

Beyond the Shovel: What to Look for in Professional Landscape Installers

When a homeowner in Central Iowa completes the design phase of a new outdoor project, the next critical step is finding a team to build it. This is when the search for qualified **landscape installers near me** begins. But this search phrase can be misleading. It is easy to find someone who can dig a hole or lay a paver, but it is much harder to find a team of true professionals who can execute a complex landscape and hardscape vision with precision, craftsmanship, and long-term durability in mind.

Installation is where the vision becomes a physical reality. It is also the phase where cut corners and inexperience can turn a dream project into a costly long-term problem. A patio that sinks, a retaining wall that leans, or a drainage system that fails are all symptoms of a poor installation.

For a company like Larkin Landscape & Design, "installation" is not just the final step; it is the most critical part of the entire design-to-build process. So, what separates a basic installer from a team of professional-grade craftsmen? Here is what homeowners in the Des Moines and Ankeny areas should look for.

Expertise in Both Hardscape and Softscape Installation

A complete landscape project rarely involves just one element. It is a synthesis of "hard" structural components and "soft" living components. Many companies specialize in only one or the other. You may find a "patio installer" or a "planting service." The best professional installers, however, are masters of both.

- **Hardscape Installation:** This is the technical backbone of your project. It includes paver patios, walkways, retaining walls, firepits, and outdoor kitchens. Proper hardscape installation is a science. It requires precise excavation, correct base compaction to prevent sinking, proper drainage management, and meticulous placement and cutting of materials. This is especially true in Central Iowa, where our freeze-thaw cycles can destroy poorly installed hardscapes.

- **Softscape Installation:** This is the living, breathing part of your landscape. It includes the installation of landscape beds, the planting of trees, shrubs, and perennials, as well as installing sod, mulch, and rock. A professional installer does more than just plant; they understand soil composition, proper planting depths, and the

long-term needs of each plant to ensure your landscape thrives for years to come.

Choosing a team like Larkin Landscape, which provides expert installation for both, ensures a cohesive project. The team that builds your patio understands how it must integrate with the new landscape beds and outdoor lighting, creating a seamless and unified space.

A Proven Process You Can Trust

The highest-quality installations do not happen by accident. They are the result of a meticulous, proven process. A professional installation team does not just "wing it." They work from a detailed, approved plan.

This is a key failure point for many homeowners. They hire an installer who promises to build a project based on a "handshake" or a "rough sketch." This often leads to miscommunication, budget overruns, and a final product that does not match the original vision.

At Larkin Landscape, the installation is the final, careful execution of the custom 2D design created and approved by the homeowner. Our "See It Before We Build It" philosophy means our installation crew has an exact blueprint. They know the precise dimensions, materials, and layout before they ever break ground. This design-build process eliminates surprises and guarantees that the final product is exactly what you paid for, built to specifications that ensure its longevity.

Local Knowledge and a Commitment to Quality

A landscape installer from a different climate zone will not understand the unique challenges of Central Iowa. Our soil, our weather, and our seasons demand specific installation techniques.

A local, professional installer knows this. They know which materials can withstand our winters. They understand the importance of a deep, compacted base for hardscaping. They know which trees and shrubs will thrive and which will struggle.

This commitment to quality should also be backed by a guarantee. A company that is confident in its materials and its installation craftsmanship will stand behind its work. A simple "one-year" warranty on a project that should last decades is a red flag. As a testament to our installation quality, Larkin Landscape, for example, backs all hardscaping work with a 10-year warranty.

Your search for an installer is a search for a partner in your investment. You need a team that respects your vision and has the technical-proven expertise to build it right, the first time.

