

Hardscapes vs Softscapes

In the context of landscape management, hardscape and softscape essentially refer to the heavy or light landscape materials used respectively. While the stone, flagstone and rock are referred to as hardscape, trees, soil, flowerbeds, vegetable gardens, grass and shrubs comprise the softscape. A great combination of hardscape design and softscape decision guarantees a landscaping masterpiece. The difference between hardscaping and softscaping is the same as that between walls and wallpaper.

While hardscape is all about brick and mortar, it is softscaping that infuses poetry in the landscaping project. Hardscape takes care of the spaces, proportion, patios, driveways, arbors and gates.

Softscape recognizes plants, flowers, color scheme and pattern of plantation.

Hardscape includes all those installations that prevent the absorption of water, even from natural rains or artificial sprinklers. However, in some cases, a trivial bit of water absorption is possible. This typically includes the use of gravel and bricks that are slightly permeable. Hardscaping is employed in the early stages of landscaping to render the area a desired shape and add-on features. For instance, walls are erected to demarcate the property boundary and shape, swimming pools and fountains are installed for recreation or ornamental beautification, and can be termed as hardscape. Hardscaping protects the soil. By the construction of vertical walls, pools, stone benches or paved walkways, the loosening and erosion of soil is considerably curbed.

Softscaping is the living, animated part of a landscape. Due to the advancement in landscaping design programs, softscaping can easily be experimented with before implementing the subtlest of ideas and changes in a landscaping area. Softscaping can be both permanent such as evergreen trees and shrubs as well as temporary, such as seasonal plants which lend their color and character to pathways and driveways. Planning and arrangement of these elements in an aesthetically appealing manner is the cornerstone of effective landscaping..