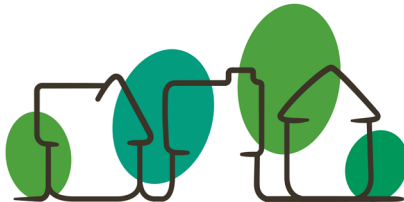


# Landscaping...



## Your questions answered!

We have gathered the most frequently asked questions with respect to Landscaping, Final Inspections and deposit refunds. We hope this compilation assists you in the process of completing your landscaping.



MERCURY GROUP INC.

This booklet is comprised of general questions and answers in an effort to provide information.

Each neighborhood has landscaping guidelines that are specific to the neighborhood and stage that must be referenced for your specific requirements.

If you do not have a copy of these guidelines, please contact your builder so that they may provide you with the necessary information.

Final Inspection requests will be accepted from April 1<sup>st</sup> to September 15<sup>th</sup>, with inspections to commence upon leaf-out each spring

<b>Question</b>	<b>Answer</b>
1. What is the Final Inspection for?	A single Final Inspection is done to confirm compliance with architectural guidelines, satisfactory completion of landscaping, and record any damages to curbs, sidewalks, street furniture, and water valve. The Builder has the landscaping security deposit and will refund this deposit to you upon satisfactory completion. Partial refunds will not be considered.
2. What is required to request a Final Inspection?	<p>The following elements should be present prior to requesting a Final Inspection:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Completion of construction</li> <li>➤ City Approval of grading, rough or final grade, specific to the neighbourhood</li> <li>➤ Completion of landscaping in accordance with requirements (available from your builder)</li> <li>➤ Sidewalks and curbs cleaned, c.c. (water main valve) exposed and marked.</li> </ul>
3. Why is it my responsibility to ensure the Water Valve (cc) is marked and exposed?	<p>Your builder is responsible to locate, mark and expose your Water Valve during the construction process, as this is the “on/off” switch to the water into your home. However, once you have taken possession of your home it is the homeowner’s responsibility to ensure that the Water Valve remains marked and exposed to ensure easy access.</p>

Question	Answer
<p>4. Can I send my request for Final Inspection directly to your office?</p>	<p>No, we cannot accept Final Inspection requests from anyone but the applicant on file, in this case the Builder. Because we are also inspecting for compliance of the Architectural Guidelines as well as damages to the curbs or sidewalks it is imperative we receive the request from and subsequently report our findings to the Builder. This process facilitates the prompt refund of your deposit.</p> <p>Where deficiencies are found and a re-inspection is required, the request must also be made by the builder.</p> <p>The initial Final Inspection and re-inspection (if required) are done at no charge to the Builder or Homeowner. However, any further inspections (third inspection or beyond) may incur a charge, subject to the developer. The charge is \$250.00 (two hundred fifty dollars) + GST, payable by cheque or cash to Mercury Group Inc. This charge is payable at time of request and must accompany the request for a 3<sup>rd</sup> inspection or any subsequent inspections.</p>
<p>5. When will my Final Inspection be done?</p>	<p>Final Inspections are done during our regular presence in the neighbourhood, which is approximately once a month and subject to weather conditions.</p> <p>If your builder's request is received in our office just prior to our scheduled presence, the response will be immediate. If your request is received just after our scheduled presence, you may wait up to four weeks. The report of our findings will be forwarded to your builder.</p> <p>Please note that at the beginning of the landscaping season, the 1-4 week turnaround time does not start until we begin inspections in all of our neighborhoods upon leaf out (early May or late June). This means that requests submitted on April 1<sup>st</sup> may not be completed until June.</p>

Question	Answer
<p>6. Are Final Inspections conducted all year round?</p>	<p>Final Inspections are only done during the growing season, which varies from year to year. Generally speaking, the growing season is from May to October.</p> <p>It is important to note that if your request for Final Inspection is received in our office after September 1<sup>st</sup>, <b>inclement</b> weather may result in the delay of the inspection until the following growing season.</p> <p>The cut off for Final Inspection Requests is September 15<sup>th</sup> every year, however we do still continue to accept re-inspection requests as long as weather permits.</p>
<p>7. Does my fence have to be completed prior to requesting my Final Inspection?</p>	<p>Fencing does not have to be completed at time of Final Inspection.** As there are specific requirements for fence style and color, please ensure you do have a copy of the fencing detail prior to proceeding with construction of your fence. A copy is available from your builder.</p> <p>Please note that while completion of fencing is not required at time of final inspection, if fencing is in place at time of final inspection, it will be assessed for compliance with the guideline standard for the neighbourhood. Non-compliance will be treated as a deficiency, affecting the refund of landscaping deposit.</p> <p><i>**Please refer to your neighborhood landscaping guidelines or HOA policies to confirm if this policy applies to your area.</i></p>
<p>8. Can my landscape plans be reviewed prior to implementation?</p>	<p>It is not the purpose of this process or our area of expertise to review or to approve landscaping plans prior to implementation.</p>

