**Easy Landscaping Courses**

**Easy Living Yards Membership**

**Finding your why**

* *Tell me, what is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?*
* *– Mary Oliver*
* Why this process is important
  + Helps you understand why your project is important
  + Motivates you when things get tough

When it comes to landscaping and other tasks, it can seem kind of pointless sometimes.

Why am I doing what I am doing? Is it all worth it? Am I making a difference?

These are all very important questions. And finding your why outside of your DIY landscaping projects can help laser focus your vision and actions.

I want to help you live your life with intent. It is all too easy these days to get stuck in the monotony, and before you know it, years have passed. Better to have a reawakening, no matter what age, than none at all.

If you can still fog a mirror, there’s still a chance to change this world for the better.

So before we do any digging, planting, or designing, let’s reflect on your unique and personal impact on this world. What can you do to make this world better than you arrived?

Let’s live your life with intent.

It’s hard sometimes. Some days your purpose seems to be ‘clean, cook, mow, wash.’

If you stay focused on what really matters, the other stuff becomes the stuff you do in between living with intent. All that other stuff percolates through the sides.

Is landscaping part of living with intent? No. Probably not.

But how you live with purpose and intent influences how you manage your landscape.

A landscape reflecting your purposeful life can be a calming oasis, a low maintenance wildlife habitat, or a beautiful low maintenance yard that your neighbors admire.

These next courses will help you design beautiful, low maintenance landscapes so you can

* reduce your own impact on the planet
* Reduce maintenance tasks in your yard
* enjoy your landscape more fully
* **have more time to live out your life vision**

If you saw my yard today you would probably wonder why I have a website dedicated to beautiful landscapes. Why? Because there is a lot to be done before it becomes a beautiful landscape.

If I have to choose between working in the yard or spending time with my children, I choose my children. If I have to choose between working in the yard or helping you learn to design your yard, I choose you.

The reality is, **landscapes are not really all that important** when we write our final chapter. What matters is the positive impact you’ve left as a legacy.

**What’s your legacy?**

So let’s free ourselves from the burden of maintaining a landscape to other people’s expectations, while having a space to be proud of and enjoy. The following courses will show you how, step by step.

If you are not in touch with your passions, goals, and living with intent, I encourage you to take time NOW to get into better touch with yourself.

Why now? It’s so easy to push it off until tomorrow, and then tomorrow becomes next year. So it’s time to take a look inward. Time to find your purpose. Time to leave your legacy. It’s never too early, and it’s never too late.

**Live your life with intent. Are you?**

Below a short exercise to help you identify your passions and how to live with intent.

So go do it! Live your passionate life, and free yourself from your landscape!

* Post your why in the Forum!
  + You know your answers best
  + It is okay if you don’t have a clear why - it is important to continue to search for it.

**Landscape Vision Roadmap**

* Why this process is important
  + Focuses your needs and desires, so you can take clear action and make confident decisions
  + Gathers input from entire household for maximum design satisfaction
* Three main tasks
  + Identify landscape functions
  + Identify landscape desires
  + Create a landscape vision
* Landscape Functions
  + Why this process is important
    - Determines functional needs for your landscape
    - Identifies unmet needs
  + Access
    - Open
    - Unrestricted
    - Adequate
    - Can you navigate easily
    - Can you access necessary areas with ease
    - Existing paths and driveways
      * wide enough?
      * Safe?
  + Functional desires
    - Entertainment
      * E.g. Outdoor kitchen
      * Patio
      * Entertaining gardens
      * pool
    - Visual
      * Welcoming
      * Monitoring children
      * Security
        + Day
        + Night
    - Engaging
      * Play areas
      * Gardening
      * Relaxation
        + Calming
        + Escape
    - Maintenance
      * Low maintenance
      * Seasonal living
  + Needs
    - Access
    - Storage
      * Tools
      * Toys
      * Seasonal Items
    - Mail
    - Trash
    - Parking
    - Pets
  + Existing Functional Problems
    - drainage
    - erosion
    - access
    - plant vitality
    - pests
    - borders/hardscape
  + Get input from key household members
    - Spouse / Partner / BFF
    - Family
    - Pets
    - Future family members
* Landscape Desires
  + Why this process is important
    - Finds your stylistic preferences
  + Preferred style
    - Updating
    - Fits personal style
    - Fits architecture
    - Unique, custom
  + Well designed
    - Visually cohesive
      * Planned style
      * Appealing
    - Unified design
      * Connected Spaces
    - Appropriate plantings
      * Structure
      * Plant types
      * Plant size
  + Preferred functions and spaces
    - Views
      * from street
      * from inside
      * from porch
    - Kids
    - Just fill space
    - Low maintenance
    - Beauty
    - Hardscape
    - Coverage
    - Nature
    - Spaces
      * Relaxation space
      * Entertainment space
      * Retreat space
      * Enclosed or open
    - Feelings
      * Escape
      * Reflect certain geography
  + Existing Desire Problems
    - appearance
    - weeds
    - chemicals
    - dated
    - maintenance
  + Get input from key household members
* Post key functions and desires in Forum
  + Ask any questions for input
  + You know your landscape the best
  + Go with what you and your household feel is best
* Create a vision
  + Why this process is important
    - Summarizes functions and desires
    - Creates a unified vision for entire planning process
  + Connect with key household members to gather input on functions and desires
    - Pull out a few key words that summarize primary functions and desires
    - Describe functional needs that are most important
    - Describe primary desires
  + Create a vision to best describe functional and desired intentions
    - One to two sentences
    - Use key words from functions and desires
    - Use active voice
      * “my garden [creates, welcomes, provides, etc]”
      * active voice helps make it clearer what your garden is doing for functions and desires
    - Review with key household members
    - Example of vision
      * My front garden welcomes visitors, increases curb appeal, and enhances the surrounding natural environment by using a naturalistic theme with year-round interest and natural habitat.
    - Post it in the Forum
  + Write vision where you will see it often during your design process
    - On front of your graph pad/folder/binder
  + When you get stuck on design or install, refer back to your vision
    - The design or plan may change, the vision usually stays the same
    - Unless
      * Vision was not correct for your needs
      * Life has changed
* Next steps
  + Find priority project spaces
  + Begin design process

