

LANDSCAPE QUESTIONNAIRE

Mount Hood Gardens is a landscape design/build company with thirty-five years of experience and knowledge in the business. We design and install high-end landscapes of the upmost quality, custom-tailored to the site and our clients' wishes. Landscaping is an art form, and we aim for every garden we create to become a treasured jewel and peaceful getaway, enhancing your comfort and well-being. Our gardens grow ever more beautiful as they mature. We aspire for our landscapes to be aesthetically pleasing, functional, practical and safe.

Healthy soils result in healthy plants. We believe in sustainable landscapes, and practice organic gardening and thorough soil preparation. Most plants are grown in our own nursery, resulting in acclimated, robust plants just right for the varied microclimates and soils in the Gorge. The plants we do not grow ourselves are brought in well in advance of the plant installation, to harden them off, and be lovingly groomed and cared for prior to planting.

Landscaping is about creating sacred spaces, a sanctuary surrounding your home, and establishing a soothing and practical, yet intriguing flow. Sound landscaping adds actual value to your property, making it a prized asset. It provides structure, comfortable enclosure and privacy, enhancing desirable views and screening unwanted ones. Building a garden is to create a living, dynamic ecosystem, which will change and develop its own identity as it matures. You and nature will fill it with life.

The best way to approach a landscape installation is to start with a comprehensive concept plan. A *landscape design* will provide the framework and guidelines for the new garden, and let you define good features, problems, and ideas on paper. This will enable you to avoid costly changes later on. The finished *concept and planting plan(s)* will permit you to closely determine the estimated cost of the total project, including plant quantities and sizes, and pinpoint logical sequencing. It allows for procurement of plants and materials in advance.

When developing a landscape design, *thorough planning* is well worth the time and effort, and will make the subsequent installation more successful and enjoyable. A design transforms your dreams and visions for your landscape into a realistic, tangible format. Contemplate in advance what features or plants you are particularly drawn to. Peruse magazines, gardening books, online images (such as *Pinterest* or *Houzz*), and check out surrounding gardens. This will give you an idea what **you** want and visualize for your landscape. Your landscape designer will be able to assist you with your decisions, and distill and edit your ideas, but this is *your* garden and it should reflect your needs, taste and ideals. A landscape is a prudent investment, which ought to be well thought out and planned with care. When all completed, it will be time to celebrate and enjoy!

Client Name(s): _____

Address: _____

Phone (home /mobile): _____

Email: _____ Date: _____

Cont.

Not all questions may pertain to you, and you are free to leave out the ones that do not apply. Please note we work exclusively in Oregon.

1. Have you worked with a LANDSCAPE DESIGNER OR LANDSCAPE ARCHITECT in the past? If yes, where and when?

2. What are your EXPECTATIONS for a DESIGN?

3. Do you live in the Gorge seasonally or year-round? If seasonally, which are the months you usually spend here? _____

4. How would you describe the ARCHITECTURAL STYLE of your home? Do you know its age? _____

Are you located in the Columbia River Gorge National Scenic Area? _____

5. As the landscape is considered an extension of your home, some INTERIOR ELEMENTS can be repeated on the outside. Examples may be paint colors or floor materials. Do you have a favorite decorating style, and, if so, did you or are you going to use it in your home?

6. Are you planning any major renovations (additions, house painting, roof, a new garage) in the near future? Or has your home been built recently? _____

7. Do you have a favorite LANDSCAPE STYLE?

Examples are *English Mixed Border, French Country, Mediterranean, Xeriscape, Contemplative, Asian, Naturalistic and/or Edible, or a combination of several styles.* For descriptions and images of different garden styles, please refer to the *Portfolio: Residential Gardens* section on our website.

A garden can be romantic, practical, secluded, formal/ informal, and/or attract desirable wildlife (e.g. birds, hummingbirds, butterflies).

As mentioned, the best landscapes blend with the architecture of the home and its surroundings. Around the residence the landscape style can be more formal, gradually becoming more naturalistic as it transitions into the native landscape. *Small urban gardens* often lend themselves to a more formal or contemporary layout, or an Asian theme. They can also be naturalistic, but tend to need more structure. The topography of your site may influence a suitable style.

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Dividing the landscape into separate areas (garden rooms) allows for more versatility, resulting in the option to combine several landscape styles.

