

ALLAN BLOCK LANDSCAPES

Newsletter for the Landscape Professional

Issue 36



allanblock.com

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Outdoor Entertaining - Enjoying Friends

The Smith's had a problem – lots of outdoor real estate, but nowhere to really spend their time relaxing or entertaining. They had dreamed for years about adding an outdoor living room with all the bells and whistles. They wanted hardscape features that fit their lifestyle, while adding beauty and function to their backyard space. Deciding to finally “pull the trigger” and get the outdoor space they dreamed of, the Smith's contacted Allan Block Certified Contractor - Spectrum Landscape Services of Greenfield, IN to help them with their design.



With a space about 1,100 ft² (100 m²) in size, the Smith's wanted an area big enough to have large gatherings, an outdoor kitchen area for the grill, a bar for entertaining, and a fire pit to enjoy on cool nights. After meeting with the contractor, a design and plan was created to make their outdoor living space a reality.

The project was not without some challenges. The land behind the house while large, had a slope that needed to be addressed in order for a patio of this size to be realized. The contractors laid out a plan to build a retaining wall using the AB Europa Collection on the low side of the property to cre-

ate a beautiful and level patio area. Stairs were incorporated allowing access to the lower areas of the yard while planting areas above the wall were added to soften the landscape.



The AB Old Country Courtyard Collection was added along the edge of the patio to add built-in seating around the fire pit and open patio areas. A rooftop structure was added to the grill and bar area to add shade from the sun and cover from the elements, creating a more intimate and cozy feel to this outdoor space. Lights were added through the retaining walls and seating walls to further create a warm and inviting area for entertaining at night.



Now that the work is done, the Smith's couldn't be happier and they can entertain, relax and enjoy their outdoor space in style.

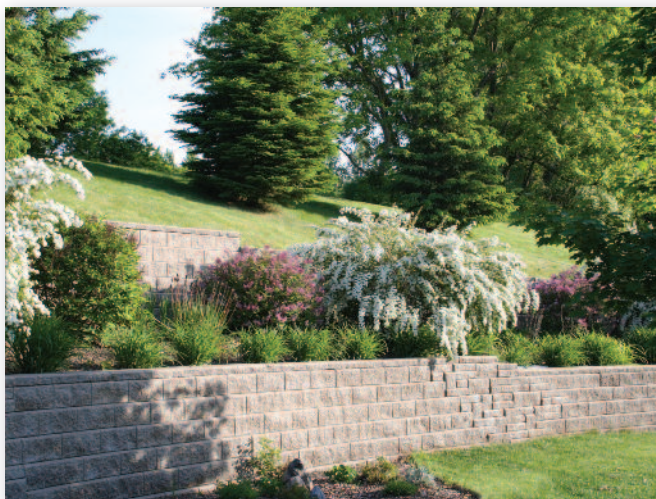
Working with Hardscapes in the Yard

What exactly is a hardscape and why do we need or want them?

Hardscapes are solid elements or non-living features of your landscape. They can be formal or informal depending on the style of your surrounding landscape and when planned out carefully, they improve the overall outdoor space. Hardscapes can add depth and texture to your yard. Some are for artistic purposes and some are more practical in nature.

When choosing hardscape features, consider their overall purpose in addition to your current style or theme. Different areas of your landscape may require a variety of elements based on their purpose. Use them as accents or backdrops, like a garden bench or a pond. Or use them as a main focal point, like an outdoor kitchen or entertainment area.

Incorporating hardscapes into your landscape can be easy and fun, if the proper planning and design for your space is considered. Here are a few tips to think about when adding hardscapes to your yard:



✓ **Think About the Landscape** - Even though you may only be starting with a small area, be sure to take the time to think about the overall picture. Indoors you wouldn't just paint a wall without taking into consideration the furniture or linens that go along with it.

✓ **Don't Ignore the Water** - More hardscapes have encountered disaster by people ignoring the drainage plans for a project than all other errors combined. Planning the placement of your structures and how water will flow on and around them can save you a lot of time, money and frustrations in the long run.

Waterfalls or bubbling ponds can add wonderful visuals and sound effects to your outdoor space. There are traditional pond options or pond-less options for water features. Consider both when planning your space but also consider the periodic maintenance. Make cleaning options and pump accesses easy to work with.

