on your home's interior are now available outside. The one factor that has not changed is that a landscaping project works best when you have a plan of action.

### **Landscape Plan**

A landscaping plan is not just about plants and trees. It is an all-inclusive look at the property surrounding your home and how you will make that land work for you. A landscape plan focuses on your hardscape – driveways, walkways, patio areas, retaining walls, and stone accents; rough and finish grade; plant material; planting beds and mulched areas; and your lawn – whether it is seed or sod. In-ground irrigation systems and buried downspouts are secondary elements of any plan. A great landscape plan is designed with the architecture of your home, the surrounding terrain, your budget, and goals in mind.

### **Timing**

It takes approximately 15 to 20 hours for a professional landscape architect to create a finished landscape plan for an average sized lot. This includes a site visit to your home, drawing a preliminary plan, updates if necessary, and presenting the final proposal. Landscape implementation may be done all at once or during a set number of years, depending on your budget limitations and the scope of your project.

### **Experience & Reputation**

Keep in mind that you should determine the reputation and experience of a prospective landscape architect or designer well before you enter this process. Money saved in the short term may not be considered well spent in the long run.

### **Maintenance**

One of the most important things you need to share with your designer or landscape architect is the amount of time you want to spend on maintenance. You might like the look of formal gardens, but the level of time you can commit to maintaining your landscape might be more conducive to a more contemporary or relaxed look. A professional will be able to tell you if the Japanese garden, water feature, or prairie restoration that you desire will work with your lifestyle priorities.

### **Outdoor Living Considerations & Trends**

Today's outdoor living rooms are being treated as an extension of the indoor amenities that we all enjoy. Dramatic features such as custom fireplaces and fire pits, built in grills, bars and kitchens, pergolas, pools, hot tubs, water features, lighting, televisions, and sound all come together to create beautiful and functional outdoor spaces. These spaces provide retreats for both relaxation and entertainment. Other considerations also include shading overhead and on side panels, and various bug control options. All these features can be customized to fit the style of your home by using endless combinations of stone, brick, wood, wrought iron, and just about any other material you can imagine. The possibilities for style and budget are limited only by your imagination.



**Choosing the Right Contractor** It is essential to choose the right contractor to remodel or improve your home. Hiring a professional contractor means that they have the proper credentials & insurance, background, and knowledge to finish your project professionally. Under no circumstances should a consumer pull a permit from a local government. This puts the sole risk and liability on the consumer. Visit [www.midshoreshomebuilders.com/consumers.asp](http://www.midshoreshomebuilders.com/consumers.asp) for a Checklist to Finding and Hiring a Builder or Remodeler.