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LAWN MAINTENANCE

Going green: Incorporating more sustainability practices and designs

Beth Hyatt | August 16, 2018



Photo: Urban Oasis Landscape Design

This is part one in a two-part series. The sequel article will publish on TLC tomorrow.

Clients may be asking you how their **landscape** could be more sustainable or whether there's enough space to feature more usable areas, and the short and sweet answer is yes.

Debbie Gliksman, owner of **Urban Oasis Landscape Design** in Los Angeles, California, works specifically to **design landscapes** that feature both sustainable and functional aspects.

If you find clients asking more about these two specific features or if you've toyed with the idea of incorporating more green and usable services into your own business, take a look at how you can get things started.

Sustainability

Being a residential landscaper, Gliksman said she sees clients on a daily basis that have space in their landscape that has untapped potential in the way of sustainability and usability, but they aren't aware of what this space can truly offer. This, she believes, is where her ideas are able to shine.

"I try and turn peoples' lots and front and back gardens into places where they can relax and enjoy," she said. "(I try to) create a beautiful environment for them, and I try to help improve their lives by giving them that place they can enjoy. What I love to do is create special places for people."

As a California landscaper, Gliksman said she is very familiar with dealing with the overwhelming droughts the state often faces, as well as the constant dry climate. As a company that specializes in sustainability, Gliksman said she ensures that water saving techniques and designs are used in every project she encounters.



Debbie Gliksman

Currently, Gliksman said she is part of the **Association of Professional Landscape Designers (APLD)**, and their water-saving philosophy is to, "Go with the watershed movement." This, she explains, simply means they work to keep water in the landscape, as opposed to letting it leave the space and ultimately end up in the sewers and streets.

When water is allowed to leave the space, Gliksman said she counts it as an incredible waste because no one is able to receive benefits from the water, and on top of that, many **pesticides**, garbage and other substances "are flushed into the ocean."

"It's all very beneficial and it actually has a big impact on the environment because you're sequestering the carbon, saving your water (and) not using nearly as much water," she said. "I think a lot of people are surprised to find out that their horrible, scrappy looking lawn is actually taking more water than any beautiful garden they could put in. It's the biggest water user of anything."

When taking stock of the amount of water used in a typical lawn, Gliksman said lawns usually have a plant factor of one, which means that the lawn is the biggest water user in the space.

Along with water preservation, Gliksman said she works to improve the soil quality in the landscapes she works with. This, she said, should be the first step because without healthy, appropriately tended soil, nothing will thrive.

Another important aspect she notes is to be sure and choose climate-appropriate plants and native plants to help attract local birds, insects and more.

Before beginning a sustainable project, Gliksman says it's necessary to ensure there are permeable surfaces present to keep water from running off and into other areas where it will be wasted.

It's also important to find ways to capture rainwater and use it, she said, whether that's by building a **stormwater retention pit**, installing a cistern or even creating a rain garden.

Since it's one of the easier options, Gliksman said many customers typically like the idea of the rain garden. While it might not be as effective as other methods, it can still act as a good source of drainage while still adding the garden aspect to the landscape.


To create a rain garden, start with a shallow depression that has amendable soil, so it will drain quickly. Be sure that the rain garden is located at least 10 feet away from the home's foundation so there will be no seepage problems.

The amended soil combined with water-loving plants will capture the excess water and allow it to slowly percolate into the earth, as opposed to it sitting on the surface of the lawn.

Check back tomorrow for part 2 of this series, where we'll take a look at creating usability designs that can also incorporate sustainability practices covered today.

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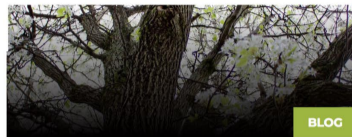


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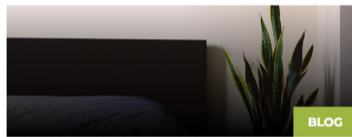
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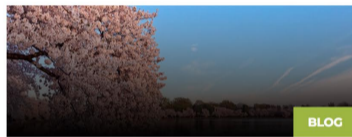


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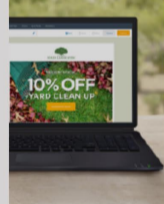
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SUBMIT

LAWN MAINTENANCE

Unlocking potential: Making the most of your customer's space

Beth Hyatt | August 17, 2018



Photo: Urban Oasis Landscape Design

This is part two in a two-part series. To read part one, click [here](#).

Debbie Glikzman, owner of [Urban Oasis Landscape Design](#) in Los Angeles, California, works specifically to **design landscapes** that feature both sustainable and functional aspects. More often than not, clients are unaware of the true potential their space has until Glikzman steps in to show them what they are missing out on.

Usability/functionality

Glikzman notes that California real estate is fairly expensive, therefore she takes great care to ensure her clients are able to take full advantage of every inch of space they have.

Time and time again, she's had customers not using areas of their **landscape** for one reason or another, and after realizing that the formerly rundown space can now be used for something attractive, her clients spend much more time outdoors.

Running with the *Field of Dreams* philosophy, Glikzman said she goes out of her way to find these abandoned areas of the landscape and recreate them into a gathering place everyone will flock to.

As far as what will be necessary on your part when coming into a usability design project, Glikzman said there really is no set idea; it's all dependent upon the customer's wants and the available space.

A total site analysis of the space, she said, is absolutely essential before offering any design ideas, and following this, she recommends taking time to sit with the clients and talk through any ideas they've had regarding their landscape.

As a California landscaper, Glikzman said she is very familiar with dealing with the overwhelming droughts the state often faces, as well as the constant dry climate. Since **lawns** are the biggest water user in the space, one main goal Glikzman said she tries to accomplish with every project she works on is to either significantly reduce the size of the lawn, remove it completely or remove it and replace it with an alternative that won't require as much water.

Since customers in her area are more open to the ideas of sustainable and usable landscaping, Glikzman said she never really encounters any customers unwilling to work with her lawn removal, replacement or reduction ideas.

Notable projects and advice

While there have been many successful projects in her career, both in the way of sustainability and usability, Glikzman recalled two specific instances that really stood out to her.

One project, which ultimately ended up doubling as both sustainable and usable, took place on top of an old, cracked blacktop. The surface had served as an abandoned area in the client's landscape for many years.



Before the renovation, the Manhattan Beach, California, home had a pool that was going unused. Photo: Urban Oasis Landscape Design

From this approximately 50 by 25-foot area, Glikzman said she was able to create a large, elevated dining pavilion, along with a collection of raised beds and fruit trees that allowed her client the opportunity to grow and prepare his own produce.

Another standout project Glikzman recalled took place at a residence in Manhattan Beach, California. At this home, she said the clients had a pool that was no longer in use and was taking up too much valuable space, as well as costing money in maintenance.

With this space, Glikzman said she was able to create an outdoor kitchen that featured a covered dining area, a covered fire pit complete with built-in benches, an open patio, a swing and an entire garden.

"I really liked the way I managed to make so much use out of that small space," she said. "Anything they want to do out there, as far as lounging, (they can do)."

For other landscapers desiring to add more sustainability practices or usability designs to their service list, Glikzman only had one piece of advice: educate yourself through courses and seminars.

"There is quite a lot to learn; it's not the same as it used to be," she said. "So, I think you really just have to learn about it and network with other designers, share with them, they share with you and learn how to do it."



Glikzman created an outdoor kitchen that featured a covered dining area, a covered fire pit complete with built-in benches, an open patio, a swing and an entire garden. Photo: Urban Oasis Landscape Design

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