



The Outdoors

Improve your outdoor space with specialized products and services that create not only beautiful but sustainable landscapes.

by Sarah Maloney, photos by Steven Hertzog and provided by businesses

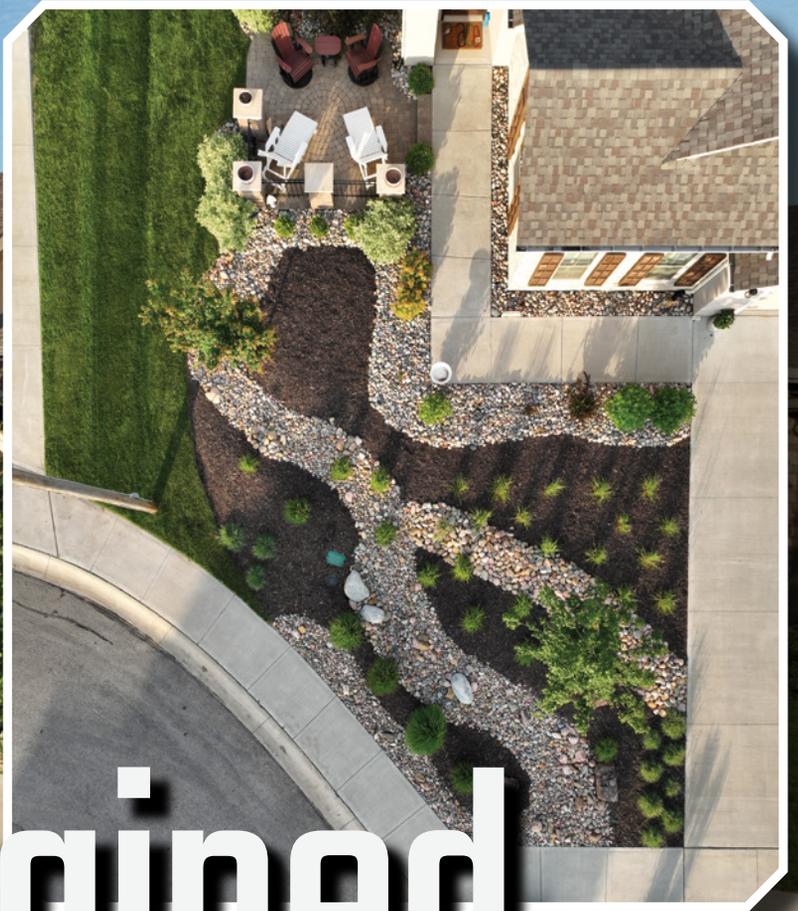
Before anyone ever turns a doorknob, landscaping has already begun to tell a story.

“Your outdoor space sets the tone for how a home feels,” says Kathy Pine, owner of Pine Landscape Center. “It creates an emotional connection before you even step inside.”

That belief is at the heart of Pine’s work—and the evolution of her family business. After several generations of a traditional farming operation, Pine Family Farms transitioned from traditional farming to sod production and eventually expanded into landscape supplies. In 2013, Pine officially took over as owner/operator, transforming the business into what Pine Landscape Center is today: a full-service landscape/hardscape supplier for both professionals and do-it-yourself (DIY) homeowners.

Over the years, the business has steadily grown. Today, a large percent of Pine Landscape Center’s customers are wholesale clients—landscapers, builders and contractors—who rely on the center for materials to complete client projects. The other percentage of clients are homeowners eager to roll up their sleeves and bring their own outdoor visions to life.

Yards and patios created, designed with materials from Pine Landscape Center



Reimagined

“DIY customers often come in with ideas and inspiration,” Pine explains. “Our job is to help bridge the gap between their dream and what’s realistically achievable.”

Providing a local option for quality landscape materials has allowed Pine Landscape Center to continually expand its offerings. From basic construction gravels to decorative rock, topsoil, mulch, sod and many other surface materials, customers can source everything they need to build a project from the ground up.

“We started researching our region to figure out where we could source the best products,” Pine explains. “Quality matters. We want people to feel confident they’re building something that will last.”

While outdoor projects can feel daunting, Pine believes thoughtful design makes all the difference. “When homeowners choose designs that feel manageable, they’re creating spaces that are both sustainable and maintainable,” she says. “That longevity protects their investment.”



