



Your 2026 Guide to Commercial Landscaping

A by-the-season handbook to keep your program growing strong and healthy year-round



Spring Checklist



Your spring landscaping needs to be planned well before spring weather actually arrives. Work with your commercial landscaping partner to develop a strategy for your properties with a checklist that includes items like these:

- 1. Check trees for freeze damage.** Palms and most fruit trees can withstand a short-term freeze but will need to be inspected. They may appear dead or damaged, but you can typically prune them back to the live growth when they sprout.
- 2. Cut back perennials** like ornamental grasses, geraniums, dianthus and hellebores in late winter to encourage healthy spring growth. Be sure to leave tender perennials like hyssop and garden mums standing—their leaves help protect their roots.
- 3. Prevent weeds** with a pre-emergent application to your turf in early spring before weeds are visible, then follow up with a second application late in the season.
- 4. Refresh your flower beds** by turning over the soil, adding nutrients, removing weeds and fertilizing before you add new spring flowers.
- 5. Choose native and adaptive plants and flower species** zoned for your area to help ensure they're likely to survive and thrive in your local climate.
- 6. Mulch your landscaping** to improve its appearance and give it a better chance to thrive. Mulching enhances soil quality, deters weeds and offers insulation from cold temperatures, while conserving water.
- 7. Complete a core aeration** to remove excess thatch buildup, encourage root system growth and help your grass stay healthier overall.
- 8. Inspect your irrigation system** to confirm it's in good condition. Make repairs, and monitor it for leaks throughout the spring and summer.
- 9. Address winter damage to sidewalks and parking lots**, repairing concrete or asphalt damaged by winter weather (or plows scraping their surfaces).

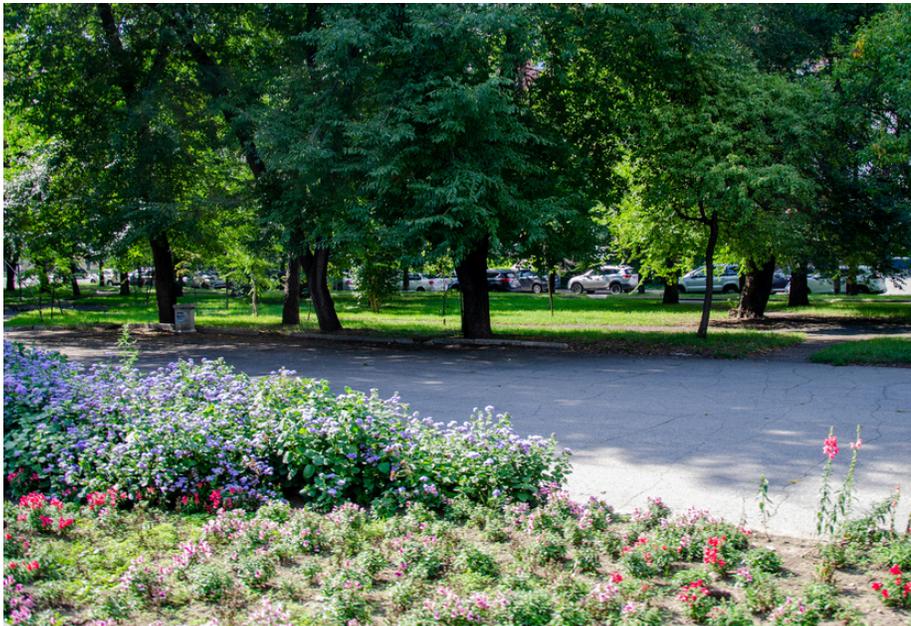




- 10. Inspect retention ponds** as part of your seasonal maintenance to make sure they're flowing properly and can handle stormwater runoff, which reduces the likelihood of flooding.
- 11. Aid in pest control** throughout your properties by cutting down perennial grasses that weren't taken care of in the fall to help keep rodents away.

TIP: ADD A POP OF COLOR

Colorful annuals can enhance the curb appeal of your properties and make them more enticing to customers. Consider adding them to entryways and/or around signage to draw attention. Remember to choose plants and flowers that grow best in your climate and don't require excessive maintenance or irrigation.



Should You Conduct an Irrigation Audit?

Irrigation audits help detect leaks and other issues that can turn into bigger problems (and greater expenses) if they aren't caught early.

Spring is the perfect time for an irrigation audit—before your growing season begins.

Why?

If an audit reveals that work needs to be completed and/or parts must be ordered, you have time to address these issues well before grass and plants start growing, ensuring they'll have proper irrigation in place to help sustain them.

Summer Checklist



Ensure your commercial landscaping is ready before hot weather hits by adding these items to your summer landscaping checklist:

1. **Complete your planting early** to give plants time to adjust and take root before the summer's hottest temps arrive.
2. **Turn mulch over** (if you didn't add new mulch in the spring), to give your landscaping a fresher look without the expense of new mulch.
3. **Fertilize your turf** to protect it from summer stressors like prolonged periods of heat and frequent mowing.
4. **Let your grass grow longer** once the high temps arrive, to help your turf maintain moisture at the roots and lower the likelihood that it will dry out.
5. **Consider soil moisture sensors** to increase watering efficiency. These sensors detect moisture levels in the soil and override irrigation systems when watering isn't needed.

TIP: MAKE SAFETY A PRIORITY

Enhancing your brand and aesthetics via your commercial landscaping is important, but safety should always come first. Ensure that trees, shrubs and other plants don't block entryways, and keep flowerbeds and walkways free of debris and roots to eliminate trip hazards.

