



Grant & Power also installed a couple of natural stone bridges over the water feature, one of which was so large, a crane had to be brought in for proper placement. The water is cycled back using one of the largest pumps the company has ever used. The bridge also gives visitors a glimpse of the waterfall that drops the last few feet into the pond.

About 15 of Grant & Power's 90 employees — installation crews, designers, salespeople and a pond crew — were



involved at the site. The company has worked at the home for years and continues to do projects for the couple.

In addition to the stream, the company installed walkways, including one leading to the front of the home, a porch, a driveway, retaining walls, a patio and sitting areas by the stream.

The homeowners provided the entire vision for the project, which had advantages and disadvantages, Bouwman says. It made planning a bit more difficult because changes

**Opposite.** Grant & Power transformed a turfgrass-dominated view into a mountain-style vista.

**This page.** A 50-ft.-long stream provides a soothing sound and incredible views. Walkways make the landscape features accessible.

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## AWARD WINNER

sometimes had to be made midproject. But the clients respected suggestions from Grant & Power.

"The customer is extremely important in this," Bouwman says. "He had the vision, and we were able to feed off of that."

For example, the central water feature originally was going to be just a



**Above:** You can follow the stream along its 10-ft. drop to the pond and landings. **At right,** hydrangas in full bloom compliment the other perennials, much of it installed by the owners.



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- Ferns
- Endless Summer Hydrangea
- Daylily

small pond, but it evolved into the 50-plus-ft. stream that drops down as it passes the front of the home. The owners wanted to see and hear the water from their home.

Grant & Power installed a series of steps and landings all along the water feature for the homeowners and their visitors to enjoy when the weather permits. Decorative concrete block walls were used to create planter boxes at the entrance to the home and along the foundation.

The homeowners spend much of their time and energy on planting gardens, but the crews from Grant & Power installed a number of plants to enhance the grounds.

Among the plantings were: Endless Summer Hydrangea, different types of hostas, astilbes, grasses and irises. There aren't many big plants because the property already had plenty of trees, perennials and ground cover, Bouwman says.

The project earned Grand & Power a merit award at the Professional Landcare Network's 39th annual Environmental Improvement Awards. **LMI**



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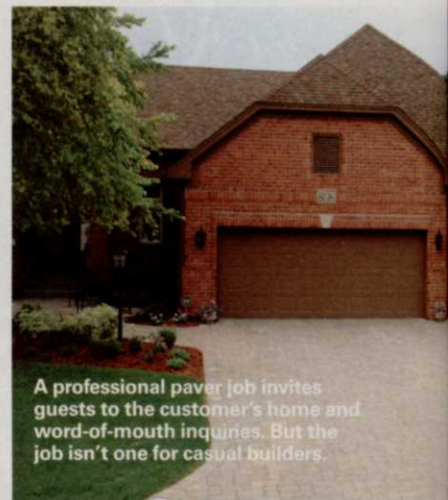
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Proper planning and project management are required to make paver installation pay off.



A professional paver job invites guests to the customer's home and word-of-mouth inquiries. But the job isn't one for casual builders.

# HARDSCAPES *made easy*

BY CURT HARLER

THE ROAD TO profits can be paved with pavers. But putting a fine edge on sales, installation and product choice spell the difference between a profitable job and just another week's work.

Success starts with proper training.

"I struggle with landscapers doing hardscaping," says Steve Jones, president of *Pave Tech Inc.*, Prior Lake, MN. "Too many landscapers are trying to fill their card for the season and see this as a good line. They need to know this requires a skill set they don't necessarily have."

A good sales pitch will include the basics and up-sells, and how you approach the customer is paramount.

"A contractor needs to understand even a basic walkway or patio is going to cost the customer \$2,000 to \$5,000," says Michael DiRienzo, vice president of *SEK Inc.* (*Snap Edge/Kerr Lighting*). That's a substantial amount of

money, especially when folks are tight with their hard-earned cash.

"Make sure you're as serious and professional as your consumer," he adds. "Dress professionally and educate the consumer about the work."

Many consumers aren't aware of upgrades that'll add to their property's value, or what they might look like when completed.

