

# Consider your **Budget**



## Scope Your Project

If your budget is limited, you may want to make small improvements first and then bigger changes in a year or two. Working with a professional designer can help you plan these phases. You may start with weed removal and preliminary planting, then add features such as a dry creek bed or a rain garden. **Plan ahead before you lose the lawn.** Like anything, an ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure. Implementing the basic functionality of a sustainable landscape does not add to your overall installation budget.

When you invest in your landscaping, you are investing in the long-term value of your property. Don't forget to plan an ongoing maintenance budget allocation for keeping the garden healthy over time (*see p. 67*). **Stretch your dollars by taking advantage of rebates and incentives. Remember, always review your local water agency's current project requirements to ensure you qualify for any rebates.**

## Landscape = Planting + Infrastructure

Planting includes ground preparation, contouring, and installation of plants. Infrastructure includes irrigation, lighting, and anything that's built on top of the landscape. Consider that the landscape is raw ground to be prepared, graded, etc. Landscape contractors, plumbers and electricians typically work on a landscape. Many people who do it themselves can remove turf, make grade changes and build soil through sheet mulching. Planting also can be accomplished using the techniques outlined in this book. The more you do yourself, work with what you have, or select low cost materials, the more affordable you will make your landscape changes.

There is no such thing as a typical budget for landscape design and installation. While a good **RULE OF THUMB** is to budget 5% - 10% of your home's current market value in a landscape renovation, every site is different, and the situations encountered on that site will dramatically influence the overall budget for the project. Location, expectations of the neighborhood, and aesthetics must be combined with all of the functional requirements discussed in this book to inform the final budget for your landscape. When you take into consideration special site circumstances such as slopes or tricky drainage, expect to spend more on design and installation.

## Need help getting the job done?

Building a garden is a collaborative experience. If your property has a slope or you live in a landslide or fire-prone zone, you may need to seek the professional advice of a licensed civil engineer, landscape architect, or other professional before grading and capturing rainwater on existing hillsides. Protect your investment by hiring a licensed arborist for your tree care and licensed contractors for installation.

## Invest in Design



The more time you spend researching your options and planning your garden, the better prepared you will be during construction. Measure twice, dig once! Spend the time yourself, or expect to pay 10% - 20% of your budget on professional design assistance.

## Invest in Soil



Soil preparation is the single greatest investment you can make in the long term health and beauty of your garden. Buy your compost in bulk, and expect to spend at least 10% of your budget on building healthy soil (*see pp. 29-30, 39-40*).

## Invest in Rain



Capturing and holding on to rainfall from the roof and adjacent hard surfaces, helps prepare your garden for the long, dry summer and reduces irrigation demand. Expect to spend up to 20% of your budget on labor for grading for rain detention and materials for drainage (*see pp. 41-43*).

## Invest in Stewardship



Plan from the beginning for maintaining the landscape. Select experienced gardeners who are on board with your vision. Expect to see your gardener less frequently for greater periods of time, and expect to pay for sustainable expertise (*see p. 69*).