Keep Pests Under Control

Insect and rodent infestations can cause problems not only indoors but also within your commercial landscaping, harming your plants and your brand. Safeguard your properties against pest problems all summer by:

- Ensuring your landscaping is well-maintained overall, from regular mowing and irrigation to ongoing leaf and debris removal.
- Proactively addressing potential pest issues and alerting your commercial landscaping partner so they can treat them before a bigger problem arises.
- Conducting regular landscaping inspections to detect potential issues. Watch for signs like wilted plants, damaged leaves or holes in your landscaping.

Taking steps like these helps ensure both the health and visual appeal of your landscaping and makes it more inviting for customers.

Fall/Winter Checklist



Though summer is usually the primary maintenance season for commercial landscaping, don't overlook the importance of preparing your properties for fall. Fall and winter prep helps you safeguard your landscaping from damage due to extreme weather conditions, saving you money in the long run. Here's where to start:

1. **Reseed grass** as needed to help it recover from intense heat and frequent mowing, paying special attention to thin or bare areas to encourage growth.
2. **Fertilize your soil**—before the first seasonal freeze if possible—to help fortify it against harsh winter weather, testing it first to assess its needs.
3. **Keep your grass raked clean** to help prevent potential fungal growth and pest issues while enabling your turf to get the sun it needs before winter sets in.
4. **Prune trees back** to help protect them from wind or snow damage throughout the winter. Wrap recently planted trees to shield them from freezing temperatures.
5. **Prune and plant new perennials and shrubs**, giving them time to take hold before winter weather hits.



Fall/Winter Checklist



- 7. Give your grass a final mow for the season,** cutting it shorter than normal to help prevent issues like matting as well as potential diseases. Take care not to go too short, which can expose the roots to harsh, cold temperatures.
- 8. Keep watering throughout the fall,** even if your region typically gets more precipitation in fall than summer.
- 9. Winterize your irrigation system** before the first fall freeze by blowing out your sprinkler lines with compressed air. This ensures your lines are dry, to prevent freezing and damage when temps drop.
- 10. Keep weeds pulled throughout the fall.** This will help you end up with fewer weeds in the spring.

TIP: DON'T FORGET SIDEWALKS AND DRIVEWAYS

Be sure to include your sidewalks and driveways in your fall landscaping prep. Perform a pressure wash, fill in cracks and seal surfaces to give them extra protection against severe freezing conditions.

When Should You Start Your Landscaping RFP?

Completing your commercial landscaping RFP on time means you can contract with the best landscaping experts in all your service areas before they're booked for the year. Here's what a typical timeline looks like:

September/October	October/November	December/January
Begin preparing your RFP so you have plenty of time to issue, analyze and interview prospective partners.	Provide your landscaping partner with site plans so that they understand the needs of each property. This gives them the time to integrate technology and source and set up services.	Schedule a recap meeting to cover what went well, areas for improvement and recommendations for next year.

Year-Round Maintenance Needs

For regions with warmer temperatures throughout the year, more robust, year-round landscaping steps are often required. For example:

Overseeding: Some markets may require overseeding to keep your turf in shape at certain times of the year. It's typically dependent upon soil temperatures and the germination temperatures of the grass used.

Freeze protection: Flowers and plants may require extra protection if temps dip to freezing in warmer climates.

Spring pruning: The warmer climates of the Southeast and Southwest may require trees to be pruned in late winter to encourage new spring growth and prevent the accidental removal of spring buds that can happen with a later pruning.



TIP: CONSIDER XERISCAPE FOR HIGH-TEMP REGIONS

Though they may be an added expense on the front end, xeriscape options—like rocks, mulch, drought-tolerant native plants and artificial turf—can pay off over time due to being low- to no-maintenance.

Selecting a Landscaping Partner

Commercial landscaping partners can help maintain your commercial property's professional appearance, enhance its value and mitigate risks by protecting both your property and the people who visit it.

Developing a strategically focused RFP is critical to finding the right partner to meet your commercial landscaping needs. To get the best responses, be certain your RFP includes:

- 1. A comprehensive “clean” site list**, with addresses and site maps if available.
- 2. A detailed scope** of requested services, which allows potential commercial landscaping partners to understand your needs and provide comprehensive and thorough responses.
- 3. Your service-level agreements (SLAs)** detailing your expectations of the service and how you'll measure whether they've been met—as well as potential penalties for not doing so.

Even when you're well-prepared, starting a contract with a new partner can be daunting. Here's a checklist to help your decision-making process.

Ask for references. Companies that are confident in the quality of their work know their customers will endorse them.

Request work samples from a prospective partner's portfolio to give you a better feel for their style and determine if it aligns with your vision for your sites.

Review their mission and values statements for a glimpse into what you can expect when you work with them.

Learn about their service model and whether they self-perform, subcontract or use a hybrid model.

Familiarize yourself with their technology to assess platform integration with your systems, evaluate user-friendliness and understand their quality-control (QC) process.

7 QUESTIONS TO ASK POTENTIAL PARTNERS

Just as you're aiming to give vendors a clear picture of your needs, it's important to get a better look at what they're all about as well. Questions like these can help:

1. How experienced is your organization?
2. Can you share samples of the work you've completed for other clients?
3. What's your service delivery model (self-perform, subcontract or hybrid)?
4. Can you walk me through your QC process and what it entails?
5. Can you summarize the scope of my request for me to make sure we're on the same page?
6. Why should I choose you as my landscaping partner versus your competitors?
7. What technology platform do you use to track your work?

Include SHINEscapes in Your RFP Process

Looking for a new commercial landscaping partner? Consider including **SHINEscapes** in your commercial property landscaping RFP process. **SHINEscapes** specializes in commercial landscaping across DFW and Houston, with customized plans to fit your property, goals, and budget.

Contact us today at [866-802-6703](tel:866-802-6703) or visit [complete the form](#) to tell us more about your property and request a quote.