8. Which HARDSCAPE ELEMENTS are most important to you in your future landscape? Examples are sitting and/or dining patios and decks, a secret retreat area, raised vegetable garden beds, a play area for children. Structures such as pergolas, arbors and sheds add vertical dimension, and provide shade and privacy. Trellises covered with climbing plants, hedges, and screening walls and fences minimize the wind. A staggered approach is best to reduce wind velocity, and direct it away from the home or patio. What kind of hardscape elements do you envision and where would they be? Do you need extra PARKING? GARBAGE AND RECYCLING STORAGE?

9. How *large* do you envision your OUTDOOR AREAS to be? How many people should they accommodate? Do you frequently entertain, enjoy eating outside, wish for a place to have coffee in the morning, or read? A place for solitude could be a secluded arbor bench or a hammock. Our long and mostly sunny summers lend themselves to creating outdoor living spaces. In recent years their significance and usefulness have greatly increased. If you think of the landscape as a series of outdoor rooms, what would you call them?

10. What do you anticipate being the most frequent TIME OF DAY you will use your particular sitting and garden areas? This will probably depend on whether it is a weekday or weekend, and the time of the year. Do you favor sunny or shady areas? In summer, some shade is often welcome.

11. Where did you go as a child for daydreaming and quiet contemplation? What kind of place were you drawn to? _____

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12. Is WIND a problem in your landscape (it frequently is in the Gorge)? Are there protected areas? *Please also refer to wind deliberations under 8.* _____

13. Which OUTDOOR ACTIVITIES do you foresee yourself enjoying in your garden and wish to include? _____

14. Do you have CHILDREN at home? If so, what are their ages? Do you have grandchildren, godchildren or other young people who may visit and spend time in the garden? What are their preferences? What games may they want to play in the garden? Do you have PETS? What kind? If so, do you need a fenced area/ pet run?

15. Do you have elderly parents or relatives who live with you or come to visit? Is WHEELCHAIR-ACCESSIBILITY important? _____

16. What MATERIALS do you favor for your hardscape? *Simplicity and permanence are a virtue when it comes to hardscape materials. Often using only two to three main materials in the landscape, to achieve continuity and unity throughout, is most satisfactory.* Materials can be wood, composite deck materials such as *TimberTech* or *Trex*, pavers, or other man-made materials, metal, or concrete (sanded, colored, exposed aggregate, stamped, regular). *Natural stone* in various colors and from diverse origins, particularly if rather local, is our preferred material to work with, and we have extensive experience with all types of detailed stonework, both flatwork and retaining walls. Compacted small gravel or walk-on bark may be used for paths.

Safety, functionality, a dry passage, longevity and cost are all points to consider.

What *colors* do you prefer for your hardscape materials?

17. What are your FAVORITE VIEWS? Consider both *inside* and *outside* views.

A. INSIDE: Which rooms or places in your home do you spend the most time in? Can you see outside into the garden from there? Generally the view lines from the kitchen sink, a bay window nook, the living and dining room are important.

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- B. **OUTSIDE**: What are your favorite views outside? Do you have a view of Mount Hood, Mount Adams, the hills or the Columbia River? Do your neighbors have a beautiful tree you enjoy? This concept is called "*borrowed scenery*", forming a backdrop for your landscape.
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18. **UNWANTED VIEWS**: Not all views are desirable and with growing building density, screening is an important issue. Which views or elements do you wish to veil or hide? Where do you feel you need the most privacy? Consider all seasons. Often the winter screening is not nearly as essential, as you do not spend as much time outside. In fact, letting as much light into the house as possible is much appreciated during our mostly cloudy winters, and can generate solar energy on sunny days. Deciduous trees placed on the Southwest or South side of the home can aid in cooling the home during the summer, decreasing air conditioning needs. A mix of deciduous/ evergreen screening plants often works best. What do you like the least about your space presently?
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Do you have **DRAINAGE** problems? If so, where _____

19. The **PLANTS** are called the *softscape* in the garden. They are only considered *after* you have determined the general concept and details explained above. Once you are ready to think about the plants, choose the structural plants such as trees, conifers and large shrubs first.