"Whether it be a seat wall, paver lighting, outdoor kitchen or fireplace, carry a photo album of work you've done, or use magazines to plant the seed," DiRienzo says. "Ask questions to learn their hobbies and interests. You might build an excellent outdoor kitchen, but if they don't entertain much or enjoy cooking outside, then you're not going to sell that upgrade."

Retaining walls differ from pavers in that they often support weight.

Jennifer Cargill Gardner, marketing manager, licensees and distributors for Atlanta-based *Tensar International Corp.*, suggests having a good system and design prepared by someone who's done it before.

Most states require an engineer's stamp on any wall over 3-ft. high. The limit is 2.5 feet in Florida.

There are two broad categories of retaining wall: structural, which uses a geo-grid for reinforcement, and gravity, which depends on the strength of the block to hold it. Gravity walls never should exceed three feet, Gardner says.

"If it's not done properly, you'll have problems with the law," she says. "Repairing a job done incorrectly is an enormous expense."

Gardner advises working with an installer who has at least five years experience with walls.

"A 2-ft.-high wall for a tree border will be different in design and installation than a 10-ft. wall with a driveway on top," she says.

There are various edging products on the market, but DiRienzo warns against using cheap ones.



"You get what you pay for," he says. "Do you consider the work you perform to be cheap or inexpensive? Why settle for less than good quality edging?"

A landscaper only needs to order one type of edging, which comes in a rigid state for straight applications. To make smooth curves, snip the back support. SEK has its own brand of polymeric sand, called Polysweep, that offers good sand gradation, superior strength and produces little to no hazing, mostly due to the fact there's no Portland cement in the mix design.

The New World Stoneworks system lets a mason install the stonework 10 times faster than traditional methods, plus there's no dusty or loud onsite cutting. The system, which qualifies a project for as many as four LEED

credits, is delivered by the Uxbridge, MA, firm to the jobsite palletized and ready to install. No cutting is required. Installation is by number and section, following the laminated instructions that arrive with the system.

Gardner recommends a proven retaining wall system like the Mesa retaining wall system.

"Hire a professional engineer to design the wall and an installer with experience in the type and height of wall proposed for the site," she says.

DiRienzo adds: "You can buy many different varieties of aggregates at several different price points, but you should be selecting and ordering the materials that'll meet industry specifications. That goes for the selection of sand, pavers, joint sands, as well as a premium-grade paver edge restraint."

Aside from little things like color, most wall grids cost about the same, Gardner says, suggesting to charge based on the total number of square feet of face area and include engineering fees, materials and installation.

Be aware if the job involves fill or cut. An engineer should be aware of loading conditions on top of the wall, as well as soil type.

"Examine every job for access, delivery options for receiving materials, size of project," DiRienzo says. "Break down every aspect of the job and calculate how many labor hours each aspect will require. Increased productivity will deliver labor savings, but understand what you can accomplish in a day. Make sure you're prepared with timing of material deliveries and the proper tools to perform those functions."

Jones says many landscapers neglect to count their own time and cost when making estimates. Or worse, they look at someone else's estimate and add or subtract a few bucks — not knowing about the other guy's figures.

Understand how many people you need to perform each function and keep the others busy.

"On too many jobs, I've seen where there are two people performing a function, and there are two other employees watching," DiRienzo says. *LM*

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# PROJECT PORTFOLIO

A SCRAPBOOK OF DESIGN/BUILD OVERHAULS

*Midwest beach living*

## THE MISSION

Wood Landscape Services creates a retreat capable of being enjoyed by individuals of all ages.

Wood Landscape Services' Ryan Kolb points to the clients' previous West Coast lifestyle as the inspiration behind this water-centric design for a residence in central Ohio. But his biggest challenge was creating a design to meet the municipality's strict guidelines.

"The guidelines, combined with existing site conditions, restricted the usable lot space," he says. "But through symmetry spatial organization, we connected the new space with the home's architecture, satisfying the municipal guidelines and clients' wishes."

The pool, spa, fire bowl and covered outdoor living space are visually connected by the central axis. Access from the house is provided through a newly located sliding door and new basement walkout. Stepping out of the home's main floor leads to an exposed aggregate pool deck that acts as a foyer to the back yard.

