WAY TO GROW

ay to Grow in Orinda Hardscape - What's Underfoot in Your Garden?

Steve & Cathy Lambert



At first glance, "hardscape" might sound like trying to landscape during hard economic times – but really this article is about the "hard" surface areas of a well-designed garden. Hardscape is a term coined to represent anything in the garden that is hard: concrete, rock, stone, brick, pavers, or anything that is not part of the softscape, such as plant materials, dirt and mulch.

This article will focus on the underfoot elements of hardscape design, meaning materials used primarily for walkways, patios and driveways – particularly paving materials. Like plants, the right paving materials can add interest to your garden through your choice of color, texture, and

pattern.

Widely available paving materials fall into two very broad categories: quarried stone and composite materials. Quarried stone, such as slate and flagstone, is dug or excavated then shaped by splitting, cutting, or crushing. Composite materials such as brick, pavers and concrete are mixed materials that are poured, shaped, worked and then fired or allowed to dry. In our area, there are hundreds of materials and processes to choose from. We hope the following information will help make your hardscape choices a little less hard.

Concrete has long been the most common paving material and is often the right choice, especially if your budget is tight.



STEVE LAMBERT

Stamped textures and color additives make this concrete outdoor kitchen area a work of art.

Although concrete is often very utilitarian, and styles and finishes come in and out of fashion, with today's options of stamp textures and color additives, properly installed concrete can be a visual marvel.

There's a huge range of textured mats available to create distinctive looks – from forest floors (complete with fossil impressions) to flagstone patterns. Some of the newest mats we've used include a windswept beach with the occasional shells scattered about, as well as a Mexican tile

Another popular hardscape element for clients with young children has been a circular concrete tricycle path that runs around a lawn or play area, creating a safe raceway space. For our own backyard trike path, we used concrete colored to resemble hardened earth and then we pressed in real leaves and grasses to add texture. Then, just for a fun kid factor, we pressed in dinosaur bone fossils using wooded 3-D puzzle pieces and dino footprints running across the path using a hand made clay three-toed dinosaur foot mold.

For really distinctive designs using concrete, there are now several companies (the Concrete Colorist) that specialize in unique faux finishes, mosaic tile patterns and more.

The cost of poured concrete is inconsistent when compared to other paving materials because so much of the ultimate expense varies with the labor and materials required to build forms and install the reinforcement necessary to make the concrete sound. Some good comparative questions to ask include how thick will the concrete be when poured, how much base rock and steel will be used, what size steel will be used and how far apart will it be placed?

Another question: What type of expansion joints will be used and how far apart will they be placed?

Concrete Pavers were once frowned upon by designers for their inept attempts at simulating brick or stone. But modern pavers have shapes and textures that give a paving project a rugged, old-world look. However, pavers have the added advantage of being more forgiving than concrete.

When comparing bids for paver installation, it is important to ask the following: How much and what type of base will you use? Four to eight inches of base gravel is what we recommend, depending on soil type. What type of edge restraint will you use? Some contractors install rebar and concrete along the edge, (this is the best restraint method) while others mix cement into the base (the second best method), and some use plastic edging (not recommended)

Stone, historically the longest used paving material, has proven itself to be enduring and elegant. It offers an enormous range of colors, shapes and sizes. From irregularly shaped Arizona flagstone for an informal look to precision-cut geometric patterns for a formal patio, there is a stone for every garden. All this comes with a price. Stone can be expensive to purchase and install. Even the most common of stone options installed on top of concrete usually runs around twice the cost of concrete or pavers. The most expensive stone we've installed is an Antiqued Jerusalem Limestone which cost more than \$65 a foot for the material alone. Cost aside, for a truly lavish look, stone is our preferred paving

While comparing masonry bids for stone [SEE GROW page18]

Integrity # Expertise

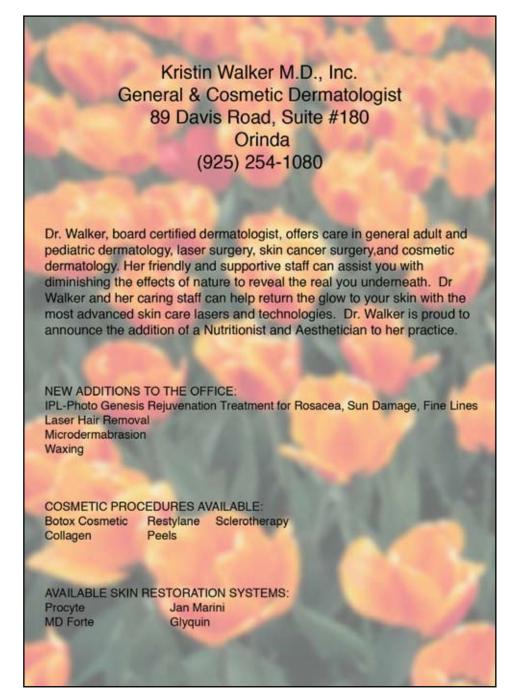
35 year Orinda Resident (925) 253-4611



Laura Abrams, M.B.A. Residential Sales Associate

Orinda Office, Coldwell Banker Real Estate www.lauraabrams.com

COLDWELL BANKER D





CLASSIFIED

◆ SEA RANCH from page 9

Orres (707-884-3335) restaurants offer excellent meals. Less fancy, the Sandpiper (707-875-2278) is in Bodega Bay. The restaurant at Sea Ranch Lodge (800-732-7262) is a great spot for watching the sunset over an elegant seafood dish.

