

RockSolidNEWS

Garden and Landscaping Newsletter ISSUE 1 • DEC 08

Seasonal PLANNER

- Winter is a great time to prune many deciduous trees and shrubs to remove dead wood, improve shape, and prune for the health of your plants.
- Mulching over the winter months helps moderate soil temperatures, improves soil structure and helps keep weeds in check for the upcoming spring/summer season.
- Add winter color/interest to your garden to enhance its four-season appeal. Examples include: Trees: Witch hazel (*Hamamelis* sp.), boxleaf azara (*Azara microphylla*), and cornelian cherry (*Cornus mas*), Shrubs: Camellia sasanqua, rosemary, coast silktassel (*Garrya elliptica*), dawn viburnum (*Viburnum bodnatense* 'Dawn'), Oregon grape (*Mahonia* sp.), sweet-box (*Sarcococca* sp.) and winter honeysuckle (*Lonicera fragrantissima*). Perennials: lungwort (*Pulmonaria* sp.), hellebores (*Helleborus* sp.), and winter-blooming cyclamen (*Cyclamen coum* and *hederifolium*).

Welcome to the first issue of Rock Solid News! We're proud to be unveiling this newsletter in conjunction with the introduction of our new website. We welcome you to take a look at both. Our goal is to provide you with information to assist in your gardening projects. Rock Solid News will be featuring regular sections on projects we've recently completed, a seasonal guide of things to do in the garden, design ideas, and information about handling the details of a landscaping project. Rock Solid News will be a quarterly feature. Please feel free to give us feedback at www.info@rocksolidlandscapes.com. Thank you!



FEATURED Garden Project – Kirkland Residence

Our featured project this quarter is a Kirkland residence that was completed in the fall of 2008. The project was designed by Phil Wood Garden Design and installed by Rock Solid Landscapes. This was a comprehensive project built on a lot adjacent to the family's existing home that was purchased to expand the outdoor living space. The family's goal was to provide more play space for their children and pets, add room for growing edibles and to construct an extensive "Summer House" to entertain family and guests.

From the back of the house, a dry-laid Pennsylvania bluestone path guides visitors on a comfortable walk to the Summer House, which has a built-in kitchen area, room for seating numerous guests, and a roof for year-round use. (cont.. pg 2)



FEATURED...

A burbling fountain faced with mortared Tenino ledgestone is a prominent element in this dining area. The front of the Summer House has an open expanse of lawn for guests to mingle and children to play. At the back of the property, raised planting beds provide room for the family to grow vegetables, herbs and fruits. A nearby lily pond provides a private seating area to enjoy the garden. Ornamental plantings surround the perimeter of the property to enclose the space and provide a visual screen from the surrounding neighborhood. The family kicked off their first garden party with a neighborhood fundraiser for the 2008 Presidential election.



Details That Make A Difference



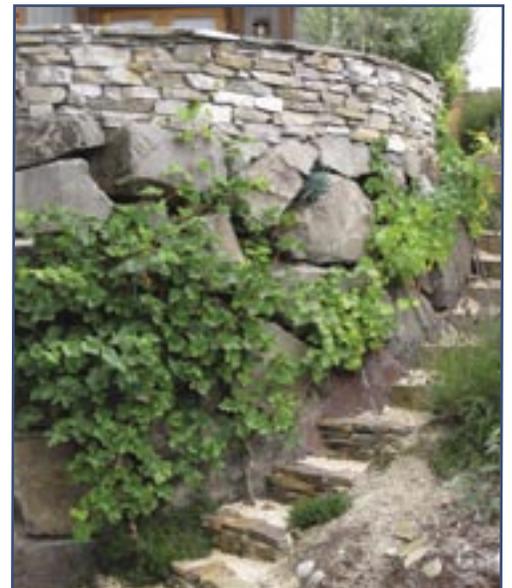
of handling slopes and terraced yards. The top of a wall can be constructed to include a planter or the wall itself can become a stand-alone raised planting bed. Seating benches and nooks for placing art pieces can be seamlessly built into a wall. Low walls constructed at seating height can be used to enclose a patio or dining area. This has the added benefit of providing seating and a comfortable place for guests to gather. These types of walls work exceptionally well in the smaller spaces of the urban environment by their multi-functional design. Our knowledge about the endless possibilities that stone can have in the built environment helps us guide our clients in the creation of projects that reflect their style and spirit.



