



**James Landscaping, Inc.  
Turns Unusable Space Into  
a Vibrant Gathering Place**

**Are you Team Trendy or Team Timeless? If you're a homeowner looking to revamp your landscape, you may fall into one of these two camps. The problem with both of these terms is that they're highly subjective. If you're Team Trendy, you may be considering a hot design trend that could show up on the "not" list the very next season. If you're Team Timeless, you run the risk of buying into a design that's outdated right out of the gate. Smart homeowners reject terms like trendy and timeless. Instead, they choose to focus on the fundamentals. They understand that a landscape is a living thing—the plants, the microbes in the soil and the ecosystem that supports it all should be teeming with life. And, as with all living things, a landscape grows and changes over time. These savvy homeowners partner with experts like James Landscaping, Inc. who respect their land, making it as healthy and functional as it is attractive. For one client, James Landscaping turned their problematic features—including a severe slope—into a lush, inviting space to spend time with loved ones and neighbors. And because James Landscaping worked with the client in phases, the property has matured beautifully over the years.**

# Bringing It All Together

PHOTOS | LORRAINE HAAN-STEWART  
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## Slippery Slope

In this month's featured landscape, the homeowners started with a steeply sloped back yard. According to Rhonda James, president and founder of James Landscaping, Inc., the yard not only sloped from the back fence, it also sloped from left to right. This created a number of issues, but topping the list was soil erosion. No amount of soil nourishment could make up for the fact that the soil could wash away with a sudden downpour. The landscape team also identified a second problem. The existing retaining wall was made from railroad ties. Once a common landscaping material, railroad ties were regarded as a way to upcycle reclaimed wood. In fact, they are still available at some home and garden retailers. The problem: railroad ties are known to be toxic. The wood has been treated with creosote, a slurry of chemicals that the EPA has since denounced and is not recommended for garden use. As the wood decomposes, creosote contaminates the soil, posing a danger to plant and animal life. Clearly, it was time to say bye to the ties.

To address both of these issues, James Landscaping replaced the existing retaining wall with a new stone retaining wall. This is not a task to be taken lightly or trusted to the inexperienced. A proper retaining wall must not only look neatly installed, it must be properly constructed to withstand the immense forces of gravity. Fortunately for the homeowners, James Landscaping has years of experience installing retaining walls which have held up solidly over time. Additionally, the yard was re-graded so that water travels across the yard, keeping the soil intact. With the slope addressed, the team could further enhance the appearance and usefulness of the yard with a flagstone patio—complete with a shade arbor.



## Growing In Phases

One benefit of working with a company like James Landscaping is cultivating a lasting relationship with true experts in their field. This allows clients to tackle larger projects in phases, and it gives them the ability to adjust the scope and direction of the work over time, but with the continuity of a team they trust. "It allows them to sit with the results for a while. Sometimes, they discover the things they initially wanted don't necessarily work for the way they live, or their tastes may have changed. They are able to make those changes in stages instead of committing a large investment all at once."

With our featured project, James Landscaping began working with the client in 2010. The first phase made a steep slope actually usable. In the second phase, the team got to work enhancing the property with a dry creek bed that would optimize water flow in the upper yard. They also worked with the existing trees in their yard by installing plant life that would thrive best with that specific environment. "Their trees provided beautiful shade, but it also made it hard for grass to grow," James explained. "We essentially replaced the grass with other plants that provided more texture, variety and visual impact. Today, you won't see any grass in the lower yard, but it's much more appealing."

It's so appealing and welcoming, that their neighbors had started coming over more often to enjoy the revamped space. Not only was it better for entertaining, it had become the kind of place where people wanted to linger a little longer to enjoy the pleasant surroundings. The results were so well-received that their neighbor across the street hired James Landscaping to work on their yard as well. "Our clients are fortunate to have neighbors who are also good friends. They spend so much time together that we were hired to connect their yards with a flagstone path," shared James. Perhaps it's time to rethink the old adage about good fences making good neighbors.

## Landscape Care And Grooming

No landscape, no matter how aesthetically appealing, can thrive unless it's healthy. Dying plants and bare ground are the ultimate eyesores. That's why more and more clients are entrusting James Landscaping, Inc. with ongoing maintenance to ensure that their dream yards stay dreamy year after year. Their services include bed maintenance like trimming, weeding, mulching and adding seasonal color on a monthly, quarterly or once yearly basis, depending on the homeowner's needs. And to keep the landscape healthy, James Landscaping offers organic fertilizer service to make your soil the richest it can be. High-salt synthetic fertilizers deplete essential microbes in soil that plants need. Using organic fertilizer optimizes the soil and is a good way to counteract the effects of extreme weather that our region has faced more often in recent years.

The James Landscaping team of experts stands ready to help their clients achieve their landscaping goals. They are so ready, in fact, that they have welcomed new members to the James Landscaping family to expand their expertise to more clients in more settings with new and exciting challenges. Watch this space as this growing team shares more of their inspired landscape transformations.

**"Looking back at where the yard started and seeing how it looks today, I'm incredibly proud of how our team rose to the challenge," admits Rhonda James, president and founder of James Landscaping, Inc. "If we can improve a property with that kind of slope—then we can tackle any kind of project."**

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*(design team pictured l-r) Jenny Burggraf, Priscilla French, Rhonda James, Shannon Jeffrey Adam and Preston Collins*