There's a covered outdoor living space that enables the clients to enjoy a fire or lower the screen to the built-in projector to watch TV in surround sound.

Water elements give the client a place to cool off. The table in the pool offers a popular gathering spot for kids, while the adults keep close watch from the spa. The installation also included lighting and irrigation.

Plants include Colorado blue spruce, Endless Summer hydrangea, Bloodgood Japanese Maple, spirea and yucca. Assorted annuals include King Tut grass, impatiens, begonias, geraniums, mandevilla, foxtail ferns and salvia.

"The elements seamlessly flow together, creating a cohesive home and entertaining space," Kolb says.





PHOTOS BY VISUAL EDGE IMAGING STUDIOS

## THE WORK

**1 | NO ACCESS.** Before Kolb and his team began the project, there was a lack of direct access to the rear property. Note the gradual slope, which affected drainage. Retaining walls and drainage pipes were added to protect the existing drainage swale.

**2 | SEAMLESS TRANSITION.** The new rear door and basement walkout location blend the architecture of the home through function and material selection.

**3 | DUAL PURPOSE.** Irrigated planters and containers are placed strategically throughout the spaces — some for aesthetic purposes, while this one provides a frost barrier to the new basement walkout.

**4 | CONNECT THE SPOTS.** The central axis links the pool and spa to the covered outdoor living area through access between the kitchenette bar top. Note how the annual plantings add interest to the raised sun deck, which is placed to take advantage of the summer sun. The 6-in. step serves as a diving platform for the kids.

**5 | ELEGANT ELEMENTS.** Water elements and fire bowl, as viewed from the new sliding door location. The umbrella rises from an in-pool table and submerged stools.

**6 | HOME NOT-QUITE-AWAY FROM HOME.** Personal accents decorate the covered outdoor living space, which is anchored by a custom-built fireplace and kitchenette. Brick and stucco blend the new space with the existing residence.

**7 | VISUAL MUSIC.** The tumbled *noche* tiles and stucco were selected to coordinate the clients' Mediterranean tastes with the home's existing architecture. The plantings were selected based on texture and color.

*Owner Thomas Wood, CLP, founded Wood Landscape Services Ltd., Hilliard, OH, 19 years ago. The firm's services include commercial and residential landscaping design, installation and maintenance; estate gardening; hardscaping; mowing; outdoor lighting; patios; snow plowing; tree, turf and shrub care; and water features. This particular property garnered a 2008 Environmental Improvement Award from the Professional Landcare Network (PLANET). For more information, visit [www.woodlandscape.com](http://www.woodlandscape.com).*

# PROBLEMSOLVER

LANDSCAPE TROUBLESHOOTING TIPS » BY H. BRUCE HELLERICK



## PROBLEM

This is one of my pet peeves in the landscape. An otherwise beautiful looking display is marred by small but highly visible problems. Something is amiss. Do you see the weed?



## SOLUTION

The definition of a weed is a plant out of place. It's a detail issue.

Yes, the red tulip is beautiful, but it's a plant out of place and, therefore, a weed. The quickest solution is to pull out the flower and give it to the first person who walks by. It's fun to do, and you will get a huge smile from the recipient.

The problem with leaving the red flower is that everyone knows the red flower shouldn't be there. Leaving the red flower in the bed reduces your core image as a landscape management professional. It may sound like a silly statement, but think about it. Is your client now thinking, "They don't see the wrong colored flower in the bed, what else are they missing in my landscape?" It's all about details.

Every day you see horticultural problems. Sometimes the solution is obvious, but others are much more difficult to solve. Brickman Group Senior Horticulture Specialist H. Bruce Hellerick tackles these issues each month in Problem Solver. He can be reached at [Hellerick@BrickmanGroup.com](mailto:Hellerick@BrickmanGroup.com).

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# IRRIGATING, DROP BY DROP

BY **RON HALL** EDITOR-AT-LARGE

DRIP IRRIGATION, SOMETIMES called micro- or low-volume irrigation, can save as much as 30% irrigation water compared to sprinklers. In light of this, water agencies are starting to recognize drip's role in water conservation.

