

ALLAN BLOCK LANDSCAPES

Newsletter for the Landscape Professionals

Issue 16

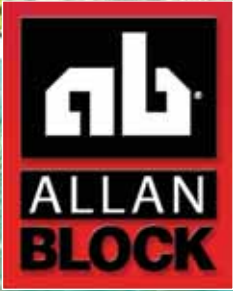


Inside:

- ◆ Renovated Backyard - AB Style
- ◆ Building Tips and Tricks
- ◆ Easy to Use AB Estimating Tool



AB Ashlar Blend patterned walls



Renovate With AB Style

Manufactured by Lafarge

Hard work pays off for this Atlanta, Georgia homeowner whose 1940's home, like so many others across the country was in need of a face lift. The owners had purchased the property with the intent of cleaning up the home inside and out, by adding additional rooms, a swimming pool and an outdoor retreat.

The biggest obstacle this project faced was the replacement of an existing concrete block wall that had been constructed when the house was built. After spending months looking at design options, the contractor, Classic Pools & Spa's, recommended using Allan Block as the perfect solution to replace the failing concrete wall, support the new deck, and add the elegant look of natural

stone to the poolside area. The Allan Block sales representative for Lafarge, worked closely with the homeowners and the contractor and found exactly what they were looking for - the AB Ashlar Collection™. Once the style and color was determined, structure and stability needed to be addressed. The AB sales rep. recommended that an engineer be brought in to address the slope conditions and drainage issues of the site.

Now that the plan and the design were complete, it was time to build. However, before construction could begin, the existing concrete wall needed to be demolished. This wall had been installed using rebar and soil ties to reinforce the structure. The entire demolition took the 5 man crew 2 weeks to complete due to the location and amount of work it took to clear the site.

Once the site was clear it only took two weeks for the



"We are so pleased with the work. Everyone was so helpful in getting our project done. All the hard work everyone put in has really paid off... We Love it!"

- Homeowners

contractor, who had never installed an AB Ashlar pattern before, to complete the work. To their surprise the pattern did not add much time to the installation process simply because of the repeating pattern of the AB Ashlar Blend™.

Once the wall was completed, the pool and deck were added and the homeowners couldn't be happier with the new and improved outdoor living space.

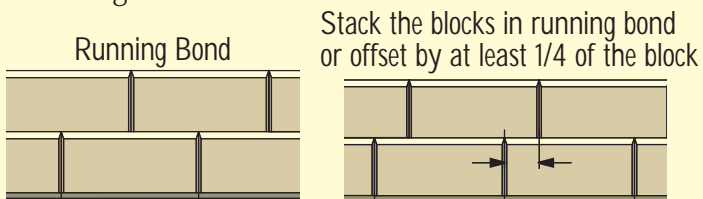


Tips and Tricks For Building

If Allan Block retaining wall products are so easy to install with no special skills required, then why isn't every installation perfect? While very few things in life are truly perfect, the fact is most wall projects are built under less than favorable conditions. While you may not be able to change the conditions of your site, there are a few "tips and tricks" for building with Allan Block that can make your next wall project a little more perfect. Let's take a look at just a few:

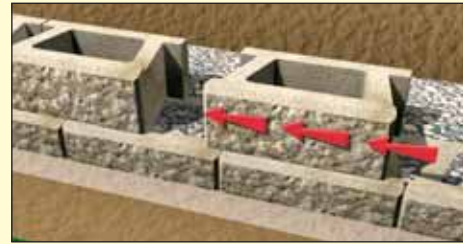
Offsetting Blocks

Keep the blocks interlocking by stacking each course of blocks so that the vertical seams are offset from the blocks below in running bond or by at least 1/4 of the block length.



Working with a Clean Surface

Before stacking up each course of blocks, use a broom to brush off any wall rock or other debris. To remove the raised bits of concrete sometimes left on the blocks during manufacturing, the solution is simple. Place an AB Block on top and slide the block into place across the tops of the lower course. Running a plate compactor on top of the blocks, as recommended, will also help to clean any rough spots.



