



LANDSCAPE LIFESTYLES

Tips & Tools For Landscape Professionals

Issue 9



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Backyard Makeovers Fuel Contractor's Growth



B & D Landscaping jumped on an emerging trend two years ago and is now building their business around it. In 2003 they were contacted by a homeowner who wanted to create more usable space in his



backyard. The homeowner wanted a place where he could relax and entertain family and friends. In addition, he wanted natural looking landscape walls that would compliment his home's exterior and increase his property value. He had researched a variety of landscape products and did not like the commercial wall block he had seen in the area but was interested in the Allan Block Ashlar Collection using a patterned wall design.

B & D Landscaping was an experienced landscape contracting company, but had never installed an AB Ashlar Blend patterned wall, stat-

ing "Allan Block definitely has the best quality block and it is the easiest to work with. Although this was our first AB Ashlar Collection wall project, I was confident the job would go well."

As they moved through the design phase, the project expanded to include walls on the side of the house and along the driveway. B & D helped the homeowners

coordinate all the design elements including stairs, planters and a raised patio.

The terraced walls and raised patio in the backyard were installed in the first phase, followed by the large wall behind the house that wrapped around the walkout basement door. The final phase included the wall along the driveway which incorporated a planter and a set of stairs. Total time on the project was about 3 1/2 months. B & D comments on the installation process, stating "when bidding this project, we initially estimated about

20% more time since it was a new product for us. We quickly learned a few tips and increased our installation rate. The project turned out great. The homeowners are really happy with their new backyard and their referrals have brought us all kinds of new business. We are currently working on another AB Ashlar wall project that is over 5,000 sq. ft. (456 m²)."

"This project has brought us new business"



Landscape contractors that know how to create backyard living areas are in high demand. Building a business on this growing trend and building walls with the beautiful AB Ashlar Collection, has helped take B & D Landscaping to the next level.

Backyard Makeover Tips

Outdoor kitchens, fireplaces and water gardens have become much more popular, making backyards the new "outdoor living area." Today, the traditional patio no longer makes the grade. Homeowners want an outdoor space that is an oasis for relaxing with family and friends.

With a nation going crazy over "extreme makeovers", it is no surprise that this popular trend has now made it to the backyard. The versatile family of Allan Block products lets you create backyard makeovers that are stunningly beautiful. Turn an unusable slope into a colorful garden, transform a lifeless patio into a charming courtyard or create an outdoor kitchen with a built-in BBQ grill. It is all possible with Allan Block.



Creating outdoor spaces that your residential customers will love takes a few simple steps. See the *AB Landscape Design Guide* for a complete description of how you can plan, design and build beautiful backyard landscapes.

Plan

- Work with the homeowner to define how the space will be used.
- Create a detailed plan so you can develop an accurate project estimate.
- Inspect the on-site soils to ensure they are suitable for construction.
- Consider water management.
- Verify lot lines and utility locations, and obtain necessary permits.

Design

- Create privacy in the backyard by designing "rooms" using raised planters and seating walls as borders.
- Add visual interest by using a range of colors and textures. Match the block to the texture and color of the home and surrounding landscape.
- Combine the Allan Block Collections to create landscape walls, free standing vertical walls, columns, stairs and seating walls.

Build

- Pay special attention to installing a level base course.
- Backfill and compact properly after each course of blocks is installed.
- Install geogrid reinforcement as needed, based on site and soil conditions. See the Allan Block *Landscape Design Guide* for details.

Backyard landscape improvements not only create more living space, they are also a good financial investment.



Hide equipment with a free-standing Courtyard Collection wall

Installation Tips for Ashlar Blend a

The Plan-Design-Build process for installing patterned walls was included in a previous issue of this newsletter. Now we will cover some commonly asked questions regarding installation.



General Tips

- For random pattern and pre-set pattern walls, use the AB Ashlar Collection to build Ashlar Blend walls and the AB Europa Collection to build Abbey Blend Walls.
- Build pattern walls with a 2 course pattern, repeated every two courses. A single course is approximately 8 in. (200 mm) tall, the height of one full-size block.
- Offset each new pattern from the pattern below to maintain the "random" appearance.
- Plan on taking 10-20% more time to build patterned walls, particularly when building one for the first time.

