



The Coral Homes
cleverliving
team

**NEWS FROM
THE HOME FRONT**

Designing your dream landscape

Presented by Jillian Haramina from the Coral Homes *Clever Living* team

A well designed landscape can add warmth, liveability and personality to your property and provide great pleasure to your family and visitors. It can even add to your property's resale value!

When designing a landscape, don't forget that apart from being aesthetically pleasing, it should also be functional. Too often landscapes dominate a property with plants and materials, rather than serve to provide a living area for families.



Draw your base plan

The first step to planning your dream landscape is to get out the site plan of your property. Coral Homes has provided this drawing to you, which includes a "to-scale" plan of your house and lot. Make several copies of this plan before proceeding further.

Along with the house, make sure all other major features are included on the base plan such as existing walks, outbuildings, trees, shrubs, driveways, property lines, easements and utilities. Also indicate the compass directions in relation to your house.



When you are ready to proceed, place a piece of tracing or tissue paper over the plan on which to sketch your landscaping ideas.

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List your family's needs

Before you proceed with sketching your dream landscape, let's stop for a second and have a think about how your landscape can be tailored to suit your family's needs. You'll need to have an idea of your budget, as there are many options available.

Watch your kids playing in the yard. Younger children generally need a lot of space. It's also a good idea to include trees in your plan to provide them with nice shady areas in which to play and hide. More complicated landscapes might include sand pits, play houses or tree houses for the kids, depending on their age. Slightly older kids might like areas to play or practice sports. Why not talk to each of the kids and ask them what they want?

Think about your pets. Dogs (especially when combined with kids) will require some open space to run and play. Birds might require an aviary which could be included as a feature.

Now enough of the kids and pets, let's think about your needs. Do you want to entertain guests in your backyard? An entertaining area could be a great feature of your landscape. If you don't already have an outdoor patio, should you build one as a feature? Perhaps you might prefer a special relaxation area in the garden where you can retreat for some quiet time to read a book.

Choose a theme or style

The style, or feel, of your home should be an influencing factor on the landscape. You may consider carrying elements of the internal themes of your home to the outside landscape. This might occur if you have a patio, deck or alfresco area and you want to "bring the inside out".



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Draw a bubble plan

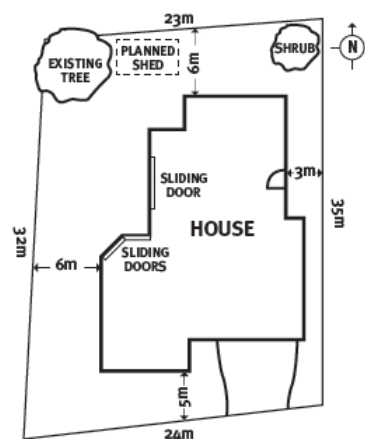
The first step to developing the master plan, or blue print, of your new landscape is to start by drawing a “bubble” plan. Take your base plan with tracing paper attached, and with a soft lead pencil draw a rough sketch of the various elements of your landscape using simple “bubble” shapes for each element. At this stage don’t worry too much about exact sizes and shapes. All you are doing is getting an idea of placement. Don’t be afraid to make mistakes and try again.

Remember to keep in mind all the things you have considered to this point, such as your family’s needs and your chosen theme or style.

If you are planning to include a walkway or path in your landscape, the best way to check placement is to walk through your yard to work out the natural paths you would normally take to get to the various areas in your yard. These should be noted in your bubble plan.

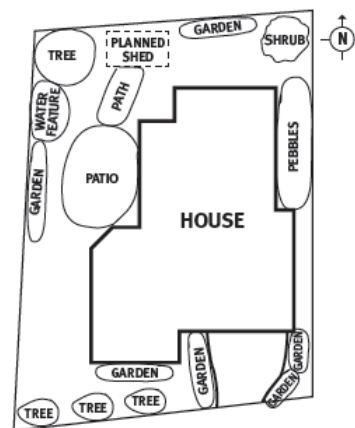
Now is also the time to consider any changes you may wish to make to slopes in your yard to accommodate drainage or to add to the design of your landscape. Things like retaining walls, terracing or stairs should be added into the bubble plan.

Landscape base plan example



Landscape bubble plan example

(Drawn on tracing paper over the base plan)



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A well positioned water feature can add an extra element of interest and style to your landscape. They are great near outdoor entertaining areas, or areas of relaxation. Depending on your budget, you may choose a water feature as the centre piece of your creation. Water features can also be illuminated for dazzling night time effect.

There are generally two types of outdoor lighting to consider: practical lighting or accent lighting. Outdoor accent lighting can be strategically positioned to highlight elements of your landscape and give it character at night time. Practical lighting should be used in areas your family intends to use most, such as the main entertaining area.

Draw your master plan

It is now time to transpose your bubble plan into a real landscape master plan. This will be your blueprint for the construction of your dream landscape. All you need to do is clean up the bubble plan a little bit and draw it to scale.

Take a copy of the original site plan or drawing of your property and begin drawing to scale your final design. You will now get a real sense of how everything will appear. If you have done a scale drawing and you are still not happy with something, don't be afraid to go back and change it. Remember that you are planning now in order to avoid mistakes later.

Choose your plants

Although you have marked out in your master plan the positioning and general type of plants in your landscape, now is the time to decide exactly what plants you want to use. The plants should be consistent with your family's needs and the theme of your landscape.

Depending on your theme, native plants are always a good option as they are generally more resistant to drought, insects and disease. Natives can also involve less maintenance, which is another major factor to consider when making your choice of plants.

Accent plants are single plants strategically positioned to create interest and contrast. Avoid using too many of these, as the result can be visual chaos.



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If you are planning to position your plants close to the side of your home, you will need to check that the plants you have chosen will not impact on the foundations of your home over time. Always consult your nursery first.

Remember to always keep your termite barrier (moving strip) visible at all times. If you want to place plants against your house, place a row of pebbles in front of your termite barrier and keep your plants small so you can always see the termite barrier behind them.

Irrigating your landscape

You've nearly finished the plan, however there is one more step which needs to be taken care of – the layout of your irrigation system. Remember to check any water restrictions in your area before proceeding with irrigation.

Instead of simply drawing this onto your master plan, sketch the irrigation layout onto a separate piece of tracing paper laid over your master plan. This is because you may have to make some adjustments and revisions. An irrigation supplier should be able to assist you with fittings and fixtures and help you finalise the design.

Before you commence the construction of your landscape, remember to allow conduit for irrigation and lighting under any paths patios or other permanent features.

Construction

Now that you have a well planned design you are ready to proceed with building your landscape. The only decisions left are the specific types of materials and colours you want to use for such things as bricks, timber, gravel etc.

So what are you waiting for? Pull up your sleeves and get started on your dream landscape (and maybe get the kids to help)!



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