...classified ads

Computer Services

Recent Miramonte Grad providing computer services in Lamorinda area includes: OS upgrades, software/hardware install, networking trouble shooting, consulting. Will find best electronics deal 925-899-8879 or Brett@orindatech.com

Macintosh technical services for busy professionals. Apple certified with OSX. Specialist in desktop publishing, database & Internet solutions. Get the help you need today. Call 254-5467.

Help Wanted

Need part-time typist. 2 days/week at home office in Orinda 253-1997.

Instruction

Art Classes at Lafayette Studio marcy@marcywheeler.com

Adventure Boot Camp for Women. Get results and have fun! Lose the gym and your old routine. Outdoor exercise class. 1 hr/day, 3, 4, or 5 days/week, 4 weeks. Laf. 5:30 a.m., Mga. 9:15 a.m., W.C. 9 a.m.; 925-457-4587; www.contracostabootcamp.com.

DANCE, DANCE Salsa dance classes: Orinda, Walnut Creek, & San Ramon w/ Tomaj. NO PARTNER REQUIRED. FREE class coupon at: WWW.SalsawithTomaj.com. Info. 925-254-3459

Guitar Lessons at Orinda studio. Jazz, Blues, Rock, Folk and Pop taught by patient experienced professional. Serving Lamorinda since 1980. Call Jack Eskridge at 925-254-6317.

Miscellaneous

Low Cost Health insurance, COBRA layoffs, for individuals and group. Also 401K rollovers. Call Madeline @ 925-253-1012 or 510-724-7070.

Pet Care

All Ears Pet Sitting Services – Attentive pet care in your home. AM & PM visits, midday dog walks. Orinda resident. Excellent references. Insured. Beverly: 925-253-8383.

Services

Gutter & Roof Cleaning - Yards & garages cleaned up. Other landscape projets. Trimming &pruning. Orinda resident. Refs. Call Charles 925-254-5533/925-528-9385.

Knife and Garden Tool Sharpening, Collins Sharpening, formerly at the Orinda Farmers Market. Drop off /pick up at our Orinda home.

Terry's Paint Co. L#851058 Res-Com. In/outside Anvthing • 925-788-1663.

Vacation Rentals

HAWAII

Big Island Of Hawaii Lovely Beach House, 3BR/2BA Kohala Coast. 510-527-2009 HaleLea. com.

MT SHASTA

2 BR/2BA just north of Mt. Shasta. Mt view, dogs ok. 377-5433.

TAHOE

North Lake Tahoe - Carnelian Bay 4 BR/4 BA, 3000 sq. ft. Sleeps 12. Rentourtahoehouse.com. 253-9550

Comfortable & nice Westshore cabin 3bed/2bath sleeps 8 or 2 families. Great location, peek-lake views. www.HomeAtTahoma.com 925-253-3115

MEXICO

San Miguel de Ailende Mexico. Historic center www.huertas22.com

Wanted

I Buy 1950's Furniture. Danish modern, Herman Miller, Knoll wanted. 1 item or entire estate! Call Rick at 510-219-9644. Courteous house calls.

◆ READ from page 6

groups in lively discussions are Resistance and Remembering the Bones. Owen Sheer's Resistance is set on the Welsh border in 1944, with the author suggesting an alternate history wherein the D-Day invasion failed and the Nazis have occupied much of Britain. And, in Remembering the Bones, Frances Itani (Deafening) takes us deep into the memories of an 80-year-old Canadian woman who is in a horrendous accident on her way to London where she is to take tea with Queen Elizabeth, with whom she shares a birthday. Both these titles are insightful and provocative

So, although the media pundits may continue to depress us and the midnight oil burns in the Oval Office, we, at home, have grand opportunities for literary escapes that take us to other worlds and other times. Today's authors offer us this and so much more.

◆ GALLERY from page 2

She prefers to work in earth tones including greens, browns, blues, purples, white and sandy colors. See www.gardenvessels.com to view the range of work. She is particularly proud of her Blessing Bowls, which she finds great joy in creating, as each is a unique work of ceramic art in her original organic style. Since all of her work is about people expressing their uniqueness, she hopes that people will enjoy the way nature shines through her work - asymmetrical, robust and delicate, all at the same time.

Call 254-2814 for more information.

