

ALLAN BLOCK LANDSCAPES

Newsletter for the Landscape Professional

Issue 33



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- What is AB Reinforcement Grid?



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Complete Landscape - Front to Back



As Walt Disney once said – “If you can dream it, you can do it.” That is exactly what Roger Davis, a 67 year old retired engineer and homeowner did. When Davis bought his Colorado home back in 2006, the existing property did not have a beautiful landscape, but it did have potential. His vision of a beautiful and functional space would require retaining walls, a new driveway, a courtyard patio and walkways.

With the help of the local Allan Block manufacturer, Basalite, Davis was able to choose the perfect colors and the right Allan Block products and paving stones he needed to make his dream become a reality.

Working evenings and weekends, Davis set out to construct his landscaping all by himself. He began with grading the site and excavating the trenches for the retaining walls. Once the actual building of the walls began, his goal was to lay 30 blocks a day to keep the project moving forward.

Using the AB Dover block from the AB Europa Collection, by Allan Block, the terraced retaining walls in the front, with an inviting stairway were constructed first, offering a beautiful entrance to his new home. The raised patio in the backyard was built next also using the AB Dover. After the walls and raised patio were complete, Davis finished off the driveway, walkways and backyard patio area with paving stones. The final phase of construction was the patio enclosure. This was constructed using the AB Courtyard Collection products by Allan Block. Using a combination of posts and wall panels, Davis was able to capture the essence of his dream backyard with courtyard dining and entertaining area, complete with gates and lighting.

While building this entire project took Davis a little while to complete, being able to plan, design and build his dream landscape made the whole project that much sweeter. He dreamt it, built it, and now he gets to sit back and enjoy it. What’s your dream?



Use Knowledge to Install the Allan Block® Products

There are many things that need to go into building a retaining wall before the first shovel of dirt is moved. By using our Residential Retaining Walls Installation Guide - Landscape Walls - you can see the complete details on how to plan, design and build a perfect project. We have spent much time creating our materials to help ensure you have the proper knowledge to complete what you have set out to accomplish.

The following is a quick example on how easy it is to build with the AB retaining wall products after the details of wall height, reinforcement, design, soil, material storage, etc.. have been determined. Visiting our website at allanblock.com is a great resource for any questions you may have as you complete your project.



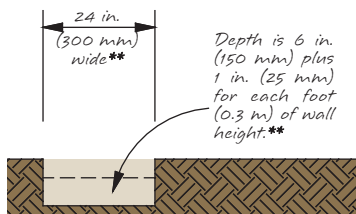
Build a small retaining wall

Step 1 - Base Preparation

- **Mark Layout** - To start your layout, place stakes to represent the location of the front of the wall. Using a string line or paint, mark out the entire length. A garden hose is an excellent tool to use when laying out curved walls.
- **Remove Soil** - Excavate the area by removing all surface vegetation and organic materials from the area. **These cannot be used as backfill material.**

NOTE: If reinforcement is needed excavate behind the wall to accommodate the design length of the geogrid. Refer to your approved plans for exact length.

- **Dig Trench** - Starting at the lowest point, dig a base trench the length of the wall. *Walls where the base trench steps up a slope will need to be installed slightly different. For this information, see page 37 of our Residential Retaining Walls Installation Guide - Landscape Walls - or our website - allanblock.com.*

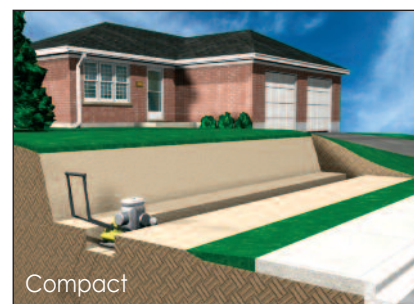


- Dig a base trench 24 in. (600 mm) wide the length of the wall. The depth of the trench will be 6 in. (150 mm) plus an additional 1 in. (25 mm) for each 1 ft. (300 mm) of wall height for the amount of buried block that is needed.**

** For walls under 4 ft. (1.2 m) dig the base trench 18 in. wide (460 mm) and 4 in. deep (100 mm) plus additional to account for the amount of buried block needed.

- **Compact Trench** - Compact the base trench making a minimum of two passes with a walk behind plate compactor.

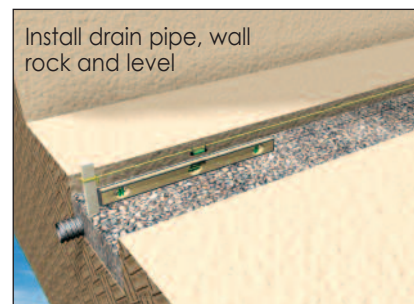
NOTE: Foundation soils at the bottom of the base trench must be firm and solid. If the soils are made up of heavy clay or wet soils, or the areas have been previously excavated, remove this material and replace with a granular material, compacting in 8 in. (200 mm) lifts or less.



