

# 4 Common Mistakes Made When Planning for a Landscape Renovation – and How To Avoid Them.

by Rick MacRoy, owner of Landscape Creations

## **Mistake #1: Not checking out contractor qualifications —**

How to avoid this common mistake —

Discuss these points with your contractor:

- Do they have the creative and functional ability to design and plan your landscaping?
- Do they have years of experience specific in hardscape and plant installation?
- Are they licensed, bonded and insured?
- Are they listed with Angie's List or the Better Business Bureau. Do they have respectable ratings?
- Do they belong to trade associations?
- Do they have the sufficient equipment and labor to handle the job?

## **Mistake #2: Dismissing the contractor's sales presentation —**

Discuss these points to avoid this common mistake —

Does your contractor:

- Offer a FREE on-site consultation?
- Provide a sketch or scaled drawing indicating proposed work?
- Charge a fee for the sketch or scaled drawing?
- Is the proposed work a written contract (proposal) with specific description(s) and line costing detail?
- Does the proposal indicate a deposit (beware of large deposit requests), specific payment terms, start and completion dates?
- Is the proposal 'work' and 'materials' specific?
- Do you know exactly what you are paying for?

## **Mistake #2: Dismissing the contractor's sales presentation (Cont.)**

- Do you know exactly what you are paying for?
- Are you aware of 'work' specifications and the type and quantity of 'materials'?
- Are these specifications in writing?
- Can your contractor offer customer references; how many, is the work similar in scope. Are the customers happy and does the work speak for itself?
- Is the work guaranteed for workmanship and for how long?
- Are permits, entrance bonds, and a contractor license fee required. Who acquires them?

## **Mistake #3: Not planning well enough for execution of design —**

To avoid this Common Mistake, be sure your contractor:

- Has an on-site review of the layout and schedule with you prior to the start of work.
- Is courteous and respectful of your neighbors' property.
- Assures you that the job site be kept safe and clean.
- Responds to changes due to unforeseen site conditions or customers change request.
- The contractor/business owner supervises the project and sees that specialized and/or detailed tasks are 'hands-on' by the business owner.
- Leaves your property 'power washed' clean when your project is completed.

## **Mistake #4. Not following up —**

To avoid this common mistake, make sure your contractor will:

- Review and walk through the project with you upon completion. Make immediate corrections, if required.
- Respond to questions and/or possible problems that may arise long after project completion.
- Assure you that the job site be kept safe and clean.
- Respond to changes due to unforeseen site conditions or customers change request.
- Offer you care and maintenance handouts regarding your project.
- Offer maintenance services for long term care.

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Rick and Rich MacRoy, co-owners of Landscape Creations have been members of the Illinois Landscape Contractors Association (ILCA) since 1999. They are authorized Unilock® contractors. Awards presented to them from UNILOCK include:

- Most Dramatic Before & After Project 2005
- Best Outdoor Living Space 2007
- Outstanding Sales Performance 2000 - 2006
- Best Raised Patio 2000
- Recognition of 5 Years as Authorized Contractor 2000
- Recognition of 10 Years as Authorized Contractor 2005