What should you ask a landscaping company before hiring?

Before you hire a landscaping company, you need clear answers about their approach, qualifications, and how they handle the work you want done. Asking the right questions upfront saves you from misunderstandings, unexpected costs, and disappointing results. Below are the key questions to ask, along with the reasons why each one matters.

What experience do you have with projects like mine?

Every landscaping job is different. A company that specializes in large commercial sites may not be the best fit for a small residential yard, and vice versa. Ask for examples of past work that match the scope and style you have in mind. Look for consistency in their portfolio and listen for how they describe the challenges of projects similar to yours.

A company with solid experience will be able to walk you through the process without vague promises. They will mention specific materials, plant choices, or design features that worked well in other jobs. That level of detail signals that they have done this kind of work before and can adapt to your specific needs.

Can you provide a detailed written estimate?

A verbal estimate is not enough. You need a written breakdown that lists every major task and the cost attached to it. That includes labor, materials, equipment rental, disposal fees, and any permits required. Without a written estimate, you have no way to compare bids fairly or to hold the company accountable if the final bill differs from the original quote.

Ask whether the estimate is a fixed price or an estimate that could change if unexpected issues come up. A reputable company will explain how they handle changes and will put that policy in writing as well.

Are you licensed and insured?

This is non-negotiable. A licensed landscaping company has met the basic requirements set by your state or locality to operate legally. Insurance protects you and your property. At a minimum, the company should carry general liability insurance that covers damage to your property and injuries that happen during the job.

Ask for proof of insurance and check that the policy is current. If the company uses subcontractors, ask whether those subcontractors are also insured. You do not want to be held

responsible for an accident that occurs on your property because someone did not carry proper coverage.

How do you handle the design process?

Some landscaping companies offer full design services, while others work from plans you provide. If you need help with **landscape design**, ask who will create the plan and how many revisions are included. A good designer will take the time to understand how you use your outdoor space, what plants you prefer, and how much maintenance you are willing to do.

You should also ask whether the design includes **irrigation** planning. A well-designed irrigation system saves water and keeps plants healthy. If the company does not handle irrigation design in-house, ask if they work with a specialist or if you will need to coordinate that part separately.

Clear expectations about the design phase prevent frustration later. You want to know how many meetings are involved, how long the design phase takes, and what happens if you want to make changes after the work starts.

What is the timeline for the project?

Landscaping projects can take anywhere from a few days to several weeks, depending on the scope. Ask for a realistic timeline that includes the start date, major milestones, and the expected completion date. Weather and material availability can cause delays, so ask how the company communicates those delays and whether they affect the final cost.

A company that is upfront about scheduling shows that they respect your time and that they plan their work carefully. If they cannot give you a clear timeline, that is a red flag.

Who will be on site and how is the crew managed?

Find out whether the person you meet during the estimate will be the one overseeing the actual work. Some companies send a salesperson or estimator, and then a different crew shows up to do the job. That is fine, but you should know who the project manager is and how to reach them if something comes up.

Ask about the size of the crew and whether they are employees or subcontractors. A crew that works together regularly tends to be more efficient and produces more consistent results. If the company uses subcontractors, ask how they vet them and who is responsible if the subcontractor's work is below standard.

How do you handle changes or unexpected issues?

No matter how well you plan, surprises happen. A rock ledge appears when the crew starts digging. A plant you wanted is out of stock. You decide you want a different kind of **sod** after seeing a neighbor's yard. How the company handles these situations tells you a lot about their professionalism.

Ask for their policy on change orders. A good company will document every change in writing, explain how it affects the cost and timeline, and get your approval before proceeding. Avoid companies that make changes on the fly and hand you a surprise bill at the end.

What kind of warranty or guarantee do you offer?

Plants die, irrigation lines leak, patios settle. A reputable landscaping company stands behind its work with a warranty that covers materials and labor for a specific period. Ask what is covered, how long the coverage lasts, and what the process is for making a claim.

Be wary of companies that offer a lifetime warranty on everything. That is usually a marketing gimmick, and the fine print makes it nearly impossible to collect. A straightforward one-year warranty on plant material and a two-year warranty on hardscaping is more realistic and easier to enforce.

Can you provide references from recent clients?

Talking to past clients gives you a sense of what it is like to work with the company. Ask for references from projects that are similar to yours in size and complexity. When you call those references, ask specific questions: Did the crew show up on time? Were there any disputes over the bill? Did the company clean up thoroughly each day? Would you hire them again?

If a company hesitates to provide references or gives you only one or two names, that is a warning sign. A company with a solid track record is happy to let its work speak for itself.

How do you handle payment schedules?

A typical payment schedule for a landscaping project involves a deposit upfront, progress payments as work is completed, and a final payment after you have inspected and approved the finished job. Ask exactly what triggers each payment and how much each one is. Avoid companies that demand full payment before the work starts or that ask for a large cash deposit with no documentation.

Some companies use a draw schedule tied to specific milestones, such as completion of excavation, installation of irrigation, and planting. This protects both you and the company by keeping the cash flow aligned with the work actually done.

When you take the time to ask these questions, you gain confidence that the company you choose is organized, honest, and capable. The process also helps you compare bids fairly because you are evaluating each company against the same set of standards.

Backes Landscaping LLC is a landscaping company in Fort Collins, Colorado serving homeowners in the Taft Canyon area. For anyone in that region, asking these questions will help you determine whether a company understands the local growing conditions, soil types, and water restrictions that affect landscape success. A company that answers clearly and directly is one you can trust with your outdoor space.

Taking the time to ask these questions before signing a contract saves you from headaches later. The right landscaping company will welcome your questions because they know that an informed client is a satisfied client. If a company seems annoyed by your questions or brushes them off, consider that a sign to look elsewhere.

Your yard is an investment, and the company you hire should treat it that way. With the right questions, you can find a landscaping company that delivers the results you want without surprises.