

# SUSTAINABILITY

## "IMAGINE OUTDOOR LIVING SPACE"



Picture from BELGARD

No more cabin fever when you can stretch beyond the confines of solid walls and step outside into your wonderful natural open space created by you. A space where you become infused with the sights, smells and sounds of a natural habitat. A place where natural senses and instincts become health benefits. When we address issues of sustainability, we must not only think about building structures and plant life, we must also think about time and energy required at the human level.

Although we think about landscaping as a function to package our home into some beautiful surroundings, we may have forgotten to put ourselves in the outdoor space leaving us to fall victims to the couch, TV and kitchen snacks. There are so many ideas and materials for creating a space that is functional and alluring. To assure that the outdoor living space does not add more work to your already busy life, pre-planning for low maintenance is the best approach. This is where experts in the field of landscaping are so helpful. Mountain View Landscaping & Design, Inc. have expertise in all areas of landscaping to include creating designs, selection of plant materials, soil erosion and retaining walls, drainage systems, paver and stone patios, terracing, and many other creative designs such as arbors, gazebos and pergolas. Using their expertise and engineering professionals, they are also able to turn mounds of unusable land into creative designs.

## **PLANNING PROCESS:**

Let's be truthful, selection of landscape materials for the home is usually based upon visual preferences. This, naturally, should be a part of the selection process but, there are many other factors to be considered if there is to be sustainability of materials. For gardening success and long-term sustainability, planning is the best way to offset maintenance requirements or money spent replacing bad choices of initial plant materials.

Landscaping involves so many opportunities to alter a space, to beautify a space or to make a space more functional. In the planning process the following factors need to be considered when making material selections:

**Location:** 1) Amount of space for the planting; 2) Degree of sun or shade; 3) Type of garden, i.e., edibles, shade garden, bold blooming flowers or succulents. The more knowledge you have about location will allow suitable selection of plant materials. Region of the country also impacts plant selections especially if areas are prone to extreme rainfalls or frequent droughts.

This Pergola is one option for a simple structure that is alluring and easy to maintain.



<http://trellisstructures.com/index.html>

Or even a more elaborate outdoor space featuring a redwood gazebo with lighting nestled within natural boulders and a small koi pond.



Photo courtesy of Doug Carrie & Joe Jones

**MAINTENANCE REQUIREMENTS:** Once plant materials are selected that are appropriate to location, care is minimized as it applies to watering and feeding. Soil quality and suitability should be considered as part of the location evaluation. Spring is one of the most common times of the year to renew mulch and to plant seasonal color. Weed control can be applied during freshening of mulch as well. After flowering shrubs such as Rhododendrons or Azaleas which are so common in this area, have finished blooming is the best time for pruning. Fall is usually considered the best time for pruning large evergreen trees or shrubs such as Holly. Pruning is an ancient horticultural practice that basically alters the shape and growth pattern of a plant or shrub.

Feeding plant material is usually done twice a year in the spring and fall with a balanced fertilizer which contains nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium.

**HARDSCAPES - RETAINING WALLS AND STONE ENHANCEMENTS:** Retaining walls are not only beautiful enhancements to any landscape, they serve a tremendous function in the landscape. Land in the mountain areas is rarely flat, composed of slopes and valleys and presents challenges for landowners to minimize soil erosion down the slopes and to control water flow. States and counties have erosion control and sediment policies that have to be followed when land is disturbed for any types of structures. This involves engineering professionals and permits.

Retaining walls if installed according to engineering guidelines and local permit restrictions will last a lifetime. Mountain View Landscaping and Design, Inc. is the leading licensed landscape

contractor in this area for installing retaining walls and other structures that involve natural stone, block, pavers, and treated wood. The use of these materials can also minimize mowing areas.