More Than Just Walls

Rock Solid Landscapes is known for its quality handling of stone in landscaping. Stone's inherent qualities of strength and beauty make it our top selection for pathways, patios, columns and especially in the creation of walls. Walls can be constructed to accent the style of your home or to stand alone as a defining element in your landscape.

Walls can be designed to be more than simply a means



FAQ

When is the right time to plant?

Here in the Seattle area, our temperatures are typically mild enough for year-round planting, though autumn is the optimum time. This is due to the incoming rainy winter season which helps plants put down roots and settle in before spring comes. It also means less work for homeowners during the first season post-planting. Winter conditions are sometimes severe enough to delay planting, such as infrequent ice storm events or when snow stays on the ground for up to a week, but those examples are more the exception than the norm. Keys to successful planting during any time of year: proper soil amending and planting techniques, a regular watering schedule and careful observation for signs of stress (leaves wilting or yellowing, leaves dropping at the wrong time of year, branches dying back or drooping at the tips, and sudden insect infestations).

Garden Notes

- Take photos of your garden a couple of times per year to help you remember where there were bare spots, areas that need additional evergreens for balance or where more varied textures are desired.
- If you're planning on a garden renovation down the road, save pictures of landscape features you like from newspapers, magazines and websites. Don't disregard those pictures that you think are out of your price range or don't "fit" with the style of your home. They are invaluable to the landscape designer you work with, to get an idea of your likes, dislikes and what attracts you.
- Don't be overwhelmed by your garden and how to care for it or how to make improvements to areas that just don't feel right. Think about spending a couple of hours with a landscape designer who can work with you in your garden to help get it back on track and be the garden you are proud to show off.

DESIGN IDEAS

Containers

Containers are a great way to perk up an area of your property that needs a little lift, especially over the darker days of winter here in the Pacific Northwest. They add instant impact to entries, patios and decks, and around seating areas. Containers come in a wide variety of styles, shapes, colors and even textures. They can be chosen to accent any style of home or business setting and are a versatile addition to your property. Well-designed containers can last for years with little care besides watering, a bit of fertilizer and a little tidying here and there.

At Rock Solid Landscapes, we like to use a strong combination of evergreen shrubs, deciduous plants with interesting forms, grasses, colorful perennials, and trailing ground covers to create container combinations that are long-lasting and look exceptional year-round. Even small trees can fit into a container setting for years before needing to be put into the landscape. Annuals can be added to containers as desired, but we find that it often works best to use annuals as accent plants in a container rather than using them as the foundation.



Containers are a fun and elegant way to perk up your property. If you would like to talk with one of our designers about planning containers for your landscape, please call us at (206) 523-7625. 208

Working with RSL

The Design/Build Process

When homeowners hire Rock Solid Landscapes for their design/build project, they are hiring a professional team to help them envision, and then create, "the Big Picture". This process encompasses directed information gathering – our clients' current and future needs, how they wish to use their property, time and budget goals for their project, a comprehensive site analysis, and specific details that will create the foundation of a new landscape.

Rock Solid Landscapes' designers work closely with clients during the design process to formulate ideas, discover issues and come up with creative solutions to each unique situation, and ultimately, create the final landscape design. This process is vital to ensuring that our clients' projects are a true reflection of them.

Once the design is completed, this landscape plan becomes the construction document from which we can accurately determine the costs and then build the new landscape. Houses aren't built without forward thinking and detailed planning; a comprehensive landscape project shouldn't be either. Having a detailed plan on paper is what guides our crews as they construct walls, lay patios and paths, build decks and finally put the proverbial icing on the cake and install all of the plantings that bring the project to completion. The design/build process that we follow ensures that our landscapes are built to the highest quality, meet our clients' needs and goals for their garden, and brings them years of enjoyment.

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good for the garden. good for the Earth

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one last thing Having problems finding the right gift for your spouse, mother, or a friend? Why not give them a gift certificate for Rock Solid Landscapes services? Gift certificates can be used for help cleaning up garden spaces, for consultation time to talk with a designer about garden ideas or personalized garden coaching, or for designing a landscape plan. We would be happy to talk with you about the different ways a gift certificate might be an especially personalized gift for someone you know. Give us a call at **(206) 523-7625**.



Find out more on www.rocksolidlandscapes.com or call and speak to us directly at 206.523.7625

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