



Leisure News

Your Source for Landscape News and Information



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Whatever Happened to Spring?

Summer's here and we're back in the game with Leisure News after a busy start to the year.

This edition of Leisure News brings you a bit of useful information, such as our essay on the lucrative rewards of landscape improvement, *Increasing the Value of Your Home*. Next we inform you of the advantages of planting during autumn in the article *Fall Beds* on page four.

Having succeeded in our efforts to restore to you, our customer, the invaluable asset of leisure time, we are proud to announce the Leisure News *Top 10 Vacation Destinations*. Finally, in *Decked Out* we hope to inform you in the latest news for decking materials and choosing safe, quality decking on any budget.

Now that you have a little leisure time, we invite you to kick back, relax, and enjoy your reading.



The clouds part after a storm on the Going to the Sun Road in Glacier National Park, Montana. Just one of the brilliant sites chosen for the Leisure News article *Top 10 Vacation Destinations*.



www.leisurelandscapes.com

Sign up a friend for a maintenance contract, and you'll receive one month of FREE maintenance from Leisure Landscapes. Just another way to say 'thanks' to our amazing customers.

Offer good through 10/1/04

We're Up and Running!

Visit us online at www.leisurelandscapes.com for great landscaping ideas. Click on a service button and be transported to a full description of the topic. See photographs of beautiful designs created and implemented by Leisure Landscapes for real homes in your area. The new features include:

- **Schedule an Appointment**—Enter your information and you will receive an email or phone call to confirm your appointment.
- **Customer Feedback**— Tell us how we're doing or schedule a special job.
- **Maintenance Flash**— Inclement weather? Click here to find the impact on your maintenance schedule.

Watch for the Leisure **Special**— our product or service discount page, coming soon.

Our site is easy to use and informative, so please take advantage of this opportunity to visit us online from anywhere, anytime!

The Leisure Landscapes TOP 10 VACATION Destinations



Three hot sunsets captured by Paul Martin of Leisure Landscapes.

Once upon a time in Mexico...



Here at Leisure Landscapes

our goal is to restore to you the leisure time you deserve, by leaving one less thing to worry about—your landscape. Now that we've freed up your evenings and weekends, don't you deserve a vacation? And to make your life a little bit easier, we've rounded up a solid list of great vacation sites so you don't have to. In our Top 10 list you'll find a wide range of recreation, so no matter what your taste we have something that will tickle your fancy. So relax! Let Leisure multiply your free time.



The beautiful inhabitants of Glacier National Forest.

- 1. Glacier National Park, Montana** Glacier offers plenty of wildlife, scenic drives, and wide open spaces. Horseback tours, trails, and the Going to the Sun Road combine to give you some truly breathtaking photos to share when you're back.
- 2. Florence, Italy** Ciao! World-famous art museums, historical landmarks, and cutting-edge shops make Italy a prime destination for any connoisseur, but Florence specifically is a treasure. Superlative hotels, local cottages and vineyards will reward all five senses, and the rich culture will tempt you to stay... at least a little longer!
- 3. Great Barrier Reef** Born with fins? Here's your chance to swim with the creatures of the sea, exploring the greatest known life form on the face of the earth. Australia and New Zealand also feature indigenous wildlife and a pleasing, tropical climate.
- 4. Gizeh, Egypt** For the hardy, adventurous couples, we suggest a horseback tour of the ancient city of the Pharaohs. Riding atop a purebred Arabian, you'll discover the pyramids and lost cities that your friends back home only see on the Discovery Channel.
- 5. Ku'au'i, Hawaii** Ku'uai, the "Garden Isle," features wild flowers, emerald volcanoes, hidden waterfalls, and water sports that will keep you busy from morning till dusk. Also, since it's not outside the United States, you don't need to worry about bringing your passport to taste an exotic culture!
- 6. Paris, France** No, you don't know the language, but we promise you'll recognize the big tower. Paris offers so much culture you'll never be satisfied anywhere else. The art museums, cathedrals and monuments are worth the plane ride over the ocean. Plus the food is one-of-a-kind.
- 7. Zion National Park Scenic Byway, Utah** For those travelers who love to use their windshields as movie screens, Utah is a visual wonderland. A subtractive landscape displays geological secrets, and heart-stopping sunrises and sunsets will have your friends at home in tears.
- 8. Cancun, Mexico** Do vast beaches and crystal clear water light your fire? There's more to Cancun than tourist attraction, and it's not that far away. The Mayan ruins are breath-taking and rival anything over "the big pond."
- 9. Snowshoe, West Virginia** If your summer dream is to escape summer, have we got a site for you. Snowshoe offers a wide range of slopes, as well as plenty of activities to keep you entertained after you've worn out your skis.
- 10. Orlando, Florida** The home of Disney World can still knock your socks off. With tons of top-notch resorts, plenty of grown-up activities, and a vibrant night life, Florida is an old favorite we still love.