**Prioritizing your Landscape Projects**

* Why this process is important
  + Clarifies desires, functional needs, and resource availability, so you can focus on the most appropriate projects in order.
  + Prevents overwhelm and provides a clear path for progress.
* Process
  + Tips for success
    - You need to write this down!
      * Pause the video in intervals
    - Walk through your landscape as you go through this process
  + Divide property into spaces – by location (and maybe function if established)
    - Front Entry
    - Driveway
    - Patio
    - Front Yard
    - Backyard
    - Rear corner
    - Side Yard
    - Mailbox
  + Focus on entire property first
    - Does any specific space stand out?
      * Major maintenance need
      * Unappealing
      * Problem area
      * Access issue
      * Unmet needs
    - Are any major functions not working out?
    - Are any major desires not met?
    - Summarize any key points
  + Choose one space and focus on just one space at a time
    - Access
      * Is it adequate?
      * Could it be improved?
      * Is this space a major traffic area?
      * List any key points
    - Function
      * What is the function(s) of this space?
      * Is this function appropriate for the space
      * Are the functional needs met?
      * Does the established function create a maintenance issue?
      * Could the function be improved?
      * Does the space satisfy functional desires?
        + Ex: pathway width
      * Are there any additional functions that should be in this space?
        + Ex: moving garbage can storage to side yard, adding access path
      * List any key points
    - Desires
      * Does the space satisfy visual desires?
      * Does the space satisfy functional desires?
    - Repeat for each additional space until you have covered the entire property
  + Determine Priorities
    - Review all areas and weigh top needs between access, function, desires.
* What is your top priority project? Why?
  + Post it in the Forum!
  + Ask questions if necessary!
* Next Steps
  + Begin designing landscape
  + Find main functions of each space
  + Map existing space

**Designing your Landscape**

**Functional Design Mapping**

* Why this process is important
  + Helps you understand the best function for each space
  + Shows whether existing spaces are doing the right job
  + Clarifies you priorities
* Get a quick outline of entire property
  + Quick sketch of property lines and major features
    - Does not need to be to scale, but general idea
    - Major features
      * House
      * Buildings
      * Existing paths, driveway, patio
      * Major plants
      * Major grades/immovable features
  + Could use map printout
    - Make sure it is clear enough to mark over top
  + Could be quick whiteboard drawing
    - Make sure to take a photo of completed exercise!
  + Pro tip:
    - Make a copy/print out a picture for beginning of base map exercise
* Find purpose of each space
  + Entry/exit
  + Attractive
  + Storage
  + Connecting spaces
  + Children
  + Edible Gardening
  + Privacy
  + Noise Reduction
  + Views
  + Recreation
  + Entertaining Guests
  + Relaxation
  + Non-purposed space
    - maintenance needs
* Identify any needs for change
  + Compare to existing functions
  + Re-assess priorities from previous exercise
  + Example:
    - We wanted to redesign front yard
    - Drainage issues in back and ugly backyard
* Post your functional design map in the Forum!

