

Dream home dream garden

LANDSCAPING NEW HOME'S LAWN

By Mike Pascoe



ensure that your dream home is really your dream home, enhanced by a beautiful verdant landscape.

IN THE BEGINNING

The initial decision on where the house sits on the lot is governed by the size of the house, the size of the lot and local planning bylaws and building codes. The tendency to build large homes on small lots often results in the house being placed toward the front of the lot close to the curb allowing full potential development in the back.

This may work for some homes, but the final uses of the back garden should be seriously considered and a balance arrived at between front and back spaces.

Large homes with small front gardens often appear out of scale since the front yard lacks the depth to showcase the house. A general rule of proportions is that the front garden depth should be twice the height of the house. This will allow room for large trees and deep plantings and approaches that allow mature development in direct proportion to the house, humanizing the scale of the property.

Forward planning is required here. As you enlarge the front yard of the house you obviously decrease the size of the back garden. Consider the implications of future development in the back, such as swimming pools, patios, children's play areas. Don't forget service areas, such as vegetable gardens and storage areas.

If you decide you do have room to expand the front yard without sacrificing usability in the back, ask the builder to determine the cost of push-

ing the house back from the curb. An increase in the costs of walkways and driveways can be anticipated, as well as the cost of extending services into the house as you develop deeper into the lot

MIND THE VIEW

Views are often neglected when building a new home, we have windows on the front and back that are the main focus. Sides of the house are often considered to be service areas, with windows being smaller or even absent. If the house is moved back from the curb, it may fall out of line with the neighbors homes and allow you to borrow views from their existing or future landscape. This may involve some risk, since you may find there is nothing desirable in your neighbour's garden that you wish to view. If there is something to see, these borrowed views may later be enhanced with the development of your own landscape where plantings are placed to funnel or lead the eye to some distant attraction beyond the boundaries of your garden.

The placement of the house on the lot is fraught with implications and repercussions, but a little thought at the 'paper stage' of development might create an awareness of some untapped potential that may be utilized when you begin to plant your own garden of the future. ♦

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So you're thinking of building a new home - that custom-built dream of a lifetime. Meetings upon meetings with the architect and/or builder will surely follow this initial decision, however little thought will be given to the landscape at this stage. Often the landscape designers and landscape installation company, if you use them, are the last ones on site and have to contend with what the developers and builders have left behind.

There are several important steps in developing a successful garden that should be considered while house plans are still in developmental stages. It is often easier to change something on paper. It is also much less expensive to adjust plans early on than realizing at some point in the future that your dream home doesn't quite fit with the landscaping look you want to eventually achieve.

This column will explore what you need to consider before and during construction of your new home to simplify the development of the landscape at some point in the future. To