"Rebate programs should be focused on total systems, and drip is a vital part of those systems," says Russell Clark, marketing manager for Netafim, which introduced drip irrigation to the landscape industry several decades ago. "I'm encouraged that the authorities who put rebate programs in

Low-volume irrigation offers many benefits for contractors and their customers in today's water-stressed environment.

place for products such as ET controllers and rotator spray nozzles are changing their rebate philosophy to include drip irrigation and other water-saving devices, too."

Rebates aside, there are compelling environmental and business reasons to become familiar with and begin incorporating drip into your irrigation designs and installations.


"I use drip mostly in beds," says Peter Pappas, president of P.J. Pappas Co., Woburn, MA. "There have been a lot of improvements made to it since we started our business. The Rain Bird XF dripline has made a huge difference in my business. We install miles of drip line every year because it's flexible, resists kinking and lays flat."

Pappas, whose 25-year-old company serves 3,000 clients, says that although the cost of installing drip is slightly higher than installing sprinklers, property owners recover that expense because of water savings.

## Turfgrass, too

Clark says drip isn't just for landscape beds, but it's also being used in turfgrass, such as in sports fields and in areas such as median strips where runoff from sprinklers might become an environmental or liability issue. The key to irrigating these types of properties efficiently with

*continued on page 51*



Drip irrigation is used mostly for landscape beds, but it's also being used in sports fields and areas where runoff from sprinklers might be an environmental or liability issue.

## DRIP IRRIGATION

### INSTALLATION MADE EASY

Benjamin Raines of the DIG Corp. says drip irrigation installations are relatively simple. They require a proper head assembly, valve, filter and pressure regulator. Drip systems operate with low pressure (25 to 35 psi), and installing a system without a pressure regulator will result in inconsistent flow rates and emitters popping off the mainline, Raines says.

Raines advises starting at the water source and running poly tubing throughout the areas you'll be irrigating with drip. Poly tubing in 1/2-, 3/4- and 1-in. diameters is the primary lateral line. Insert drip emitters directly into the poly tubing with a small handheld punch, or branch off to plants using 1/4-in. microtubing. You can bury poly tubing or leave it on the surface, depending on your aesthetic preference.

After you've run the desired length



Drip irrigation systems require a proper head assembly, valve, filter and pressure regulator.

of poly tubing, close off the end of the line with a Figure 8-end closure or a compression end cap, leaving the end of the poly tubing so you can flush periodically to remove debris from the drippers, Raines says.

Point source drip emitters are most commonly used in a drip irrigation system. The most popular are the pressure compensating (PC) emitters that contain internal self-cleaning diaphragms that regulate to the specific flow rate stated. Use PC emitters for long runs and uneven landscapes



because they'll provide a more consistent and accurate flow rate, Raines says.

### Retrofitting

Existing sprinkler systems can be easily converted into multi-outlet drip systems. Retrofit drip manifolds mount directly onto 1/2-in. risers, in place of existing sprinkler heads and are available in four to

12 outlets. Drip manifolds come with preset and adjustable

flow rates (1/2 - 20 GPH) and don't require an inline pressure regulator if your existing pressure is at or below 60 psi. Poly or vinyl microtubing of 1/4-in. is used to run from the drip manifold to the plant in lengths as long as 25 feet. Drip manifolds, which are used for first-time installations, are typically set within plant groupings and placed below the surface inside 6-in. valve boxes.

Emitter line, or dripline, is another method of installing drip irrigation. Drip emitters come preinstalled within the poly tubing, which can be easily

**TIP:** Leaving the poly tubing in the sun for a few hours makes it pliable and easy to work with.

rolled out along the desired area to be irrigated. With multiple flow rates and various dripper spacing, dripline is

an uncomplicated installation that's useful for row plantings and densely planted areas. The preinstalled drip emitters are self-flushing and typically contain two outlets per drippers to minimize clogging. Additionally, dripline is available with pressure-compensating drip emitters to ensure consistent flow rates.

Drip irrigation systems use compression fittings and require only one tool — a hand-punch for installing drip emitters. The systems don't require glue. Repairs and modifications because of changes in the layout of the landscape are simple. To change the location of a drip emitter, simply pull out the emitter, insert a so-called goof plug and use a punch to install in a new location.

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