**Base Map**

Intro

* Why this process is important
  + Gets specific detailed map of existing space
  + Serves as starting point for designs
  + Prevents mistakes
    - Design
    - Installation
    - Maintenance
* Detailed map of existing conditions
  + More specific than functional design map
  + Use accurate measurements
  + Does not need to be fancy
  + Does need to be clear & descriptive
  + Important for small and large projects
    - This video shows process for whole property
    - For smaller design, plot base map for smaller space at minimum
    - Full property base map important for long term design success
* Two steps
  + Measurement & recording
    - Gathers details of property
    - Quick sketch map for reference
    - List of measurements
    - Onsite process
  + Plotting
    - Detailed map to display existing features
    - Reference point for design and installation
* Materials
  + Measurements
    - Tape measure
    - Flags or reference markers
  + Plotting
    - Graph paper
    - Ruler with cm
    - Compass – makes way easier
    - Writing utensils
* Survey
  + Professional marking of property boundaries
  + Important for
    - Clear establishment of design borders
    - Reference for site measurements
    - Prevention of neighbor tension
    - Determining easement boundaries
  + Recommended for
    - Big projects
    - Projects close to property line
  + Not immediate for
    - Projects distant from property line
    - When property boundaries are clear
* Next Steps
  + Measure your landscape
  + Plot your base map

Measurement & Recording

* Why this process is important
  + Gets specific measurements that allow accurate drawing of base map
  + Measurements will later be used to map out design for installation
* Get a quick outline of entire property
  + Similar to beginning of functional design map
  + Quick sketch of property lines and major features
  + Does not need to be to scale, but general idea
  + Major features
    - House
    - Buildings
    - Existing paths, driveway, patio
    - Major plants
    - Major grades/immovable features
  + Add additional features
    - Window locations
    - Entries and exits
    - Hose spigot locations
    - Exterior outlets
    - Downspouts
    - Mailbox
    - Utility meters & access
* How to measure
  + Label points that need measurement with a letter
    - a-z, aa-az, etc.
    - Any corners or center point of plotted features
      * Corners of house
      * Center of large trees
      * Hose spigot
      * Each edge of windows, doors
  + Choose a few reference points across property
    - Convenient, well established points to minimize measurement errors
    - Examples
      * Property corners
      * Corners of house
  + Measurement process
    - Measure to a location from two reference points
    - Eg
      * A and B are reference points
      * D is location to be measured
      * Measure a-d, b-d
    - Two measurements for each location will make an accurate base map
    - List out all necessary measurements, from at least two reference points
      * Start with one reference point and measure to other reference points
      * List all reference measurements to other locations
  + Take measurements
    - A helper is useful
    - If you don’t have a helper, stick a large screwdriver or other item through the loop of your tape measure to fix into the ground
      * If your tape measure has no loop, tie a loop of string onto the end
    - A landscape tape measure is helpful
    - Record listed measurements to within 6 inches
    - Keep measurement tape as horizontally as possible
      * If not possible, note that it is a sloped measurement.
    - If there is a significant slope, estimate height change
    - Mark each measurement on your list
* Any questions – post in forum
* Next Steps
  + Plot your base map

Plotting the Base Map

* Why this process is important
  + Gives visual of existing conditions
  + Map of all recorded measurements
* Gather measurements
  + Make sure all necessary measurements are in place
  + Each location should have two reference measurements
  + Figure out one corner of property to begin plot
    - Usually first reference point – property corner
* Plot the base map
  + Determine scale
    - Make sure entire map can fit on one page, or plan for full size of map
    - Measure 1 square – usually 1cm
    - Ideally, 1 square = 6in, 1ft, or 2ft for best accuracy
      * 1 square = 1ft is easiest for math!
    - If large property, can do one more accurate map for near house at one scale, then another map at 1 square = 1yd or 10ft for entire property.
  + Determine starting spot of reference point on page
    - Ensure farthest corners fit on page
    - Orient graph paper so lines lay as desired
      * Usually N-S-E-W or flat with house
      * Flat with house is easiest
    - Easy way
      * Start with a scrap sheet of graph paper
      * Plot out footprint of house on the scrap sheet
        + Measure distances to each corner based on your scale
      * Cut out house footprint
      * Lay house footprint on your new Base Map sheet
      * Place in estimated location that allows all features to fit
      * Measure from house corners to property corners (two house corners to each property corner)
      * Adjust house position and re-measure if necessary
  + How to plot
    - Use two reference points for each plotted location
    - From first reference point, use compass to mark distance to location
      * Adjust compass to desired distance with a ruler or by counting squares
      * Draw a light semi-circle in general direction of location from reference point
    - From second reference point, use compass to mark exact location
      * Adjust compass to desired distance with a ruler or by counting squares
      * Draw a light semi-circle in general direction of location from reference point
      * The measured location lies where the two light semi-circles intersect
    - Mark point and erase semi-circle lines if desired
  + Plot reference points
    - Plot property corners and house corners
      * Once position is established, mark corners of house
      * Repeat measurements to property corners and mark on page
    - Outline property
      * Use a ruler to trace outline of house
      * Trace outline of property
  + Plot other measured locations
    - Mark other points by repeating process to identify location of all other points from at least two reference points.
    - Use listed measurements to ensure all locations are plotted
* Finish the base map
  + From each point, draw in any necessary structures around measured point
    - Example
      * Tree circle around center of tree
      * Mailbox outline
      * Draw to scale if possible
  + Add lines and labels where needed
    - Example
      * Line and label marking outlets, hose bibs
  + Add a title – Base Map
  + Add scale – Ex: 1 square = 1ft
  + Add North direction
  + Notes:
    - Once base map completed, don’t mark up with design ideas
    - Make plenty of copies of base map for mark up – keep the original intact
    - Easements and Utilities can be added to base map later if desired
      * Usually easements and utilities marked in dashed lines with label
* Your base map is complete!
  + Congratulations! This is a big accomplishment!
  + Scan / snap your map and share in the forum!
* Next Steps
  + Pre-design investigation

