



EXTERNAL AFFAIRS
with Tim Goom

The benefits of creating a Master Plan

A master plan creates the framework and key elements of your landscape and establishes a vision for your overall project. Having this plan from the outset allows you the freedom to construct the plan in stages as budget and time allow, whilst preserving the goal of a cohesive theme.

Breaking the project down into phases also minimises the sense of risk of going 'all in' from the outset and allows the client to acquire a solid understanding of how different parts of the master plan and individual features will combine to create a whole balanced outdoor environment.

A master plan is a must for larger-scale commercial projects which will take time to construct but is equally beneficial for smaller residential projects. Often a client will ask me to visit to discuss ideas for one area of their garden, but taking a step back and time to consider how this will tie in and impact other spaces in the landscape will give you an idea from the outset of what can be achieved and a strategic framework which directs the order in which stages should be undertaken. Things that may impact the order of implementation of stages include:

Cost

Naturally, some parts of your project will cost more than others. A master plan and feasibility study which indicates the costs of each stage will be very useful in directing your decision regarding which part to tackle first against the backdrop of your budget. Even if one area is not entirely achievable in terms of budget, the design can future proof for the later addition of elements. I find this often occurs when a client wants to install a pool or construct an outdoor room at a later date. With thoughtful design, your landscape can be developed in a way that means it won't be damaged or undone by future landscaping additions.



Season

Landscaping is clearly not a fair weather career choice! Weather is a challenge we are constantly working around but certain seasons are better for implementing certain components in a landscape. Structural elements such as decking and fencing can be constructed year round- although concrete pouring can be impacted by the vagaries of wet winter weather. Planting is more likely to do well if introduced when the soil is neither too dry or cold and with enough time to establish roots to contend with either challenge.

Location

Kiwis tend to do most of their outdoor living in their back yard- and so this may be the first part you want to focus on in your landscaping project so it is ready to enjoy first. This also usually works better logistically, completing works at the back of your property and then moving forward, so you are not having to traipse machinery, materials and plants through a part of your landscape that is completed. This is not always the case, the priority may be to erect fencing at the front for security or privacy, or enhance a utility space at the side for better functionality. Your priorities together with the location of the stage of your project may determine which part you tackle first.

Hardscape vs Softscape

In general, hardscaping provides the framework into which softscaping fits. If patience is not a virtue and multiple stages seem drawn out, a simple approach to staging is to complete your hardscaping (decks, walls, planter boxes, concrete etc) first before softening and completing the overall landscape by the addition of planting.

Call Goom Landscapes on 0800 466 657 to discuss how a master plan can benefit you and your property.

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