

SOUND ADVICE ON SELECTING A LANDSCAPE CONTRACTOR

The landscape season is just around the corner but before you hire a contractor for landscape work this season there are a few items that you should keep in mind. Who you work with has a huge impact on the overall success of your garden. If you spend the money on hiring a professional expect to see professional results that last.

1. Ask for references. A contractor's abilities and workmanship can best be appreciated by seeing completed landscape projects and speaking with former clients.
2. Get it in writing. A written and signed contract will protect the interest of both parties. Contracts should clearly specify the scope of work, timelines, payment schedules and necessary permits required (ie. underground service locates). Weather delays are often unavoidable and alter the timelines written in the contract.
3. Does the landscape company have liability insurance and have proof of Workers Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) Standing. Landscape contractors are required by law to pay WSIB premiums on behalf of their employees in case of a workplace injury. If the company does not have this, then you will be liable if workplace injuries occur on your property.
4. Warranty. Envisioning your landscape ten years down the road is often ignored by the majority of homeowners. How long will the hardscaping materials last? Will the plants be replaced if they do not live through the next winter? What are your responsibilities as a client with respect to landscape maintenance? For example, if you are away at the cottage all summer, you will need someone else to do the watering and weeding for you.

. Now is the time to assess your landscape needs. Can you do the landscape construction by yourself or do you need to hire a professional? It is a fascinating experience to watch the construction work in progress and the landscape transform before your eyes. Whatever the size of your property, a professionally designed landscape offers numerous benefits to you and your family. Whether for recreation, relaxation or entertainment there is no better way to enhance your quality of life and enjoyment year round.

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