Step 2 - Base Material

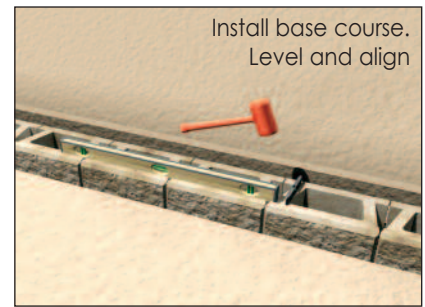
NOTE: A drain pipe is required for any reinforced wall, gravity walls over 4 ft. (1.2 m) tall or sites with poor drainage. Place the drain pipe at the lowest possible point toward the back of the trench and vent to daylight every 50 ft. (15 m). See approved plans for location and specifications. *For this information, see page 18 of our Residential Retaining Walls Installation Guide - Landscape Walls - or our website allanblock.com.*

- **Install Wall Rock** - Place a minimum of 6 in. (150 mm) of wall rock in the base trench and rake smooth.
- **Compact Trench** - Compact the wall rock making a minimum of two passes with a plate compactor.
- **Check for Level** - Check the entire length for level, and adjust as needed.



Step 3 - Install Base Course - AB and AB Europa Collection

- **Install Blocks** - Begin the base course at the lowest wall elevation. Place all blocks with the raised front lip facing up and forward on the base material near the front of the base trench. *For AB Fieldstone, see page 28 of our Residential Retaining Walls Installation Guide - Landscape Walls - or our website allanblock.com.*
- **Check for Level** - Check and adjust each block for level and alignment as it is installed. Check the blocks for level frequently from side-to-side and front-to-back. Irregularities in the base course become larger as the wall stacks up. Careful attention to a straight and level base course will ensure a quality finished wall.



Step 4 - Backfilling and Compaction

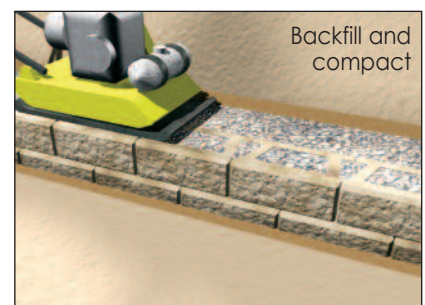
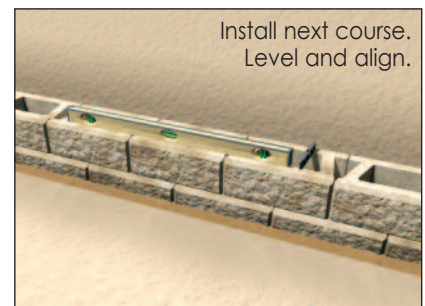
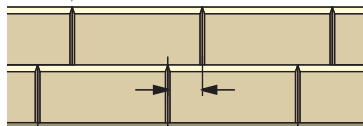
- **Backfill** - Fill in the area in front of the blocks with on-site soils. This will keep the base course blocks from shifting while filling and compacting. Fill the hollow cores of the base course and 12 in. (300 mm) behind the block with wall rock to the height of the block.
- **Backfill Behind Wall Rock** - Use infill or approved on-site soils to backfill behind the wall rock in lifts of no more than 8 in. (200 mm).
- **Compact** - Use a plate compactor to consolidate the wall rock directly behind the block then compact in a path parallel to the wall, working from the back of the block to the back of the excavated area with a minimum of 2 passes. *For information on compaction, see page 20 of our Residential Retaining Walls Installation Guide - Landscape Walls - or our website allanblock.com.*
- **Check for Level** - Check the base course for level and adjust as necessary.



Step 5 - Additional Courses

- **Prepare Installed Course** - Remove all excess material from the top surface of installed blocks. This prepares a clean, smooth surface for placement of the next course.
- **Reinforcement** - *If reinforcement is needed refer to page 23 of our Residential Retaining Walls Installation Guide - Landscape Walls - or our website allanblock.com to continue installation.*
- **Install Next Course** - Stack the next course of blocks so that the vertical seams are offset from the blocks below by at least 1/4 the length of the block.
- **Check for Level** - Check each block for level and alignment and make adjustments as needed.
- **Backfill** - Fill the hollow cores and 12 in. (300 mm) behind the block with wall rock to the height of the block. Use infill or approved on-site soils to backfill behind the wall rock in lifts of no more than 8 in. (200 mm).

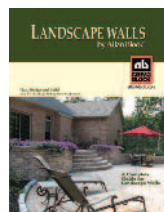
Stack the blocks in running bond or
offset by at least 1/4 of the block



NOTE: - From the 2nd course and above use a plate compactor to compact directly on the blocks as well as the area behind the blocks. Compact in lifts of 8 in. (200 mm) or less.

- Repeating these steps, complete the wall to the desired height. On the last course, fill behind the blocks with organic soils in place of infill or approved on-site soils. This will assist in any plantings above the wall and also to direct water from running behind the blocks. *For information on finishing wall options see page 49 of our Landscape Walls Guide or our website - allanblock.com.*

Look for our Residential Retaining Walls Installation Guide - Landscape Walls for complete installation details available online at allanblock.com or from your local AB Sales Rep.



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AB Reinforcement Grid

Does Your Wall Need Reinforcement?

Determining if your wall needs to be reinforced or not is an important part of the wall design to ensure the project will be built properly and perform to its full capabilities.