1. How can I easily estimate block quantities?

1. Visit allanblock.com and download the estimating tool.
2. Use the example below to estimate the blocks you'll need.
3. See your local AB rep. or dealer for an AB estimating wheel.

2. Do I start the pattern on the first course?

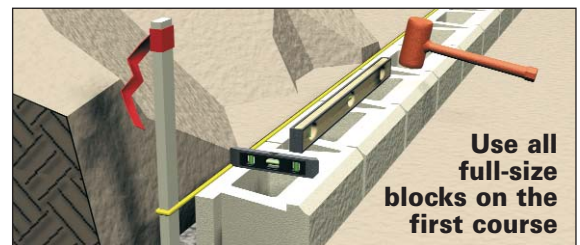
No. Lay the first course with full-sized blocks using the AB Classic (Ashlar Collection) or the Dover (Europa Collection).

3. What is the best pattern for curved walls?

When building curves always use the 2 course pattern. It is the easiest pattern to work with and requires less custom fitting or cutting of blocks.

4. How do I end a patterned wall?

Patterned walls may be ended with step-ups, step-downs or turn-ins. When ending the wall, discontinue the pattern and use a random selection of blocks on the end.



Calculating Block Quantities - Example: Wall is 4 ft tall x 40 ft long and uses the two course pattern, three times.

- | | |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| A. Divide the wall height by the pattern height. $4 \text{ ft} \div 1.3 \text{ ft} = 3$ ($1.2 \text{ m} \div 0.4 \text{ m} = 3$) | |
| B. Divide the wall length by the pattern length. $40 \text{ ft} \div 10 \text{ ft} = 4$ ($12 \text{ m} \div 0.3 \text{ m} = 4$) | $6 \times 12 = 72$ Dover Blocks |
| C. Multiply the totals together - $3 \times 4 = 12$ | $4 \times 12 = 48$ Palermo Blocks |
| D. Multiply each block quantity for the pattern by 12. | $8 \times 12 = 96$ Barcelona Blocks |
| E. To calculate the base course block required, divide wall length, $40 \text{ ft} (12 \text{ m}) \div \text{Dover length, } 1.5 \text{ ft} (0.45 \text{ m}) = 27$ Dover Blocks | $8 \times 12 = 96$ Bordeaux Blocks |

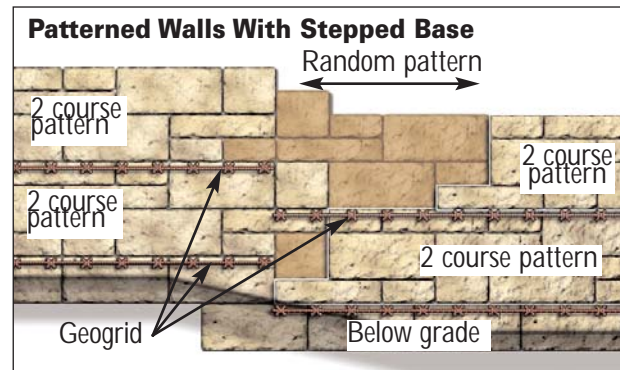
<p>Two Course Pattern</p> <p>1.3 ft (400 mm) Approx.</p> <p>10 ft. (3 m) Approx.</p>	<p>Europa Collection Blocks Required</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6 Dover 4 Palermo 8 Barcelona 8 Bordeaux 	<p>Ashlar Collection Blocks Required</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 6 AB Classic 4 AB Jumbo Junior 8 AB Lite Stone 8 AB Half Lite*
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* Use the AB Half Lite (an AB Lite Stone cut in half). Check with your local AB representative for availability.