Fertile Ground:

By Chris Taylor
March 3, 2003

An Article from
SmartMoney Magazine

You've done everything humanly possible to boost the value of your home: put a trendy island in the kitchen, laid fresh carpeting to replace that dusty '70s shag, constructed a spa-quality bathroom bigger than most studio apartments. And now you're scratching your head, wondering how to jack up your resale price even more.

Look outside, silly.

After all, when well-heeled buyers pull up to your home, it's not the luxury faucets or the gorgeous granite counter they see first. It's the landscaping. And if your lawn is patchy, your trees are on their deathbed and your plants are a poor excuse for flora, it isn't going to matter what kind of magic you've worked indoors. Those buyers may keep on driving. "When people ask me how they can get strong interest in their property, I always tell them to fix up their landscaping," says Walt McDonald, president-elect of the National Association of Realtors. "If a homeowner is reluctant to do it, I tell them they won't get top dollar."

"If you spend 5 percent of the value of your home on landscaping, and do it wisely, you might get 150 percent or more of your money back"

That's the payoff. You will not only attract more buyers and get a quicker sale but also probably get a welcome boost in your sale price. "If you spend 5 percent of the value of your home on landscaping, and do it wisely, you might get 150 percent or more of your money back," says Massachusetts Realtor Gill Woods. And sometimes that number

can go even higher. If your home's landscaping is on the low end for the area and you're putting it on par with your neighbors, you could be looking at a 15 percent rise.

Just ask Chuck Mitton of Cherry Hills Village, Colorado. He and wife Jean went to town on the nondescript backyard of their ranch home a few years ago. A tangled mass of overgrown plants became a three-level wonderland, complete with ponds, waterfalls, dwarf conifer trees and fresh flowerbeds with roses and azaleas. Oh, and don't forget the new "hardscapes," such as a winding brick walkway, a backyard hot tub, and a barbecue pit and dining area, where the couple eat "almost every day" during warm weather. "If you're going to do some landscaping, I'd say do quite a bit," suggests the semiretired bookkeeper and investor, who spent \$60,000 on his additions. "Then you can enjoy it yourself—and the value of your home will go up too."

The proof: When Mitton refinanced in 2001, the originally \$250,000 home was reappraised at \$750,000—roughly \$150,000 to \$200,000 of which he attributes to the landscaping. "Landscapes take time to mature," says the 59-year-old, "but I'd say people might be able to make 200 percent of whatever they put in."

Plus, it can be fun. Gardening is one of the most popular hobbies in America: In 2001 homeowners spent \$37.7 billion taking care of their yards, up from \$22.5 billion five years earlier, according to the National Gardening Association. While the increase has been fueled by a maturing boomer population and a spike in home-buying, people are also clueing in to the fact that it can add dollars to their home's value. And academic studies are proving it. A study by Clemson University and the University of Michigan found that consumers value a landscaped home up to 11.3 percent higher than its base price. And one Quebec survey found that hedges raised property values by 3.6 percent, a landscaped curb by 4.4 percent and a landscaped patio by a staggering 12.4 percent.

In fact, you're going to have to do what you can to make your property stand out, now that the housing market is cooling. Most real estate watchers, such as home-price research from Fiserv CSW, are predicting slower price increases in the coming years; other market bears are warning of a steep drop-off. "Six months ago anything on the market had people clamoring," says Woods. "In a cooling market, it's going to be more difficult to get a buyer into a piece of property. The key thing now is 'curb appeal.'"