Using the chart below, your site information and proposed wall height, you can quickly see what will be needed.

Installing AB Reinforcement Grid is easily incorporated into the build process of your project. Just follow our simple installation guidelines located in our Residential Retaining Walls Installation Guide - Landscape Walls - or on our website at allanblock.com.



AB Reinforcement Grid is biaxial (strong in both directions) and can be simply rolled out along the wall. Other geogrids are uniaxial (strong in only one direction) and must be installed running from the front of the block to the back of the excavated area.

AB Reinforcement Grid is available in 2 sizes: 3 ft and 4 ft rolls that are 50 ft long (0.9 m and 1.2 m by 15 m).

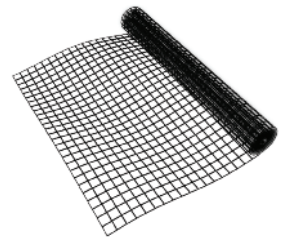


Lock your wall in place with AB Reinforcement Grid from Allan Block.

If your project site does not fit within the conditions show in the Soil Reinforcement Chart below, or your project has any special characteristics or requirements, be sure to consult a qualified local engineer.

Strong Walls Built Right!

Soil Reinforcement Chart for Residential Wall Applications									
CONDITION ABOVE WALL	WALL HEIGHT	AB Stones of the AB Collection only				AB Collection (excl. AB Stones), AB Europa Collection and AB Fieldstone Collection			
		CLAY SOIL		SANDY SOIL		CLAY SOIL		SANDY SOIL	
		No. of Layers	Width (W)	No. of Layers	Width (W)	No. of Layers	Width (W)	No. of Layers	Width (W)
Level	3ft (0.9 m)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	4ft (1.2 m)	2	3 ft	0	0	2	3 ft	0	0
	5ft (1.5 m)	3	3 ft	0	0	3	4 ft	3	3 ft
	6ft (1.8 m)	4	4 ft	4	4 ft	4	4 ft	4	4 ft
Surcharge* 100 psf	2ft (0.6 m)	1	3 ft	0	0	1	3 ft	0	0
	3ft (0.9 m)	2	3 ft	0	0	2	3 ft	0	0
	4ft (1.2 m)	2	3 ft	0	0	2	3 ft	2	3 ft
	5ft (1.5 m)	3	3 ft	3	3 ft	3	3 ft	3	3 ft
Slope 3:1	3ft (0.9 m)	2	3 ft	0	0	2	3 ft	0	0
	4ft (1.2 m)	2	3 ft	0	0	2	3 ft	2	3 ft
	5ft (1.5 m)	3	4 ft	0	0	3	4 ft	3	3 ft
	6ft (1.8 m)	4	4 ft	4	4 ft	4	4 ft	4	4 ft



Example:

Using a block from the AB Collection, a 5 ft high wall (1.5 m) built in sandy soil with a level surface above the wall requires three layers of geogrid, 3 ft wide (0.9 m).

Chart is based on Clay soil having an internal friction angle of 27° and a Sandy soil having an internal friction angle of 32°. Soil reinforcement increases the strength of the wall by creating a reinforced mass of soil behind the blocks. The weight of the reinforced soil mass combines with the blocks for a heavier, stronger wall. Chart is for estimating geogrid quantities only.

Do You Want to Build Something?

But Don't Know Where To Start?

So you are ready to become part of the Do-It-Yourself nation, but are not quite ready to tackle a large project? Then start small - Allan Block has a wide variety of projects that can be built in a weekend, everything from small borders or edging, tree rings, up to raised planters.

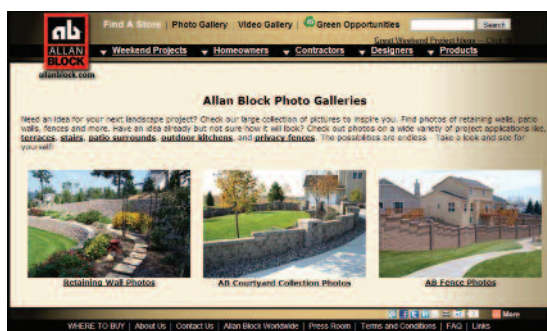
By using our AB Courtyard products even more options are available for easy weekend projects. In a few hours you can build a light post, outdoor garden bench, an above ground pond or a firepit. Ready for something more advanced? Then try a BBQ surround or a custom outdoor kitchen.

The possibilities are endless using our retaining wall or courtyard products.

Check out all of our great weekend project ideas at allanblock.com.



Allanblock.com - Everything You Need All In One Place



Allanblock.com has everything you need to plan, design and build your project - including complete installation details, installation videos, estimating tools, featured project profiles, product information and much more.



Visit our photo gallery at allanblock.com to see a vast resource of different projects and ideas for all Allan Block products. When designing your project, make sure to use allanblock.com as your #1 resource!

Did you Know?

Allan Block has gone social - Check us out on **Facebook**, follow us on **Twitter**, watch us on **You Tube** and read our blog at allanblockblog.com for the latest information.



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Sign up at allanblock.com to receive the *Allan Block Landscapes* newsletter by e-mail.

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