

Dear Homeowner,

Choosing a landscaper isn't easy. Why? Because you are constantly bombarded with misleading advertising, confusing claims and simply bad information. From super low prices to high pressured sales and unqualified landscapers. How do you ever find an experienced, competent professional landscaper? Start by reading this consumer guide to landscaping. In this fact filled piece, you will discover the misconceptions about landscape companies, things to be aware of when choosing a landscape company, and questions to ask. I wrote this guide to help you better understand landscaping and give you the information to make an informed, intelligent decision.

There are misconceptions people have about landscape companies

- The products used and labor performed are of equal value.
- Landscape companies offer all the same warranties on goods/services.
- Landscapers have equal education and the same qualifications.
- Each landscape company has a professionally educated designer on staff to design your yard.
- There is always someone on the job site able to answer your questions.
- A lien waiver is not required when the job is completed. This *is strongly recommended* to keep suppliers from putting a lien on your property in the future if materials were not paid for by the landscape company.

Things to be aware of when choosing a landscape company:

- Everything needs to be in writing regarding the scope of the work and the cost estimate.
- Does the agreement have a lot of unnecessary exclusions for price increases?
- Know the dispute resolution up front.
- Never hire by the hour.
- It is never necessary to put more than 50% upfront.

Questions to ask when choosing a landscape company

- When will the job begin and when will it be completed.
- Ask to see a testimonial/referral sheet.
- Ask to see certification for category of work to be performed – for example, brick pavers (ICPI), retaining walls (MCA).
- Ask to have proof of insurance sent from insurance company to know insurance is accurate and up to date.

Importance of value and price

When comparing price be sure to compare product and *exactly* what work is to be done. For example, you get 2 quotes for re-mulching your flower beds. One is for \$490 and the other is \$465. The 1st contractor installs 70 bails at \$7.00 and the 2nd installs 60 bails at \$7.75. This is an example of a small difference, but as the job gets bigger the price difference also gets bigger. This difference can be a reflection between two quotes for a job. Always feel free to ask the contractors what the difference in price is.

This consumer information is provided by Tim Symmonds at Harbor Bay Landscaping. Feel free to contact us via email: Tim@HBLandscaping.com, via phone: 770-286-0138 or visit our website: www.HBLandscaping.com