"You're going to have to do what you can to make your property stand out."

Such appeal isn't just about your lawn, trees, shrubs and flowering plants, though—these days you'll want to consider popular hardscapes such as gorgeous walkways, sweeping arches, full kitchen areas and barbecue pits, elongated patios and decks, elaborate backyard retreats and gazebos, and more. The stakes have been raised.

To put it into perspective: For a \$500,000 home, on which you spend \$25,000 to spruce it up, even a modest gain of 7.5 percent would put \$12,500 of straight profit in your pocket.

When Mitton refinanced in 2001, the originally \$250,000 home was reappraised at \$750,000—roughly \$150,000 to \$200,000 of which he attributes

Visiting family for the Holidays?
Don't worry when cold weather strikes.



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Decked Out

A recent study uncovers serious alternatives to high-maintenance decking materials from the past in our riveting article, *Decked Out*.

When it comes to building decks most people try hard to match the style of their homes, but there's been little debate over the materials. Pressure-treated lumber has predominantly been the choice for outdoor structures, pine being the most common type. Though wood can be inexpensive, it is also a maintenance nightmare.

Decking is the surface of the structure—the part you walk on and enjoy, but also the part that in wooden decks deteriorates over time. The under-structure of the deck is hidden from UV rays and most rain-water, so wood is a great material to use.

But wood is *not* an ideal material to use in decking (the surface). Pressure treated wood splinters, cracks and rots if not con-

stantly maintained, and dangerous contents of the wood could be harmful.

Until 2004 pressure-treated lumber—wood infused with chromated copper arsenate (CCA)—has been used heavily in outdoor constructions. Since the beginning of this year the outdoor-lumber industry has voluntarily stopped the production of CCA for residential use since CCA contains a known carcinogen.

If you already own an outdoor structure containing CCA, tearing it down would be a drastic last resort. But now that wood might be moving down to the bottom of your list of options, what choices do you have left?

Composite is a combination of plastic

resin and wood fiber, which can be mildly manipulated and is nearly maintenance-free. **Plastic or Vinyl Decking** is made of various plastics and can be easily installed, requiring little or no upkeep.

These decking alternatives still require a wood under-structure of posts, beams and joists, but new chemical treatments are available that are more friendly to the environment.

For a look at some examples of our decks, visit www.leisurelandscapes.com and click on "Decks and Arbors."

More information on safe decking is available at www.ConsumerReports.org under the July 2004 issue of Home.

Summer Special - 10% Off Irrigation! *

Tired of Dragging Hoses? Install an **automatic irrigation system** with Leisure Landscapes.

Sprinkler heads and piping are installed underground and connected directly to your water meter. When it is time to water, the nozzles automatically pop up to water the area and retract when done.

Automatic irrigation saves **you** money and water at the same time. The systems meter the water out

exactly. Each head is calibrated to release a certain amount of water (from 1.5 to 2 gal per minute). With our sophisticated **RainBird** controllers, we can put down **exactly** the amount of water required in each area of the landscape. And we can do it on any schedule that meets local requirements: odd even days, or specific days of the week. We even have sensors that automatically turn the system off in the event of sufficient rain!



Don't leave your hose running all night. Choose a **water-wise irrigation system** from Leisure Landscapes and save!

* Offer valid for contracts signed August 1, 2004 through August 31, 2004, Not to be combined with other promotions.

Live outside the ordinary...

Live the Life of Leisure.

Leisure Landscapes
Professional Landscape Management

WALKWAYS

The path to tranquility is in your own back yard

"What are you writing for the fall newsletter?" Kathy asked.

"I don't know yet. Have any ideas?"

"Yes! You should write about walkways. The crew put one in my backyard where my kids and pets used to tear up the lawn, and *I love it.*"

"A walkway provides a clean and immovable boundary that stepping stones can't"

Nothing like first-hand experience to spark interest, so I took her advice. Kathy is the accountant for Leisure Landscapes, so I know her well enough to recognize the sincerity in her voice. And it's well deserved; Leisure Landscapes has transformed countless lawns with walkways and arbors, earning steady positive feedback from their clients.