- A. Do you have suitable existing **TREES**? Generally, trees only need to be removed if they are sick, a fire hazard, prone to ice breakage, or too close to the residence or building. Often an arborist can improve the health of a tree with careful pruning and thinning out, and/or limb it up for increased fire safety and visibility. Some trees may be too weedy or messy to retain.
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- B. Do you have any **TREES** you wish to remove? If so, what are the reasons?
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20. What are some of your **FAVORITE PLANTS**? You can attach a separate sheet with a plant list, perhaps with examples from magazines or the internet. Again, think trees and shrubs first, then perennials, bulbs and annuals. The last three are considered the *color* or "filler" from a design perspective. They are the easiest to change or amend later on, and are often not as long-lived as larger woody plants. When selecting trees, consider their mature height and spread, and if they would be suitable for your site. Messy leaf drop or seedpods can be a problem close to a patio or the residence.

Another issue to consider is hardiness. Most of the Mid-Columbia locales are in USDA Zone 5 to 6, or Sunset Zone 2 to 3.

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a. FAVORITE TREES:

b. FAVORITE SHRUBS:

c. FAVORITE PERENNIALS:

d. FAVORITE ANNUALS, BIENNIALS, BULBS, CUT FLOWERS:

Please consider that some plants, especially biennials, reseed vigorously and can be a maintenance issue.

e. Which PLANTS do you DISLIKE, if any?

21. What are your favorite plant and flower COLORS? _____

Are there colors you do not like? _____

22. Do you envision PLANTERS / CONTAINERS? If yes, what type and color? Any you have already? _____

23. FRAGRANCE is usually a bonus in the garden. Do you have any fragrance you particularly enjoy? _____

Any fragrance you dislike? _____

24. Would you like to include a VEGETABLE GARDEN (raised beds are a favorite), HERBS or FRUIT TREES? If so, how large of a garden, or how many fruit trees?

Please consider that in Hood River County all fruit trees require a regular spray program to prevent infesting any near-by orchards. Some trees or shrubs act as host plants for codling moth, fire blight or other threats to the Fruit Industry.

Edible elements can also be incorporated into the ornamental beds and borders, e.g. Strawberries or Raspberries on a trellis. Blueberries make great ornamental plants. It is fun to be able to sample from your garden when strolling through it.

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25. What is your FAVORITE SEASON in the garden? Normally the landscape, and particularly outdoor rooms, experience the most liberal use during the summer. However, outdoor heaters and fire pits can extend the season. Please consider fire safety for the latter.

Many people enjoy cheery early spring color. With our frequently beautiful warm autumns, fall leaf and flower color is also a welcome addition, providing a late season finale.

26. Are DEER abundant in your area? If so, do you intend to install a deer fence?

27. Would you like to attract BIRDS, hummingbirds, butterflies or other wildlife? Attracting *pollinators* has become a valuable consideration.

28. Are ALLERGIES a factor with you or any family members? This may influence certain plant choices or their positioning. _____

29. MAINTENANCE is a large concern for most homeowners. Some people are able to spend plenty of time in their garden. Others would like it to be as low-maintenance as possible.

a. Do you consider yourself an avid, experienced, interested, occasional, or non-gardener? _____

b. How much time do you envision yourself being able to spend in your garden *per week*? Two hours, four hours, ten or more? Naturally, the time required to keep up your landscape depends on its size, plants and materials chosen, season, and the desired maintenance level. _____

30. A large LAWN sets off the home and is a great place to play, etc. It can also be very maintenance-intensive if it is to look close to perfect. Manicured grass uses substantial amounts of water during the summer, as well as fertilizer and perhaps chemicals. There are a number of solutions that have a lesser impact on the environment. You may also be able to tolerate a few weeds, or apply less water during the summer once the lawn is established. In general, deep soaking 2 to 3 times a week is preferable to watering shortly every day. The lawn will develop a deeper root system and be stronger and more resilient. You can also have a smaller, intensely maintained mown grass area, and more meadow-like grass further away from the residence.

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Do you wish to have a substantial lawn? If so, do you intend to do the mowing, fertilizing and other maintenance yourself, or hire it out?

