

SPECIAL REPORT

7 Questions You Must Ask Before Hiring Any Landscape Contractor

Here's your chance to finally get some straight talk about choosing a landscape contractor. Cosumnes River Landscape has helped many people just like you achieve the landscape of their dreams. This special report will provide you with information you need to make the right decision. So turn the page and let's start...

At Last, You Can Feel Confident When Making A Decision To Hire A Landscaper...

Dear Friend:

Choosing the right landscaper isn't always easy.

Why? Because you may be bombarded with misleading claims, confusing advertising, or simply bad information.

You see, making the decision to hire a landscape company can be a daunting task. There are so many contractors hustling for the business. On the surface, they may all appear to be pretty much the same. But often times by simply by digging a little bit deeper and knowing what to look for, you'll be much better prepared to make the right decision.

That's why I've prepared this special report.

Whether you've hired a landscape company in the past, or if you're searching for the perfect contractor for the very first time, this information will save you some time and money...maybe even a headache or two. So let's get started...

7 Questions You Must Ask Before Hiring A Landscape Installation Company

Question #1: Is the company properly licensed and insured?

The first seemingly obvious thing to consider when hiring any contractor is their license and insurance. We all know that, right? Just looking in the Yellow Pages makes that quite apparent. In fact, considering all the ads starting with huge bold headlines reading “licensed and insured”, that’s certainly something a lot of contractors are proud of.

Let’s talk about licensing first. Sure, you want to hire a contractor that’s licensed. But what does that really mean?

Through countless conversations with prospects and clients over the years, I’ve discovered that most people really aren’t even aware of the different licenses that landscape contractors are required to have – much less whether or not they have them.

Did you know that there are actually Two licenses that contractors in California are required to carry?

1. Business License
2. Contractors License

Now I’m not an attorney and I’m certainly not qualified to give you legal advice. However, any company working on your property without the proper licenses could present a potential liability issue for you.

Certainly you’ll want to hire a company that is insured. Always insist on certificates of insurance for liability and worker compensation coverage. It’s also a good practice to verify those certificates with the insurance company and ask to be named as an “additional insured”.

Question #2: Are quoted prices fixed or just cost estimates?

A low price can often be presented in the form of an “estimate”. Always be cautious of these. Instead, insist on a firm proposal which details the service to be provided and sets forth fixed pricing for those services. Unless a significant amount of excavation is involved, an experienced contractor should not have a problem with this type arrangement.

It's no secret - professional landscape contractor's base their pricing on four basic factors: labor, equipment, materials and profit. However, there are also overhead costs that you may not realize. Things like employee uniforms, the employee training programs that we mentioned, and many other expenses that go into bringing you a high level of service. If you expect a professional company with great quality and great customer service, then it's unlikely you'll be happy with a contractor offering the lowest or “rock-bottom” pricing.

Keep this in mind when comparing prices and proposals. Quite often what appears to be the low price can be deceiving. It is critical for you to clarify and understand exactly what's included and what's required to achieve your desired outcome.

Once you are comfortable with a proposal, you'll want get a signed contract that will legally document the terms and scope of work agreed upon by both parties.

Question #3: Will you be able to talk to other clients who have used the contractor for a project similar in size and nature to that of your own?

Any contractor can make comments regarding their company practices and the quality of their work. Unfortunately, some of what they say may not be completely accurate.

Established companies will be able to offer you plenty of testimonials and references from current AND past clients – if they cannot, then it are probably a good idea to keep looking.

It's important to personally contact a few of those references, and if possible to get out and take a look at their properties.

Be sure and ask for references from other customers whose properties are similar in size and scope of work to that of your own. A contractor who specializes in landscape maintenance and has a great reputation in that regard may not be your best choice for a comprehensive landscape installation project.

When gathering feedback from other customers' make certain you ask about the level of communication offered by the contractor, their reliability and overall quality of work, and if their project was finished on time and within budget.

Question #4: How are the companies employees trained? And, are there certified professionals overseeing their jobs?

For any company to operate efficiently and effectively and provide you with professional service, all employees should be properly trained. Proper crew training is more difficult than it may sound.

A formal introductory and ongoing training program has become common place in our industry today. Inquire into the details of how the employees working on your property are trained.

Question #5: What will be your line of communication with the company while your project is underway?

As with any relationship, an open line of communication is critical to a successful relationship with your landscape contractor.

The ability to effectively communicate with the crew that is working at your property is essential should unexpected circumstances arise.

Should you hire a larger company, it's highly unlikely that the person that comes to your property to present you with a proposal will be the same person you will see supervising the crews at your property. That being said, a crew leader (or foreman) will be the individual in charge of what transpires on a daily basis.

Be certain to ask any landscaping salesperson about communications and who your point of contact within the company will be. This way, should any problems arise you'll be in the best position to handle any issues that may come up.

A professional company should report to you the progress of each days work, and most will also include a plan for the next day. This is sometimes done verbally, but a documented written report is always the best solution.

Question #6: Will the company be able to provide you with ongoing maintenance for your project?

The first year for any newly planted landscaping is critical in determining long term success. For trees and shrubs to flourish over the long term, they must be established properly. This will typically occur over the course of the first year. Proper watering and maintenance is more important during this establishment period.

