

Improve Your Landscape Improve Your Quality of Life

AFTER

From luxuriant grass between your toes to vibrant hues of verbena to the fragrance of fresh herbs and the tender hum of pollinators, there's no denying that landscaping appeals to all of our senses. However, through respected research done by Cher Brethour, from the New York Street Tree Consortium, Dr. Virginia Lohr of Washington State University and several others, it has been revealed that the real value of well-designed landscapes is more substantial than aesthetics and aromas. *Society Life* recently sat down with Rhonda James, the President and Founder of James Landscaping Inc., to discuss these benefits beyond the beauty. James Landscaping Inc. has provided quality landscaping with intelligent design for the DFW area since 1989. Rhonda and her team of horticultural experts are dedicated to expanding the beauty of North Texas while working with nature to preserve and protect the natural resources of our area. By transforming outdoor living areas into personal retreats, they have helped to improve the quality of their clients' lives. Here are some of the ways you can put plants to work for you.

(continued on next page)



“Not only do plants improve your quality of life, but it may also improve the quantity of life.”



The Benefits of Creating a Personal Outdoor Retreat



Priscilla's Story

Priscilla French has been working with James Landscaping in design support since 2014. She prepares client proposals and puts finishing touches on the beautiful, yet functional designs James Landscaping Inc. is known for.

But before Priscilla was a member of the team, she was a client. Back then, the French family had a backyard without landscaping—just a large pool and a few scant trees. They wanted more shade for the pool, privacy from the neighboring second story windows and more beauty in their outdoor living area. Priscilla knew just who to call. Rhonda James' children attended school with her children. "I called her because she has an outstanding reputation as a designer and installer," says Priscilla. What Priscilla remembers most from that first meeting is that Rhonda is a great listener (*she had never actually spoken with Rhonda before that initial consultation*). "I never felt that she was there to sell me anything. I felt that she was there to solve the issues that we had," Priscilla recalls. "It was very comfortable and at the end of the meeting, I felt that she really understood exactly what our family needed."

Three years later, the plants that were installed have blossomed into a beautiful landscape that gives them the full privacy and shade that they initially wanted, plus some added bonuses. "I look forward to walking around the beds and exploring what is growing, what birds are visiting. I have actually sat and filmed hummingbirds flying around our Turks Cap—so relaxing!" And not to mention a job she loves. "I like many things about this job, but I especially love working with this group of women in the office." Priscilla continues, "Although we have our own responsibilities, we collaborate and support each other as a team. I look for integrity and authenticity in the people that I surround myself with and I found that here!"

Walk Away From Stress and Prolong Your Life

It's been shown that keeping flowers around your home can greatly reduce stress levels. According to research done by A.L. McFarland for *HorTechnology* journal in 2010, natural aesthetic beauty is soothing and keeping ornamental flowers in your living environment is an excellent way to lower levels of anxiety. Additionally, people who spend more time outdoors have a significantly more positive outlook on life than people who spend a great deal of time indoors. Communing with nature increases people's feelings of vitality and energy, and consequently has a large positive effect on their overall mental health.

In a separate nationwide study of adult women from 2000-2008 published in *Environmental Health Perspectives* in 2016, it was found that not only do plants improve your quality of life, but it may also improve the quantity of life. It was observed that those living in the highest quintile of satellite-measured green vegetation around their home had a lower mortality rate than those living in the lowest quintile of greenness. Increased vegetation planted around the home reduces harmful exposures, increases social engagement and may mitigate the effects of climate change—in addition, evidence of an association between vegetation and lower mortality rates suggests it also might be used to improve health.

Improve Your Family Life

Are your kids constantly quarreling? Is your spouse grumpy from the daily grind? Spend more time with them in the yard. Ornamental plants affect the levels of compassion that people feel for others. A study lead by Cher Brethour in 2007 found that people who spend more time around plants are much more likely to try and help others. Not only is it a creative way to spend time together, but research also shows that people who care for nature are more likely to care for others—reaching out to their peers and forming shared bonds resulting from their common interests.

Consider taking homework time outdoors, too. Plants incorporated into a child's learning environment can enhance focus, concentration and improve their ability to retain information. Specifically, for children with shorter attention spans, adding plants to the area where they do their homework can have a positive effect on the way they learn. Surrounding them with the natural beauty of the garden can help to minimize the distractions that would otherwise occupy their minds.

Lower Your Electric Bill

Think a professionally-designed landscape is out of your budget? Enlisting the experts at James Landscaping Inc. will actually save you money in the long run. Consider this—a well-shaded HVAC unit doesn't have to work as hard as one that bakes all day under the sun. According to the U.S. Department of Energy, you can reduce your air conditioning costs by at least 15% by adding a well-planned landscape. That's because shading homes can reduce attic temperatures by as much as 40 degrees. This is accomplished by using trees and bushes to block the sun from your windows and walls, as well as planting ground covers and shrubs to reduce the heat reflected from the ground to walls and windows.



Increase Your Property Value

Intentionally-designed outdoor living areas and landscapes are essential for increasing the investment you have made on your property. Looking at your home from a resale standpoint—on a cost per square foot basis—adding an outdoor living space has a better return per dollar than any other remodeling project. Landscaping enhancements made at the front of your home improve a property's curb appeal and invites buyers into your home, while outdoor living spaces extend the usable living space. According to research done by *Smart Money* magazine, you could boost the resale value of your home by 15% and could see a return of 150% or more on your initial landscape investment. Research from the Husqvarna Global Garden Report 2012 shows that 63% of respondents were willing to pay more for a home if it was located in an area with good green spaces.

Become A Super Hero

You may have heard some buzz lately about "pollinators" and the decline of their populations as studies have found there to be fewer bees, butterflies and moths in the skies. Research conducted by the most authoritative experts across the globe uncovered that loss of preferred natural foraging habitats and pesticide exposure are the biggest culprits. While some people may rejoice in fewer opportunities for stings—bees and other pollinators are essential to our well-being. Pollinators are necessary to our food supply: about one out of every three bites of food you eat has been enabled by pollinators. Protecting honeybees, butterflies, moths and other pollinators will take action by all of us. One of the best things you can do is to plant a pollinator-friendly garden. Just by installing a mindful, well-managed landscape filled with native plants, you're doing your part to help the environment.

James Landscaping offers landscape renovation, new design and installation. Whether the job is large or small, James Landscaping, Inc. can accommodate you. Designing and constructing the landscape is only part of their scope. They also educate you so your living space is sustainable and scenic for many years to come. Their services include:

- Bed Maintenance
- Shrub Trimming
- Organic Fertilizing
- Low-voltage Lighting
- Irrigation
- Drainage
- Patios and Walkways
- Pots and Seasonal Color
- Arbors
- Retainer Walls
- Ponds and Water Features

JamesLandscaping.com
(817) 329-0528