31. Our long, warm and dry summers make **AUTOMATIC IRRIGATION** almost a necessity. The system will enable you to adapt the irrigation easily according to the seasons, and choose the sprinkler type best suited to the specific planting, or zone. Lawns will need even coverage and more frequent watering, best achieved by larger pop-up sprinklers and separate zones. Trees, shrubs and other plants can be set up with water-saving DRIP IRRIGATION. We increasingly use bubbler drip irrigation for complete planting beds, customized according to the needs of each plant. However, either domestic water, or thoroughly filtered irrigation water needs to be used, for the emitters not to plug up. Plants love it, it is targeted and water-saving, and reduces weed-growth during the summer.

With smart controllers, settings can be changed and irrigation output adapted more easily. Avoid watering paths, patios and other hardscape areas.

An irrigation contractor will be able to give you an estimate showing the cost of the irrigation system based on your completed design.

What is your SOURCE of irrigation water? _____

How is your water pressure and volume? _____

Do you have an existing irrigation system, which could be adapted? _____

Would you like additional faucets, and where? Short hoses are easier to handle and conceal.

32. Would you like to include NIGHT LIGHTING? Aside from increasing safety, night lighting also creates ambiance, and makes the garden user-friendly at night. Up-lighting trees with spotlights can add drama and romance. Photosensitive timers activate the lights at dusk for a selected number of hours, eliminating the need to reset them during the course of the year. _____

33. Do you plan to include any WATER FEATURES? They add pleasant sound to the garden, and can mask street noise. A quiet water surface mirrors the sky and surrounding plants. However, they are often high-maintenance and need to be winterized, unless the water is constantly moving and the water volume is high. Also, are you considering a pool?

34. SHEDS are a practical addition to the garden for tool and equipment storage, a place for outdoor cushions, toys, or as a playhouse for children. With a custom-built shed, its features and style can link and blend with the landscape and residence. They also can provide screening, as small sheds are permitted to be taller than a fence. Sheds under 200 square feet in size do not require a permit. Do you wish to include a shed?

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35. Do you enjoy CARPENTRY AND/OR LANDSCAPE WORK? Do you have the skill level to do some or all of it yourself? Do you have the necessary tools and time? Equipment can also be rented. _____

36. GARDEN ART, sculpture, birdbaths and bird feeders, pottery/urns can be part of and enhance the garden. Interesting details add to the quality of a garden. Often repetition achieves the most pleasing effect.

With garden art, whimsical is an option, but the objects should still be of high quality, and chosen with the landscape style and theme in mind. Contrast can add a positive, lively element of tension. Old or used pieces may also be used, as expressed in the Japanese Wabi-Sabi teaching. _____

37. What kind of TIMING or PHASING do you envision for your project? Do you have a deadline you would like to meet? This clearly will be influenced by your budget, the degree of phasing, and the contractors' schedules. _____

38. The **COST** of the project depends on many different factors, among others the type and quality of the materials chosen, size, spacing and kind of plants, and degree of features. Size of the landscape, topography (need for terracing, retaining walls), soil type (particularly extremely rocky soil), and access will all affect cost. If a firm budget does exist, it is an important factor to take into consideration for the design process.

At this early stage, have you determined a BUDGET or budget range for the installation? Regarding the *landscape design*, we will give you a quote for it prior to starting any design work. The *design fee* will be due regardless of when and if the installation follows. A deposit is usually requested upon acceptance of the design quote.

The itemized, estimated cost of the *installation*, or its phases, will be presented to you after the design has been completed. _____

39. Do you have a PLOT PLAN / SURVEY of your property, and/or building plans for your house? Providing these will speed up the measuring process _____

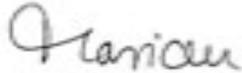


Thank you for taking the time to fill out this detailed questionnaire and brainstorm the indicated questions. Your assistance and thoughts will greatly aid in developing a custom landscape design just right for you, and your home and site.

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When you have finished the questionnaire, please return it to us. We look forward to working with you and creating your very own garden paradise!

Warmly,



Marion McNew, CPLD, FAPLD

President, Mount Hood Gardens, Inc. & Solcrest Garden Designs, LLC

**MOUNT HOOD GARDENS, INC.
& SOLCREST GARDEN DESIGNS**
1570 Orchard Road
Hood River, OR 97031

PHONE: (541) 386-4119

FAX: (541) 386-5266

EMAIL: mounthoodgardens@gorge.net

WEB: www.mounthoodgardens.com