It's a good idea to explore the possibilities of contracting with the same company who performs your installation to maintain their work. Many companies will guarantee the health and vigor of any plant material they install for the first year. A few contractors will even extend that guarantee for so long as they maintain the property. That leads us right into the final question you should ask...

Question #7: What type of guarantees will the company offer on your project?

Any company should be fully accountable for their performance on your property, and plantings or other product they install, and for the way that you are treated as a client.

This seems fairly straightforward, right? However, not all landscape contractors offer a guarantee and if they do, they're certainly not all created equal.

Here at **Cosumnes River Landscape** we offer the most powerful guarantee in the industry, our comprehensive "10-STAR" GUARANTEE. This ensures our clients that they will receive the utmost respect and courtesy in their relationship with us. It also guarantees 100% satisfaction with everything that we do. Our clients experience a rare level of confidence through our commitments to them.

In fact, you'll experience that same sense of confidence and security when you know exactly what to expect.

Here's the guarantee you would receive as a client of Cosumnes River Landscape:

Cosumnes River Landscape

OUR POWERFUL "10-STAR" GUARANTEE

1. Our staff will treat you with respect. Each employee will be in uniform and professionally trained to perform his or her assigned tasks on your property.
2. Each crew leader will be available to communicate with you when necessary.
3. Management will schedule daily inspections of your property and will review your projects progress with you at your request.
4. We will promptly correct any aspect of our work that is unsatisfactory to you.
5. Your job site will be left neat, clean and safe each and every day.
6. Our trucks will be clean and identifiable, and will not detract from the appearance of your neighborhood.
7. We will be there when we say we will and we will do what we promise to do.
8. You will receive accurate and detailed invoices for each phase of your project and any additional work or changes which you have approved.
9. You will be completely satisfied with all aspects of the work we do for you.
10. *If a plant that we install on your project does not perform as it should, we will replace it free of charge for one full year after installation. If we design it, plant it and maintain it, we guarantee it! RISK-FREE LANDSCAPING!*

In addition, if you hire Cosumnes River Landscape to provide maintenance immediately following an installation project, we will extend the warranty for the duration of our uninterrupted maintenance services. Some of our clients have had their plants under warranty for years!

Okay, so does all of this make sense to you?

I hope so. I hope you've found this report to be educational and informative.

You wouldn't find this kind of straight forward information anywhere else.

We covered the seven questions you must ask. Your next step is to talk with a company and ask these questions. Here's a simple checklist of questions to ask and topics to discuss:

- ✓ How long has the company been in business?
- ✓ What certifications are held within the company?
- ✓ What type properties do they specialize in?
- ✓ Do they have other jobs in your area?
- ✓ What type of formal training program do they have in place?
- ✓ Will the employees be in uniform?
- ✓ Are their trucks and equipment such that will not detract you're your neighborhood?
- ✓ Are they properly licensed and insured?
- ✓ How will you be billed?
- ✓ What form of payment is accepted?
- ✓ Who will be your main point of contact?
- ✓ Will the crew be able to communicate with you?
- ✓ Will they be able to provide maintenance services for the project?
- ✓ What happens if you should require changes or additional work?
- ✓ What type guarantee do they offer?

In addition, you'll certainly want to find someone who listens to your concerns and is easy to talk with.

The only way to find this out is by scheduling an appointment or consultation.

That's why I want to make you a special offer. Although we stay quite busy this time of year, I would like to offer you a very valuable service.

I would like to offer you a free consultation and landscape audit.

This audit is a real \$150 value, and this is not some marketing gimmick and is much more than any estimate or consultation. Here's exactly what you can expect:

I will tour your property and make a comprehensive assessment and inventory of your landscaping. You will receive a report detailing any potential or existing problems – and recommended solutions.

Then, we will sit down and discuss your particular situation in detail and determine your goals and objectives for your landscaping.

As a result of this consultation, you can decide if you feel comfortable with me and together we will determine if there should be a next step. There will be absolutely no obligation and no pressure.

Our philosophy here at **Cosumnes River Landscape** is to take the time to educate people and make certain that we are a “good fit” for our clients before jumping into contracts or commitments. This is the best way to ensure a long and mutually beneficial relationship.

Just look at what a few of our clients have to say:

"Cosumnes River Landscape exceeded our high expectations, and made sure that any necessary follow up or adjustments were completed in a timely manner. Their pricing was very competitive, and their quality and service were exceptional. I would highly recommend them without reservation"*Kristy Uhrich, "The Ranch" Wilton, California*

"Jeff was great to work with and was efficient on getting the work done and in a very timely manner. His workers work hard, and if there is anything that you have questions on, he is more than happy to help."*Chris Wheatly, Wilton, California*

"Cosumnes River Landscape is a company that will resolve any issues and stands behind all work that they do. Cosumnes River Landscape has very professional and knowledgeable employees."*Mark & Stacey Creager, Carmichael, California*

Here's what to do right now...

Before you put down this report, give us a call today at **(916) 687-8544** to schedule a complimentary landscape audit and consultation.

I've helped a lot of people, just like you; achieve the landscapes of their dreams and save a whole lot of time, money and headaches in the process.

I hope I can do the same for you. But you won't know unless we get together.

So why not spend some time, at my expense, finding out exactly what is right for you.

I look forward to seeing you soon.

Sincerely,

Jeffery S. Cookson, CLP

Any more questions? Shoot me an Email crl@citlink.net and I'll do my best to answer them.

**Cosumnes River Landscape
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