Ending Walls with Ease

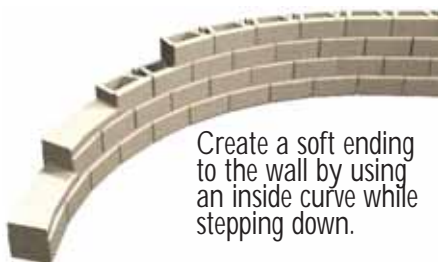
The option you choose for ending your wall should enhance the overall landscape of the project. With Allan Block, you can turn wall ends into the hillside with smooth flowing curves, corners or simple step-downs.



For a gradual step-down, use half-high blocks either the AB Lite Stone or AB Barcelona.



For a graceful, flowing end to the wall, curve the wall to create a plantable area that can soften the look of the wall.



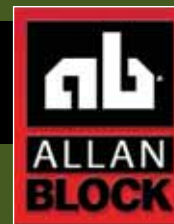
Create a soft ending to the wall by using an inside curve while stepping down.

For additional end of wall options, check out the AB Landscape Walls Guide or visit us on the web at allanblock.com.



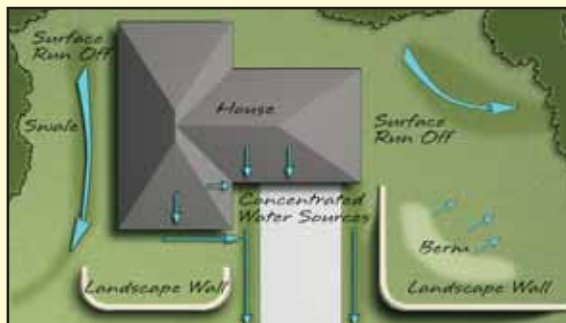
For a dramatic end to the wall, use the AB Corner Block to turn the wall back into the hillside.

with Allan Block™



Water Management During Construction

Where does the water go? Routing water away from the back of the wall is extremely important to the performance of your wall structure. What we often forget to think about is managing water during the construction process. Stage your materials so that surface runoff is not directed improperly. It is also good practice to cover infill soils and the entire project at the end of each day to prevent water saturation if rain is in the forecast.



Site Access

When planning your project, make sure you can access your wall site with construction equipment and materials. For sites with restricted access, plan out where you will stage and store your block, wall rock and other materials.

Proper Wing Removal



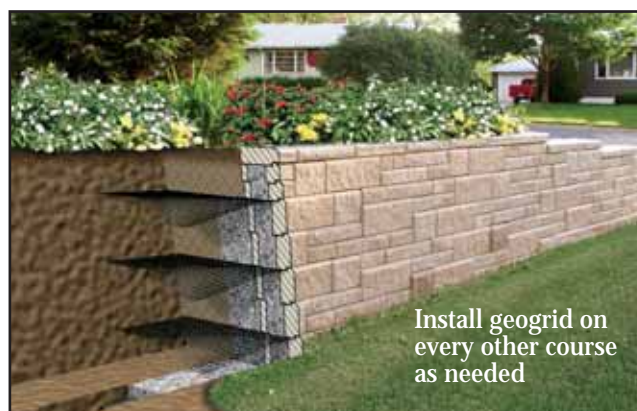
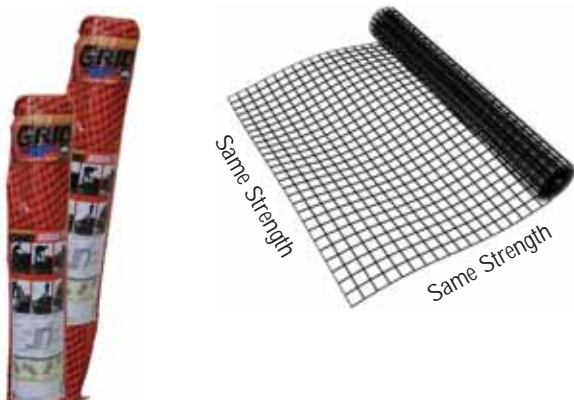
When building outside curves one or both of the wings on the back of the blocks will need to be removed. To do this efficiently, place the block on its face and use a hammer to strike the wing where it meets the rest of the block in a downward motion. This will remove only the wing leaving the rest of the block intact.

Reinforcement Grid - Which is the right roll for you?