◆ GROW from page 10

installation it's important to ask the same questions as we outlined under concrete bid comparisons, but ask these important questions as well. What size grout joints will you use? Too large (over 34") or too small (less than 1/4") both have their share of problems. Ask how large and how small the individual stone sizes will be. Some contractors use small pieces that others would throw out, making the job look cheap and too busy.

Slate gives a landscape a beautiful and unique look, and it's usually an easy material to install. The biggest drawback with

◆ COOKING from page 12

start with the vegetable (or two or three), which ideally should comprise two-thirds of the plate. The remaining one-third of the plate should be divided between lean protein and whole-grain carbohydrate and quality starches (whole grains, rices, and pastas.)

Here are some key suggestions for properly selecting, storing, cooking and finishing vegetables:

Shop seasonally: Vegetables purchased in season taste best, cost less, have more nutritional value and require less energy to transport. Choose organic whenever possible.

Never cook green vegetables for more than 7 minutes to preserve color, texture and flavor. Also, keep in mind carry-over time - the time it takes to call the family to the table!

Blanch green vegetables for less than a minute and transfer to ice-bath to stop cooking and preserve the color – great for snacking and pre-cooking to add to other vegetables.

Never refrigerate tomatoes because chilling reduces flavor and damages texture.

Cut vegetables into uniform pieces to ensure even cooking and aesthetically pleasing results.

When cooking different vegetables in the same dish, add the densest ones that take the longest to cook first, then follow with the others to ensure that they are all cooked to equal doneness.

Cook all vegetables al dente or, "to the tooth," offering a slight resistance when bitten. Al dente cooking preserves texture, bright color, full flavor and nutrition.

Fold chopped greens into soups and stews just prior to serving for added color and value.

Finish vegetables with quality kosher or sea salts to enhance flavor and richness and bring out sweetness that may not be initially apparent.

Utilize a variety of cooking techniques to present vegetables at their best: sauté, grill, stew, steam, or roast. Each method will provide a different result and countless variations.

We all have preferences and dislikes when it comes to vegetables. Many of us don't eat certain vegetables because of past experiences, including how they were prepared and served, not always to our liking. These memories linger and have an impact on our choices as adults. Remember: Vegetables are only as good as prepared. Begin collecting simple, tasty recipes - variety is the key to avoid the common vegetable rut. Give it a try and let me know what you think!

For the tasty recipe for Wilted Greens with Roasted Shiitake Mushrooms and Walnuts pictured on page 12, go to page 21. You may contact Chef Charles by email at charlie@epicureanexchange.com or visit www.epicureanexchange.com.

slate is that because it's a sedimentary material, it chips easily, especially along the edges. Because it's so breakable, slate must be installed over concrete. Whenever we install slate, we insist that a border of concrete or other stone be used to help protect its fragile edges.

Brick is another hardscape material that has been used for centuries. Brick is either made from fired clay or concrete and is available in many color choices. Brick is versatile in its application and is just at home in a cottage garden as it is in a grand estate. Often considered old-fashioned or traditional, there are some homes and applications that just scream for brick. One way to use brick with a more modern look is to install it in combination with stone or

concrete as a border or ribbon material to help break up large spaces.

Gravel is a good option for small budgets and small spaces such as walkways, undersized patios, outdoor breakfast nooks, etc. It's easy to install but not as permanent because it requires refilling after it breaks down or is kicked or blown out of its original location. Another downside is the level of care gravel requires. Weeds will poke through and require regular maintenance to keep your gravel space looking clean.

Before deciding on your hardscape material, consider the pros and cons of the products we've discussed. For any specific questions on hardscape materials or installation methods please email us at steve@ gardenlightslandscape.com.

2009 **Publication Schedule**

<u>Deadline</u> <u>Issue</u> March February 5 March 5 April

Orinda News classified ads

Your ad in The Orinda News reaches 9,000 households and businesses in Orinda!

(line (\$10 minimum

Ad rates are \$5 per

Categories

 For Sale Cars **Musical Instruments**

Sports Equipment Miscellaneous

- Help Wanted
- Household Services Caregivers **Domestics House-Sitting**
 - Music Lessons **Tutors** Miscellaneous

Instruction

- Pets
- Pet Care
- Rentals
- Services
- Vacation Rentals/ Home Exchanges
- Wanted

			The	re a	re 3	32 s	pac	es p	er i	line	. C	oun	t ea	ıch	lette	er, p	oun	ctua	atio	n n	arl	k, ai	nd s	spa	ce b	etw	een	ı wo	ords	;.
Nan	Name														Category															
Address												Number of Lines																		
City	Wı	rite	you	r ad	l in	the	bo																							
																														Г
																														Г

Enclose your check payable to The Orinda Association and mail to Orinda News, P.O. Box 97, Orinda, CA 94563. We reserve the right to reject any ad. Classified ads must be prepaid. Your cancelled check is your receipt.