**Pre-Design Investigation**

* Why this process is important
  + Checks various items important for design
  + Ensures compliance
  + Avoids fines and stress
* Soil Test
  + Determines existing conditions of soil
  + Local cooperative extension office usually offers soil tests
    - Local state university agriculture extension
    - Search on google
      * University name + “soil test”
      * Or county name + “soil test”
    - Gives you a report on your conditions
  + How to read a soil test
    - What is important
      * pH
      * organic matter
      * Soil type
        + If not listed, check out USDA reference for your area
        + Get general understanding

Loam

Clay

Silty

Sandy

* + - * + Find mineral base

Limestone

Sandstone

Granite

* + Take notes of existing conditions for later reference
* HOA Requirements
  + Check with HOA or property association for requirements
  + Obtain copy of code and research
  + Talk to board directly
  + Prevents having fines or being required to remove expensive and time-consuming work
  + Prevents surprise of HOA and neighbors when project work begins
* Zoning Requirements
  + Check with local municipality for zoning requirements
  + Easiest to call and ask
    - Municipality zoning office
      * Town, township, city,
    - Let them know you are redesigning property and want to know requirements
    - Ask about
      * permits
      * Setback requirements
      * Any other design requirements
      * Existing records for your property
  + Take notes of requirements for reference during design
  + Use a copy of the base plan to plot setbacks
    - Prevents design mistakes that violate zoning
      * Example
        + Constructing a shed too close to property line
* Easements
  + Areas with limitations on use
  + Examples
    - Underground utilities
    - Drainage and stormwater easements
    - Sewer easements
    - Public access easements
    - Septic systems
  + Check with local municipality AND county for easements
    - Call and ask
      * County planning office
      * Municipality zoning office
    - Ask for
      * existing plans of property that show easements
      * What are limitations for each easement that touches your property
  + Take notes of requirements
  + Use a copy of the base plan to plot easements and requirements within each easement
    - Can use Setback plot to mark easements
    - This prevents design mistakes that conflict with requirements
      * Examples
        + Planting trees in easement
        + Regrading or constructing in drainage easement
* Utilities
  + Check with local utility company to mark underground utilities
    - Usually free
    - [Call 811](http://call811.com/) in most areas
    - Mark gas, electric
  + Water may be more difficult to locate
    - Find water meter at street
    - Draw line to where it enters house
      * Check inside for water shutoff valve
        + In basement (if you have one)
        + Turn water on real slow in a sink

Trace sound back to where it seems to leave house

Should be in direction of water meter

* + - * + Ask your plumber if you don’t know
    - Use a copy of the base plan to mark location of water line and utilities
      * Can use Setback & Easement plot to mark utilities – label utility type
      * This prevents design mistakes that might cause expensive damage to utilities during installation or growth
      * Also mark overhead lines location
* Next steps
  + Basic Design Ideas
  + Time to get creative!

**Basic Design Ideas**

**Design Structure**

**Plant Selection**

**Master Plan Design**

Zoning Approvals

**Landscape Installation**

Pre-installation

Scheduling

Plant & Materials Ordering

Helpers

Project Planning

Timing

Phased installation

All-at-once installation

Installation

Basic Tools

Specialty Tools

Hardscape

Border & Edging

Grading

Existing plant removal

Soil Preparation

Amendments

Compost

Decompaction

Erosion Control

Planting

Timing

Before Weed Prevention

After Weed Prevention

Inoculants

Weed prevention

Cardboard

Mulch

Finishing Touches

Trimming

Cleanup

Re-seeding

Maintaining your new garden

Early Maintenance

Watering

Weed management

Long Term Maintenance

watering

Replanting

Weed management

Trimming

Amendments