✓ **Preserve the Plants** - In the warmer, drier climates a concrete or stone garden may be the style of choice out of necessity rather than design, but overall it would not be the ideal trend to follow. Having an even balance to hardscapes and landscapes can create the best of both worlds. Create a beautiful backyard with hardscapes framed by flowers and shrubs to soften the area, while a small patch of lawn can provide a safer surface for children to play on as well as keep the area cooler on those hot sunny summer days.



- ✓ **Choose the Right Materials** - Think of a two or three word phrase that describes your vision and style and stick with it. Texture is very important as well when choosing your materials. If you have too many, your space can become too busy or look messy. Keep your materials limited to a few coordinating styles to add continuity to your landscape.



- ✓ **Don't Be Afraid to Call an Expert** - Hire a designer or a contractor who knows and understands your style. Check portfolios and get recommendations before embarking on a project with a hired professional. Contact your local Allan Block representative for a list of AB Certified Contractors in your area. Buying using the Where to Buy on allanblock.com you can find a trained expert to help you.

Hardscapes are a vital part of a functional and beautiful landscape. With careful planning and consideration you can have the backyard you have been dreaming of.

**For more information
see our website -
allanblock.com**



**Have a question? Ask an expert.
Check out our blog -
allanblockblog.com**

Why Allan Block®? Check Us Out!

Allan Block Has It All!

While there are many different products on the market today that can provide attractive solutions, you may be asking yourself; why choose Allan Block? At Allan Block we like to say that AB stands for "Always Better". What that means is our team is always striving to be the best.



Better Products

The built-in features of Allan Block products make them the most reliable and efficient products available. Every Allan Block Product has three main features in common:

1. Hollow Cores

- Provides superior drainage, easier handling and faster installation.
- When filled with wall rock, they create a block-to-block interlock that ties them together for a strong connection.



2. Mortarless Construction

- Provides flexible, superior performance over more rigid construction techniques.
- No concrete footings, mortar or grout are needed saving time, money and creating better resistance to freeze-thaw cycles.

3. Built-in Engineering

- Built-in interlock - each block locks firmly in place by the patented lip and notch configuration. No pins, no mortar, no fancy connectors needed.

Better Solutions

Allan Block provides attractive solutions for any landscape. With hundreds of millions of square feet (or meters) in the ground, we deliver the quality and performance your project needs. Our blocks have been used to build a wide variety of projects all around the world. Our styles and colors are guaranteed to blend into your natural surroundings.

Better Service

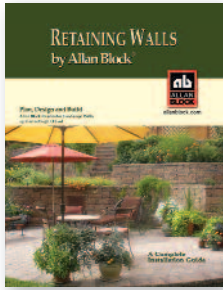
Allan Block values the training we provide our people, enabling them to give the best possible service to our customers. Whether you are working with a dedicated AB Dealer, an AB Certified Contractor, a local experienced engineer or one of the many trained Allan Block Representatives in your area, you can be confident in their knowledge and experience.



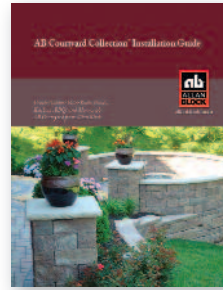
Do You Have a Tablet or Smart Phone?

Allan Block has materials for your tablet or smart phone as well!

Ebooks are interactive publications in digital form, consisting of text, images, or both, and are readable on computers or other electronic devices. The Allan Block installation manuals are available for download from iTunes, Barnes and Nobel, Amazon to name a few. Check them out today!



- **AB Residential Retaining Walls Guide**



- **AB Courtyard Installation Guide**



Download today and easily flip through the interactive screens to watch videos, see detailed instructions, graphics, photos and more.

Allan Block has an Estimating App!

This user-friendly app is a fully featured estimating tool with a 5 step process of estimating a retaining wall project. With the entered information the app will email a complete detailed package that includes easy to read wall drawings, a listing of local suppliers ready to assist you and a complete material list for all of the available Allan Block Collections – so you can see the difference and make a choice.



Residential Retaining Wall Estimator

Get it here now!



Available for Apple and Android.



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