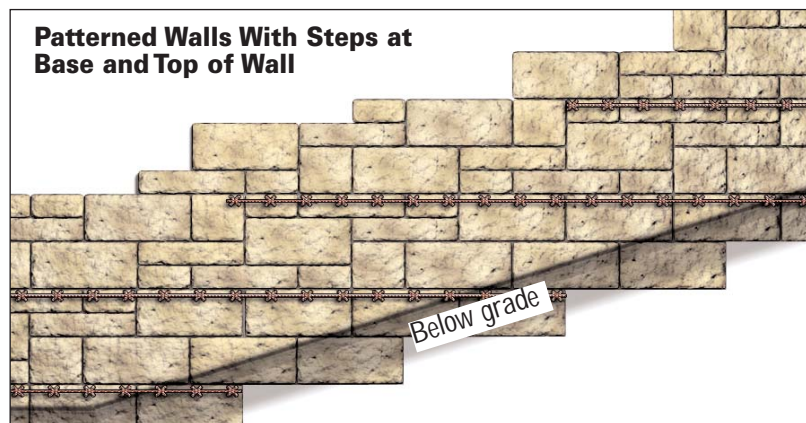
and Abbey Blend Patterned Walls

5. How do I maintain the pattern when my wall steps up or down?

- Using all full-size blocks, start the base course at the lowest elevation.
- As the base course steps up, install additional full-size block for your next base course.
- Transition the pattern with each step by randomly placing different blocks at the transition points. In geogrid reinforced walls, also transition up the geogrid position.



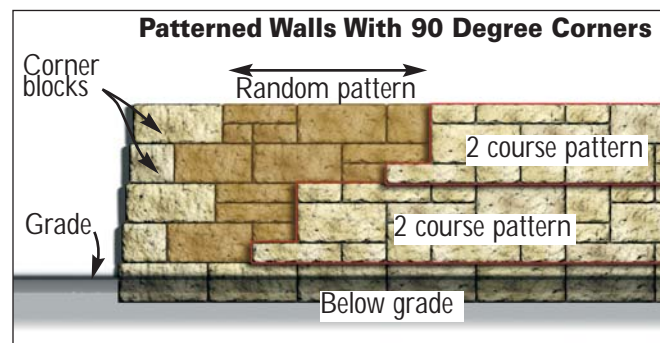
- When your wall steps up or down at the top, randomly place the block at the transition point. If you have a grid wall and you are transitioning up to another 2-course increment, install another layer of grid.
- Keep in mind to follow the two course pattern to ensure continuous horizontal placement of the geogrid.
- When estimating block quantities, order a few extra blocks to allow for building transitions when walls step up or down.



6. How do I install 90 degree corners?

We recommend that whenever possible you build with curved walls rather than 90 degree corners. If you have 90 degree corners available:

- **Outside corners.** Start at the corner and build the wall working out in both directions. Use a random selection of blocks to transition from the corner into the patterned courses. *Check with your local AB representative for availability of corner blocks.*
- **Inside corners** are constructed in the same manner as for non-patterned walls. Remove the top lip of the course where the walls intersect.



For additional information on building patterned walls or previous issues of the Landscape Lifestyles Newsletters visit allanblock.com

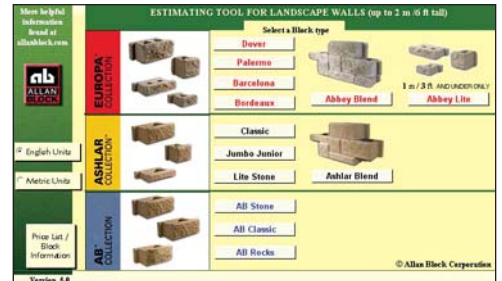




Great Ideas and Resources for Landscape Professionals

Tips and Tools For Estimating AB Projects

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



Helpful Hints - Landscape Walls

- When estimating, remember to include buried block in your total wall height. Bury 1 in. (25 mm) of block for every 1 ft. (3 m) of wall height. Projects with a slope below the wall will require additional buried block.
- Order 2-5% extra materials to allow for step ups, curves and minor project changes that can occur as you build.
- Wall rock quantity should include the material to fill the block cores and the 12 in. (300 mm) behind the block.
 - When building with any of the Allan Block Collections, take the square footage of your wall and multiply by 1.4 to give you the cubic feet of wall rock you will need (sq. m by .42 for cubic meters)
- On Ashlar or Abbey Blend walls that will include curves or corners use a two-course pattern.
- Drain pipe should be included in your AB landscape wall estimates when needed.

Visit allanblock.com for more information to help plan, design and build your next Allan Block project.

Sign up to get the Landscape Design CD and the Landscape Lifestyles Newsletter by e-mail

For professional landscape ideas and inspiration, sign up to receive Allan Block's Landscape Design CD at allanblock.com. Packed with information to help you plan, design and build landscape walls up to 6 feet high (1.8 m), this CD includes product specifications, installation guidelines and a valuable material estimating program.



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