Under certain conditions, the block weight and setback alone do not provide enough structural support. Reinforcement grid is the ideal option for adding that much needed support but with so many types which one should you use?

AB Reinforcement Grid™

The small roll, AB Reinforcement Grid is biaxial, which means it has the same strength in both directions and can simply be rolled out along the wall. It is available in widths of 3 ft (1.9m) and 4 ft (1.2m) and is 50 ft (15m) long. This grid's strength and size has been developed specifically for residential walls under 6 ft (1.8m) high.



Large Roll Grid

Large roll geogrids are strongest along the roll or machine direction and have to be cut to the design length. They are best suited for commercial projects and all walls over 6 ft (1.8m) high. Check with your local dealer for type and availability.



AB Estimating Tool - It's a Snap to Use

The Allan Block Estimating Tool makes it quick and easy to determine the amount of materials you will need for your project. Available in two formats, a Microsoft Excel based estimating tool you can download from allanblock.com and a rotating estimating wheel tool you can use for fast, on-the-go, estimates (see your local Allan Block representative for details).

How to Use the AB Estimating Tool

Begin by opening the AB Landscape Estimating Tool in Excel. When prompted, click the button to "Enable Macros." Next, select the block type that you are most interested in by clicking on the name of the block. Once you have selected the block you wish to use, the input screen shown below will be displayed.

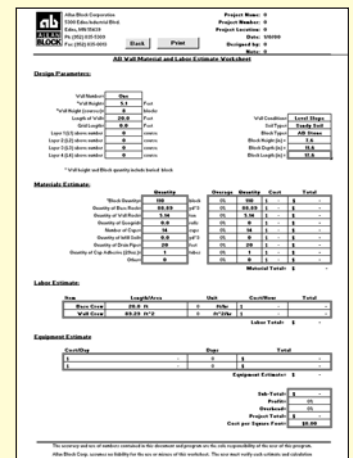


Input Screen

On this page you can type in your project information, soil type, wall condition, wall height, and wall length. You will notice that the page lists four walls. This allows you to design up to four different walls, or four different heights in one wall.

Next, select the type of soil that is on the project site (sand or clay). Select your wall height, by clicking on the drop down menu for "# of courses", type in your wall length and last but certainly not least, select Yes or No, depending on whether you would like AB Capstones included in your estimate.

To start, first type in your project information at the top of the input screen. Then under Wall 1, select your condition from the three different options; level slope, 125 psf surcharge or 3:1 maximum slope



AB Wall Material & Labor Estimate Worksheet

Once you have completed these steps for each wall in your design, click on "View Wall". This will take you to the next screen, which will estimate the amount of block, drainage rock, and all other materials you will need for your landscape wall. If you have entered more than one wall, select "Click Here To Summarize All Walls", this option will summarize each of the walls entered on your Input screen.

Adding Pricing / Block Information

Pricing can be added to the contractor version of the spreadsheet to help with estimating costs. On the main menu, click on the button, "Pricing / Block Information", type in your block information and pricing, then click on the "Return to Main Menu" button. Be sure to save the program so that your numbers will be saved for future estimating.



Price List / Block Information



What's available at allanblock.com:

Product Info

Estimating Tools

Project Ideas

Installation Info

Videos

Training Info

Specifications

Detailed drawings

and much more!



AB Contractor Certification Rewards

The AB Rewards Program recognizes AB Certified Installers for their commitment to building top-quality Allan Block walls. It is easy and the rewards get bigger at each level.

By achieving the first level in the AB Rewards program **you can receive this durable contractor bag for FREE.** Ask your local AB Representative or visit allanblock.com for more details on how to get this great gift for building with Allan Block.



See How Easy it is to Install AB Products

Get all the answers with our new **LANDSCAPE WALLS GUIDE** and **HOW TO INSTALL DVD**. They contain all the information a landscape contractor or a DIY homeowner needs to plan, design and build professional-quality landscape walls up to 6 feet high (1.8 m).



Missed Any Landscape Lifestyles Issues?

Not to worry. You can still get up to speed on all the projects, installation tips and all the other valuable information published in previous issues on-line at allanblock.com.

Be In The Know...

To receive the *Landscape Lifestyles* quarterly newsletter by e-mail, sign up at allanblock.com.

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