Question	Answer
<p>9. What if I don't think there is enough room to plant a tree(s) in my front yard?</p>	<p>If you are challenged by space constraints and/or utility locations, you need to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ Contact "Call Before You Dig" to have the utility locations identified and a report will be provided to you noting their locations.</li> <li>➤ Review the locations and options available to you with your landscaper.</li> <li>➤ Explore the species of trees suited to the challenges of your lot such as a Columnar Aspen.</li> </ul> <p>If after exploring all options available to you it is determined that it is not possible for you to plant the required tree(s), you will need to assemble the following information and submit to our office for review:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Utility Plan – The original colored copy or a color photocopy of the original.</li> <li>2. Copy of your plot plan illustrating your proposed landscaping in detail. i.e. ground cover, location of planting and specifics/sizes of plant material proposed.</li> </ol>
<p>10. What is a prepared shrub bed?</p>	<p>A prepared shrub bed is defined by edging, which may be vinyl, block, stone, or concrete. The purpose of the edging is to visibly separate the shrub bed from the sod.</p> <p>Shrub beds are intended to create mass, but may be planted in more than one site if preferred.</p>
<p>11. What would be considered a shrub?</p>	<p>The definition of a shrub is: A horticultural rather than strictly botanical category of woody plant, distinguished from a tree by its multiple stems and lower height.</p> <p>Shrubs or bushes are generally broad-leaved, the smaller conifers being classed as evergreens. When clipped, shrubs have dense foliage and many small leafy branches growing close together.</p>

Question	Answer
<p>12. Where sod is required, how much of my yard has to be covered to meet the requirements?</p> <p>See Appendix A for illustrations.</p>	<p>Requirement for sod means hard landscaping must be restricted to tree and/or shrub beds. Sod must be installed on the entire front yard to the fence tie backs (to the front corner of the house and front corner of the garage).</p> <p>Side yards at the driveway may be finished in rock or mulch rather than grass.</p> <p>In the case of a corner lot, any portion of the side yard not hidden by an existing woodscreen fence is considered to be the front yard and must be landscaped.</p>
<p>13. Can I seed my yard instead of installing sod?</p>	<p>Seeded grass is not permitted; sod must be installed for a mature finished yard.</p>
<p>14. What is a deciduous tree and how is it measured?</p>	<p>Deciduous trees have leaves and are measured by calliper or the width at the thickest part of the trunk of the tree. Standard measurement is taken approximately 6 inches up from the root ball before planting or up from the ground once planted.</p>
<p>15. What is a coniferous tree and how is it measured?</p>	<p>Coniferous trees are evergreens such as a pine, spruce or fir tree and are measured by height. Standard measurement is taken from the grass surface once planted.</p>
<p>16. Is a Cedar or Juniper considered a tree?</p>	<p>Cedars and Junipers are not considered trees but are defined as coniferous shrubs. They will not satisfy the requirement for a tree(s). They require sheltered space beside the house or a fence to thrive and are seldom viable in an open yard or on their own.</p> <p>Your local greenhouse may suggest these conifers as an option for the required tree(s). We caution you that this is not a conflict of information as the intent and interpretation of the guideline requirements is determined by the Developer. If you plant a cedar or juniper rather than a coniferous tree(s) (spruce, pine, fir) your landscaping will not be approved.</p> <p>For further clarification you may reference the following sources for definition of pyramidal, columnar and global cedars, as shrubs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ "University of Alberta Woody Ornamentals for the Prairies" by Hugh Knowles</li> <li>➤ "Alberta Yards and Gardens" published by Alberta Agriculture</li> </ul>

Question	Answer
<p>17. Can I do rockscape or hard surface landscaping?</p>	<p>Check with your Builder or refer to the guidelines applicable to your neighbourhood.</p> <p>Where the guidelines indicate that “hard surface landscaping may be permitted...”, it is the homeowner’s responsibility to obtain professional advice on how to achieve the desired look while still meeting the landscaping requirements to achieve greenery in all front yards within the neighbourhood. The use of hard surface landscaping therefore requires the planting of additional shrubbery and/or trees to visually soften the hard surface and achieve greenery.</p> <p>Hard surface landscaping will require a variety of rock sizes, as well as variation in contours (bumps/rises) and materials for interest. Red shale and white landscape rock will not be permitted.</p> <p>Landscaping plans will not be reviewed prior to implementation.</p> <p>Please see Appendix B for examples of suitable hard surface landscaping.</p>
<p>18. Can I install artificial turf/grass in place of sod?</p>	<p>Check with your Builder or refer to the guidelines applicable to your neighbourhood.</p> <p>Where the guidelines indicate that “Residents will have the option to install synthetic turf in place of sod...” the selected synthetic turf (including putting greens) must meet the requirements set out in the artificial turf standard for the neighborhood.</p> <p>Please note that synthetic turf adjacent to natural sod will not be allowed without installing a distinct integrating strip of landscaping between the styles of turf. The installation of undulating rock/mulch beds with shrubs and landscape edging are the acceptable practice for meeting the standard. These beds are installed in addition to the minimum landscaping requirements as set out in the guidelines.</p>