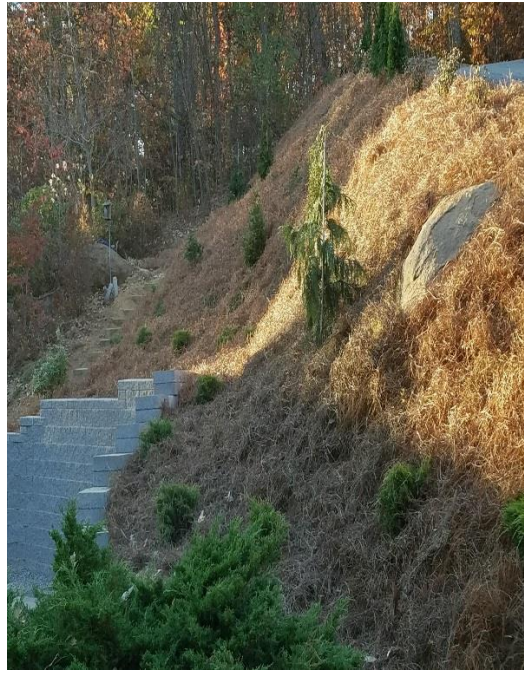
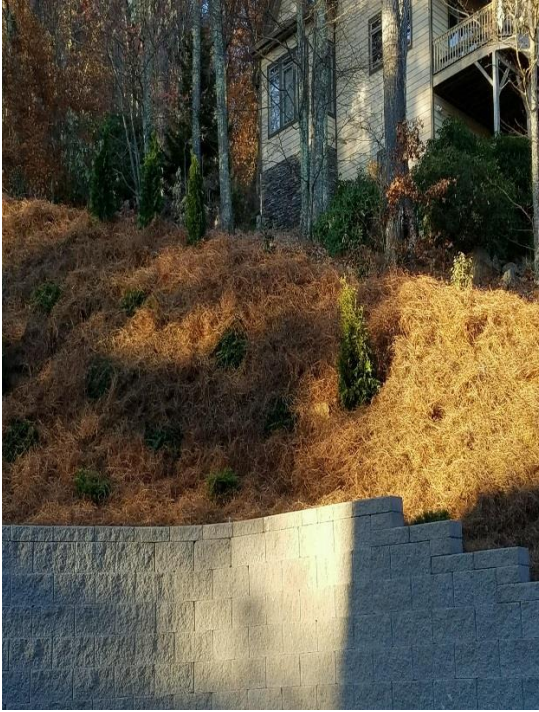


Using natural stone as steps going down slopes



Beautify flagstone walkways with decorative stone or pavers

Cornerstone Block Retaining Wall



Boulder Retaining Wall



All work by Mountain View Landscaping & Design, LLC



A setting that looks like an extension of home except the view is surrounded by nature. The beautiful flooring is composed of decorative pavers from BELGARD, a leading manufacturer of hardscape design products.

Mountain View Landscaping & Design is proud to use BELGARD products.

## **GOOD NEWS ABOUT HARDSCAPES**

Hardscapes encompasses many elements that may not come to mind. We commonly think of retaining walls, pavers for driveways or patios, excavation, grading or drainage issues. These are functional elements and relate to soil erosion, water control, clearing land or grading roads. However, hardscapes are becoming more and more popular as landscape enhancements and for aesthetic appeal.

For example, a retaining wall is usually constructed to prevent soil erosion along slopes, particularly in mountain areas. Retaining walls can be as simple as stacking railroad ties or cinder blocks usually 3 to 5 feet high or it can be both functional and elaborate showcasing natural stone and decorative blocks. Although initial expense is always a consideration, stone retaining walls can last a life time, while decaying railroad ties will have to be replaced many times. Some hardscape ideas that may not be so evident and are gaining popularity are the following:

- Outdoor fireplaces or fire pits within a small stone walled area
- Using pavers or natural stone as steps down slopes or as unique pathways through gardens

- Constructing a stone raised flower bed around a pool or as a focal point in the landscape.
- Encase the mailbox in decorative stone with complementary seasonal flowerbeds.
- Add Dry Creek beds along drainage areas or as focal points using river rock and/or decorative stones.
- Enhance entry ways with partial stone arbors and side pillars with lights
- Place stone edgers around flower beds or curbs to add a final touch.



Mountain View Landscaping & Design, LLC continues to assist customers with developing their outside space for enjoying nature and to relax from a fast-paced world. Our inside-outside focus is based on beauty, functionality and human enjoyment. Let us help you implement your ideas for an improved outdoor space.