A walkway can turn a muddy mess into orderli-



A walkway by Leisure Landscapes at the beautiful Foland residence.

ness. As in Kathy's case, pets, children, and everyday traffic can wear down the lawn in spots and create channels for rainwater to slick the dirt. A walkway provides a clean and immovable boundary that stepping stones can't. But the walkway doesn't have to hang around the house.

Some homeowners who have flat, uninteresting lawn space can recreate the mystery and tranquility of a more natural space through a designer's skillful choice of flora and hardscapes. A walkway is usually suggested to guide the homeowner and his or her guests through a myriad of color, texture, and light in the new landscape.

The walkway itself can widen the range of the sensory enjoyment of your landscape. Walking on varied textures and having a choice of following the path or not will make strolling to the mailbox a pastime instead of necessity.

Your walkway can be made of:

- ◆ Stone
- ◆ Concrete
- ◆ Stone and Brick
- ◆ Concrete Pavers
- ◆ Brick
- ◆ Gravel
- ◆ Gravel and Stone
- ◆ Stone and Turfgrass or Moss

Meet the **New Kids on the Block**



Jason Hanna is the new landscape designer on our staff. At 24, he already has plenty of experience under his belt (including architecture). He designs irrigation and landscape installation projects, estimates maintenance contracts, and meets with customers and crew to get the job done. Jason enjoys playing guitar and recording in his free time, and loves the outdoors.

Danielle Hanna is our new graphic designer. She has a fine arts degree from UNC Greensboro, and works on most of the current advertising and graphics produced by Leisure Landscapes. She is also Jason's new wife, and is grateful for the opportunity to work with him. Danielle's hobbies include handmade crafts and photography.



Mary Grace Sellars is our new Office Manager. She is responsible for customer service activities as well as scheduling plant and materials orders. Mary Grace is a whiz at organization, and we're glad to have her aboard! When out of the office, she is an avid reader, and can also be seen ferrying her kids to soccer practice.

WELCOME!

to our new Complete Care Plan customers for 2004:

Yvonne Aselle, Kildaire Farms II; **Brenda and Joe Burns**, North Ridge; **Bob Butzow**, Sunset Ridge; **Jim and Linda Caravello**, Brookhaven West; **Aniko and Imre Gaal**, Wakefield Plantation; **David and Louise Harp**, Windjammer; **Jeff Marshall**, Olde Raleigh; **Grace Nelson**, Canterbury; **Jayne Nelson**, Country Club Hills; **Janice Parmelee and William Hammack**, Wessex; **Tom and Deb Smith**, North Ridge; **Nellie and Joe Tobias**, Alyson Pond; **John and Eileen Wagner**, Olde Waverly; **Daniel Lee**, Woodspring; **Meghan Kofod**, Woods of St. Albans; **Nina Eldredge**, Dominion Park; **Cynthia Gage**, Laurel Hills

A Note from our President

We are experiencing another growth spurt as the company matures into adolescence. For the first time now, we have another talented designer (in fact, I have two, both Jason and Danielle). As a result we will be able to serve you with quality designs, faster. And with Mary Grace ordering materials in advance for on-site delivery, we will be more efficient.

Our continued growth during these tough economic times is a testament to the value you place on our service. And we will continue to honor that commitment. Thank you for your confidence and support.



Paul Martin



PLEASE
PLACE
STAMP
HERE

Leisure Landscape's Weekly
Maintenance Schedule

LEISURE'S INFORMATION STATION

	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Team 1 Leader: Carmen	Special Request Jobs	North Raleigh	North Raleigh	Apex, Cary, Morrisville	Cary, Raleigh, Morrisville
Team 2 Leader: Roberto	Special Request Jobs	Cary, Raleigh, Holly Springs, Fuquay Varina, Apex	North Raleigh, Chapel Hill, Pittsboro, Cary, Durham	North Raleigh	Raleigh

The Leisure Landscapes Summer Calendar

JUNE	JULY	AUGUST
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Apply Herbicides to Lawn ◆ Apply Iron fertilizer for lawn ◆ Apply 10-10-10 fertilizer to plants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Set Japanese Beetle traps ◆ Apply herbicides for crabgrass ◆ Prune hedges 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◆ Apply grub killer for Japanese beetles ◆ Apply round-up on weeds in lawn