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COVER STORY

James Landscaping, Inc.

Hot doesn't even begin to describe the summer of 2022. (Scorching. Stifling. Oppressive. Oven-baked?) And if you suffered spending any length of time outside under the sun, imagine how your plants felt. They were practically broiling. What we'd all give for some tree cover, am I right? Shade trees offer relief for our extreme summers, but there's often a tradeoff. If your property is blessed with an abundance of trees, you're likely cursed with an inability to grow grass. Remember that photosynthesis lesson you learned in grade school science? The plain and simple truth is, lawns need sunlight to thrive, even in sundrenched North Texas. "If you've ever compared your neighbors' lush, green lawns to the bare patches under your trees and wondered 'what am I doing wrong,' trust me, you're not alone. If you're at a loss for how to get grass to grow in those areas, there are things you can do to improve the health and appearance of your shaded yards. There are people who can help," said Rhonda James, owner of James Landscaping.

JAMES LANDSCAPING, INC.

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MADE IN THE SHADE

JAMES LANDSCAPING'S SMART, BEAUTIFUL, BEYOND-THE-LAWN DESIGN TRANSFORMS A CHALLENGING SPACE



THROWING SHADE This month's featured property is owned by a loyal James Landscaping client who understood the pleasures and pains of owning a heavily shaded property. Their tree-filled corner lot offered a respite even during the hottest days, but presented other problems year-round. In addition to its unsightly appearance, the lack of ground cover led to soil erosion which only made the space more unattractive and less usable. "We had been working with these clients for a number of years. For a long time, they held onto hope that they could grow grass in their shaded area. Unfortunately, that was never going to happen and they finally reached out to us to help them reclaim their struggling lawn and let it live up to the potential we always knew it had," said Rhonda. With a corner lot, curb appeal matters tremendously for both passersby and the homeowners alike. James Landscaping had a tall task—reinforcing the best features of the property while dramatically transforming the space to please its owners and their guests any time they set foot (or eyes) on their property.

FROM DRAB TO FAB The first order of business for the James Landscaping team: preserve the lot's best asset. The team worked earnestly to preserve the trees and highlight the natural shade they produced. Next, they added life to the once barren soil. Instead of grass, they planted a variety of ground cover to improve the integrity of the soil and prevent erosion. They also added color and texture with a mix of shade-loving plants like ferns, Japanese maples, redbuds, oakleaf hydrangeas and dogwood. They then installed a walkway of flagstone on decomposed granite that leads to a sitting area featuring a custom stone bench. A raised dry-stack

stone bed provides a soothing buffer from the street corner. To invite further exploration, the team installed a stone path that circles away from the sitting area and meanders to the back, creating better continuity. What was once an eyesore is now a lovely retreat. "All the elements together really bring you into the space. Everything fits seamlessly and naturally. It's hard to even imagine having a lawn in its place," admitted Rhonda.

CULTIVATING TRUST The clients leaned on James Landscaping's expertise to determine the best use of the space and tailor the optimal mix of hardscapes and plant life. That implicit trust, built over years of close collaboration with James Landscaping on other projects, as well as scheduled maintenance service, gave them the confidence to move the project forward. "We showed them our design and they basically said 'let's do it.' It was as simple as that, but that kind of trust only happens when you're in the business of building relationships over years. We already knew what plants they liked. They knew what we were capable of, so they knew they were in good hands," explained Rhonda. The results prove that their trust was well-placed. Since the project was completed, the plants have grown in splendidly. The ground cover looks as thriving, verdant and enviable as any

conventional lawn. And the trees, which proved so problematic before, now have a sense of place, enhanced by the thoughtful design elements surrounding them. The property owners' wish for a low maintenance solution has also been granted. For one, the clients have much less lawn to mow. And, because James Landscaping always aims to be more water efficient in its designs, the landscape overall requires less watering.

SUSTAINED VALUE James Landscaping's work shows its value year after year. Of course, extending the life and quality of this investment requires ongoing care and attention. Homeowners could do this work all on their own, but opting for the James Landscaping bed maintenance service has paid terrific dividends. Highly trained crews take care to trim plants naturally so they can continue to thrive, while other companies trim indiscriminately to conform to box-like hedges, or pull up plants, such as perennials, when they are just emerging. As a part of their maintenance services, the James Landscaping team visits your home's property regularly to ensure that weeds are managed, the sprinklers are functioning properly and your landscape lighting works as it should—all handled by one team instead of three separate companies. To truly maximize your investment, James Landscaping

offers the best organic fertilizer they've identified on the market, MicroLife. Their products don't contain chicken manure which can have a lot of arsenic. Instead, MicroLife packs its products with valuable nutrients that nourish soils and are safe for plants, humans and animals. "The basis of any landscape is healthy soil, and in our experience, nothing is as effective as MicroLife at improving soils and efficiently feeding plants. They're always a key part of delivering successful outcomes for our landscape projects," raved Rhonda. "Many arboreturns and universities use MicroLife products, and we think that's a powerful endorsement."

Whether they're filled with mature trees, expanses of grass or new plants still taking root, all yards need time, care and attention to help them flourish. North Texas is a region prone to extreme weather, which only seems to get more extreme with each passing year. Nothing can fully weather-proof your property against the elements, but proper design, installation and maintenance can give it a fighting chance. With the help of a true partner like James Landscaping, those outdoor spaces can provide beauty and enjoyment for many years to come.

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