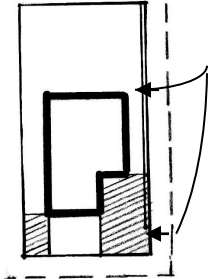
Question	Answer
<p>19. There is already a tree(s) in my yard. Can I count this tree as part of my landscaping to meet the requirements?</p>	<p>No. The Developer places these trees and although it may appear they are on your property, they have been planted on the boulevard, which is City property. Not all boulevards are separated from your property by a sidewalk and are actually a portion of the front of what appears to be your yard.</p> <p>These trees do not satisfy the minimum landscaping requirements for your yard.</p>
<p>20. What if my tree(s) or shrubs die before the inspection is conducted?</p>	<p>Plant materials that are dead or dying will not be considered to satisfy the minimum requirements.</p>
<p>21. My neighbour's tree(s) doesn't meet the requirements and they got their money back, why can't I?</p>	<p>The landscape requirements are minimum standards. We endeavour to apply the requirements consistently and fairly using our allowed discretion for a tolerance in tree size of up to ¼" on deciduous trees and 6" for coniferous trees if all other elements meet or exceed the minimum standards as set out in the Architectural Guidelines.</p> <p>Inspections conducted on properties other than your own will not be discussed.</p>
<p>22. The greenhouse does not have any trees large enough to meet the minimum requirement for my landscaping?</p>	<p>Local greenhouses carry a limited selection of trees and for ease of transport, they are generally smaller in size. You should contact the tree farms in the area for a larger selection of species and size.</p> <p>The minimum requirement will not be waived or relaxed due to availability. It is a good idea to shop earlier in the season for the best selection.</p>
<p>23. I have spent a lot of money completing my landscaping and feel it far exceeds the average yard in my neighbourhood, but I failed my Final Inspection! Why?</p>	<p>The guideline requirements established for the community are in place to ensure that a specific standard of planting will be carried through the development. Although the landscape design you have chosen is perhaps more esthetically pleasing than neighbouring properties, compliance is still necessary and the minimum standard tree planting must be incorporated. The planting of additional material and landscape features does not satisfy the requirement for a tree(s) of minimum standard.</p>

<b>Question</b>	<b>Answer</b>
24. What if I choose not to meet the minimum landscaping requirements? What will happen?	You will forfeit any deposits paid to the Builder and where a caveat has been filed against your property, it will not be discharged.
25. What happens to my deposit if I exceed the timeframe set out in the guidelines to complete my landscaping?	<p>The time limit in the guidelines is intended to provide an incentive for the timely completion of landscaping. The requirement is not intended to be punitive.</p> <p>We understand that there can be delays in the landscaping process due to weather and seasonal issues, in which case the timeline would be reset.</p> <p>For example, where your rough grade is not obtained in time for you to complete your landscaping in the current growing season, your timeline would automatically be reset to have the landscaping completed by the end of the next growing season.</p> <p>Upon satisfactory completion of your landscaping, any monies owing to you will be refunded by your builder.</p>
26. If I have questions regarding the process or status of the final inspection, who should I contact?	<p>Your builder is your contact for any and all questions or concerns regarding this process. It is their responsibility to provide you with the information required.</p> <p>Stop by the Showhome in your neighbourhood to obtain copies of the information you will need. You can also contact your builder's seasonal department as they are provided with up-to-date landscaping information at the beginning of each season.</p>

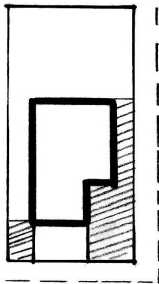
# Appendix A – Where Sod is Required



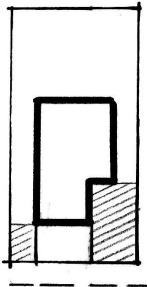
Denotes location of sod



Corner Lot with existing Woodscreen Fence



Corner lot with no existing fence



Regular Lot

## Appendix B – Examples of Suitable Hard Surface Landscaping

