Hiring
A
Landscape Company
What You Should Know
Before You Start

Interview Outline, Worksheet
& Suggested Questions

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A
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Before You Start
This document is intended as a companion guide to the *Hiring a Landscape Company – What You Should Know Before You Start* brochure. The purpose of this guide is to provide consumers with a helpful tool for planning and conducting interviews, as well as a selection of suggested interview topics and potential interview questions. *(Use one worksheet per candidate.)*

**INTERVIEW PROCESS OUTLINE**

### Pre-Interview Preparation
- Develop Project Outline
  - Goals and Expectations
  - Type of Project & Assistance Needed
    - Installation
    - Installation and/or Scheduled Maintenance
  - Budget
    - Installation
    - Maintenance
  - List of Local Regulations and Restrictions
- Generate a List of Potential Candidates
- Check with Better Business Bureau
- Check with California Contractors State License Board
- Review Portfolios/Resumes
- Check References

### The Interview
- Schedule Interview
- Review Project Outline
- Review Interview Topics
  - Soil Evaluation
  - Erosion Control
  - Irrigation Systems
  - Plant Selection
  - Maintenance
  - Fertilizer Management
  - Pest Management and Weed Control
- Review/Examine Credentials
  - Contractor's License
  - Liability Insurance
  - Workers' Compensation Insurance
  - Maintenance Gardener Business License
  - Employee Credentials
    - Experience/Education/Certification
Candidate

Goals and Expectations

Type of Project and Assistance Needed
Installation

Maintenance

Budget
Installation Item

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TOTAL $ 

Maintenance Item

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TOTAL $
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS - INSTALLATION

Soil Evaluation

- What type of soil test do you conduct?
- How do you incorporate soil test results into the landscape plan?

NOTES


Erosion Control

- What solutions do you recommend for existing erosion problems?
- Are potential erosion issues examined? If so, how?
- What preventative actions do you recommend to minimize or avoid erosion?

NOTES


Irrigation Systems

- Is the irrigation system divided into watering zones?
- Do you base the irrigation system design on plant needs? If so, how?
- Do you design an irrigation system to apply water uniformly within a watering zone?
- What climate resource information do you consider when planning an irrigation system?
• How is over-watering avoided?
• Do you use organic amendments to increase water-holding capacity of soil? If so, how?
• How will the irrigation system be maintained?
• Is water runoff eliminated? If so, how?

NOTES

Plant Selection

• Are plants that are site appropriate and suitable for the area recommended for your landscape design? If so, what factors do you consider?
• How do you select plants that contribute to the landscape design?
• Do you select plants that are pest-resistant? If so, how?
• Do you select plants that are non-invasive?

NOTES

Budget:
Will your installation activities fit within my installation budget of: $ ____________________ ?
INTERVIEW QUESTIONS - MAINTENANCE

**General Maintenance**

- What type of service program will be necessary to maintain my landscape?
- What type of maintenance will be required on a weekly, monthly, seasonal, and/or annual basis?
- What will be my responsibility, if any, in maintaining the landscape?
- What type of emergency maintenance plan do you make available for situations such as a broken irrigation line?

**NOTES**

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**Fertilizer Management**

- What are your fertilizer application practices including timing, amounts, and location?
- How are your fertilizer practices tied to plant selection?
- Do you consider runoff potential when using nutrient products? If so, how?
- How do you determine if it is appropriate to use organic fertilizers?

**NOTES**

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Pest Management & Weed Control

- Please describe the Integrated Pest Management (IPM) approach you utilize regarding pest management and weed control.
- Do you include a regular scouting or pest monitoring program as part of your IPM approach? If so, how often?
- Do you have a knowledge of local pests and weed problems? If so, what do you consider the top issues?
- How do you utilize biological agents for pest control?
- What type of physical controls do you use for weed suppression?
- Please explain how you minimize the effects of pesticide use on the environment.
- Do all your employees associated with pesticide use have current appropriate licenses? (See box below.)
- How and when do you provide clients with safety information and the potential environmental impact regarding the possible pesticides that may be used?

NOTES


Budget: Will required ongoing maintenance activities fit within my maintenance budget of $______________ per month?

Minimum Required Licensing and Certification

- State Contractors License (Landscape Contractor License C-27)
- For installation/remodeling projects valued at $500+
- Minimum of Qualified Applicator’s Certificate Card for pesticide application regulated by the CA Dept. of Pesticide Regulation
- Maintenance Gardener Business License provided by the CA Dept. of Pesticide Regulation
- Registered with County Dept. of Agriculture