

**YOU DON'T HAVE TO BE AN EXPERT
TO TELL A GOOD YARD FROM A BAD ONE,
YOU KNOW IT WHEN YOU SEE IT.**

JAMES LANDSCAPING RECENTLY TACKLED ONE VERY BAD YARD.

It had large swaths of bare ground, an extreme slope, mud washing into the swimming pool and too many trees. You'd think more trees is a good thing, especially during our sweltering summers. But, too many trees can also mean too much shade. (Grass tends to grow poorly in the shade.) Combined with too much slope and too little plant life holding it together—erosion was a major problem. Even an untrained eye could see that this yard needed help. Fortunately, James Landscaping didn't write this yard off as a lost cause. They saw through its dysfunction, used their know-how and experience, and turned it into something spectacular. The extreme slope was completely transformed by stacked-stone terraces. Poor drainage was tackled with a dry creek bed that channels water in stormy weather, but also looks great in drought-like conditions. They planted mostly native, drought-tolerant plants that thrive in shade. And, they did all this without removing a single tree or branch. *That took smarts!*

Southern *smarts*capes

James Landscaping, Inc.

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COVER STORY

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COMPLETED
PROJECT



BEFORE & AFTER



BEFORE & AFTER

ABOVE / RIGHT BEFORE & AFTER | PROJECT FROM INTRO ON PAGE 30

PHOTO CREDIT FOR CIRCLE ON OPPOSITE PAGE (L-R) | MARIE WEIL,
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Simply Smarter Landscapes

We humans often over-complicate our environments. Mother Nature prefers to keep things simple—that means healthy soil, conserving water and letting the right plants grow in the right places. James Landscaping has been in tune with Mother Nature since 1989. They have given their clients beautiful, healthy, efficient outdoor spaces that respect the environment and let biological processes do their best work. That's not just smart—it's also the right thing to do. "The perfect environment for plants to thrive is a soil teeming with microbes," says Rhonda James, owner of James Landscaping. "They help obtain food, oxygen and water for the plants as well as protect them from weeds, insect pests and disease." To sustain this vital microbial life, James Landscaping has chosen to use MicroLife Biological and Organic Fertilizers.



ORGANIC vs. CHEMICAL

"Chemical fertilizers have very few minerals and a very high salt content which kills the microbes and causes plant malnourishment. This weakening of the plants and soil leaves the door open for pests, weeds and diseases to move in, forcing additional chemical pesticides to be applied. This only further degrades the ecosystem. It's a vicious circle that spirals down," Rhonda explains. Synthetically fertilized plants also require more water because they tend to become more dehydrated than organically fertilized plants. Don't let heavy rains fool you. Water conservation continues to be a major consideration—even without droughts. The population in our region is exploding, and if trends continue uninterrupted, we will have a catastrophic water shortage by 2050, and the cost of water will rise dramatically. "By improving the soil and building bigger roots, MicroLife will help to reduce water use by as much as 25 percent the first year. This water savings offsets the cost of using organics," Rhonda asserts. In experiments, organically fertilized plants lived almost two weeks longer without watering than synthetically fertilized plants. You'll also spend less on pesticides and herbicides since healthier plants are more pest-resistant and edge out weeds for yard space. Organic fertilizers are more nutrient-dense, so they require fewer applications than synthetic fertilizers. All of these factors represent major cost savings in the long run.

HEALTHY YARD, HEALTHY PEOPLE & PLANET

MicroLife's organic products are safer for the environment and for people. They contain no poultry manure (*an ingredient used in many organic fertilizers*). Poultry manure is mainly sourced from large chicken ranches using hormones, steroids, antibiotics and arsenic-containing feed. This poses a danger to kids and pets who are unknowingly exposed to these substances when playing in their yard. And synthetics have a high salt content that kills the microbes and robs the plants of water. It's better to use no fertilizer at all than to use these products! MicroLife products pose no such danger to your entire household. Research has consistently shown that its slow-release, non-burning properties are better for plants and for the environment (*including less chemical runoff to compromise our rivers, lakes and water supplies*). MicroLife products contain over 70 minerals, trillions of microbes, 11 species of essential Mycorrhizal Fungi, plant accelerators (*humates, kelp, molasses and fish*) and yucca (*a natural wetting agent that opens the soil*). These natural agents result in healthier, more pest-resistant plants. Ultimately, plants thrive (*as all living creatures do*) with better nutrition.

ADDRESSING THREATS NATURALLY

Societally, we try to be more environmentally conscious than generations past. That doesn't mean Mother Nature can't throw us the occasional curveball or two. Our plants and yards can still be threatened by unwanted pests and diseases. James Landscaping educates their clients about emerging threats they've observed on the job to keep them a step ahead. "We still need to be on the lookout for Rose Rosette Disease," warns Rhonda. Infected roses have overly thorny stems, deformed buds and a 'witch's broom' appearance. The virus is transmitted by microscopic mites that are carried by the wind and exacerbated by our longer, hotter summers. Unfortunately, the only effective intervention has been to completely dig out infected rose bushes, roots and all. It's a drastic measure for a drastic epidemic, but Rhonda has seen this diligence pay off. "It does seem to be subsiding as people are removing their diseased roses to keep it from spreading," she says. But as one threat diminishes, another one emerges.

Crape Myrtle Bark Scale (*or CMBS*) is an insect that appears as a white-gray 'crust' or scales on branches. "I am seeing the scales on almost every crape myrtle I see," says Rhonda. The scales are actually insects, a high population of which turns the branches black from sooty mold growing on them. Not only is it unattractive, but CMBS also decreases flowering. In true James Landscaping fashion, their best solution is the more natural kind. Rhonda suggests spraying infected branches with a mixture of neem oil mixed with orange oil. "It seems to be working pretty well and avoids the use of harsh chemicals," she says.

PREPARE FOR PEAK SEASON

Taking preventative and intervening measures for your plants may be unpleasant work, but it's a necessary process as we head into autumn. "Fall is the ideal time to plant trees and shrubs," says Rhonda. "Summers here are harder on plants than typical winters. In the fall, we usually have more rain and milder temperatures for the plants to get established. The roots can continue to grow through the winter and then have the mild temperatures and rains in the spring to establish even further before they have to deal with the scorching heat of summer."

Fall is an exciting time for green-thumbed homeowners, but it's particularly exhilarating for clients of James Landscaping. They'll see their valuable investment in thoughtful, resourceful, livable design finally take root. Bad yards beware: James Landscaping is planting smarter than ever to transform properties throughout North Texas this fall.

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