Sustainability goes beyond just plant choices. Proper drainage, correct installation and durable materials help prevent future problems—and keep products out of landfills.

“Buying quality up front usually saves money in the long run,” Pine says. A well-designed outdoor space also enhances curb appeal and creates a sense of pride. It reflects personal values while making homes more livable—and enjoyable.

“We don’t just want our spaces to be livable,” she continues. “We want them to be places people truly enjoy.”

Purposeful landscaping can also increase resale value, offering potential buyers a glimpse of what awaits inside. And for current homeowners, it creates opportunities for gatherings, celebrations and everyday moments outdoors.

Grounds for Excellence

Turf Masters co-owners Jack Bell and Dustin Nye have been maintaining and transforming lawns for well over two decades. It’s not only important for curb appeal but for the safety and cleanliness of the property, they agree. They strive to be a full-service company, meaning they can take care of present needs and be proactive to prevent future issues. The company is completely locally owned and run.



Yards and patios created, designed with materials from Pine Landscape Center

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In 2011, Bell and Nye bought their first landscaping business followed by the purchase of Turf Masters in 2014 before merging the two. Their company focuses on maintenance—mowing, irrigation and lawn treatments—but they have been doing more landscaping the last couple of years, Bell says.

Walkways, patios, retaining walls and other projects to make existing spaces more usable for residents are some of the landscape projects they've focused on recently. Making sure weeds are not becoming overgrown and are away from dwellings and homes is also a good way to prevent issues with pests, Nye explains. Creating slopes that ensure effective drainage away from the property is also a component of maintenance.

One of the most common problems Bell and Nye see are those related to shade created by big trees leading to dirt patches. Recapturing areas that were once created with a purpose are some of the easiest ways to make use of already developed destinations, Nye continues.

A Good Investment

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When coming in with dreams of a new outdoor barbecue space or a new and improved patio, oftentimes it's important to start with the basics and do research before jumping to what the final project should look like. Making sure the installation process is well done is the first and most important step, Pine explains. "Don't skip the prep stuff."

Ultimately, it can be expensive to put money into landscaping since the opposite would be keeping it as is, she says. Recognizing that commitment and taking steps to make sure it's done right will create the most sustainable result.

Rather than thinking about how you want a new space for one specific event such as a graduation party, consider making the best choice to create long-term results. Quick fixes are the biggest thing to avoid in a project like this, Pine says.

Some of these considerations are taking drainage into account and making sure that nothing is going to bring water to the house rather than away from the house. When putting in a walkway or a paver patio, it's making sure enough depth is created for base materials so that over time they don't move or crack, especially with Kansas' winter freezes and thaws.

It's also important to make sure you're finishing out a project in a way that doesn't allow for growth of weeds down the line. Finish joints appropriately as to not allow moisture to go into the group and weeds to grow up.

Patios and paving built by Turf Masters



Creating a lovely outdoor space adds value to not only the home but the property. Taking care of the acreage, rather than just inside the walls, means more value in the future, Pine explains. It's also one more thing prospective homeowners don't have to worry about upon moving into a new home, she adds.

Pine Landscape Center has a staff that is knowledgeable and able to match customer desires with the right products to ensure their goals meet reality.

They provide experience-based guidance on materials and applications, Pine says, clarifying that they are not designers or architects, but are able to give knowledge-based advice on items they sell.

For example, if someone is looking to build a three tier wall with a patio on the first level and a deck on the second, Pine can help them obtain materials and resources they need, but if they realize they need more help with installation, she can help connect them with the right person to do that installation.

For Pine, it's about more than selling supplies. It's about empowering people to create outdoor spaces that feel intentional, welcoming and enduring.

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Just Add Water

If you're looking to go beyond just traditional landscaping, aquascaping can also be a good way to bring another focal point to your patio or front lawn.

Matt Llewellyn, owner of 23rd Street Brewery, has had a passion for water falls and features for 30 years. Last year, he decided to make this hobby into M&M Waterworks, a formal business with which he can share his knowledge professionally.

His love for water began when he lived in Lake Tahoe in his 20s, and it's only grown as he's continued to hone his skills. He's been able to turn his DIY hobby into a business, a dream he couldn't be happier to share with those wanting to better their outdoor spaces.

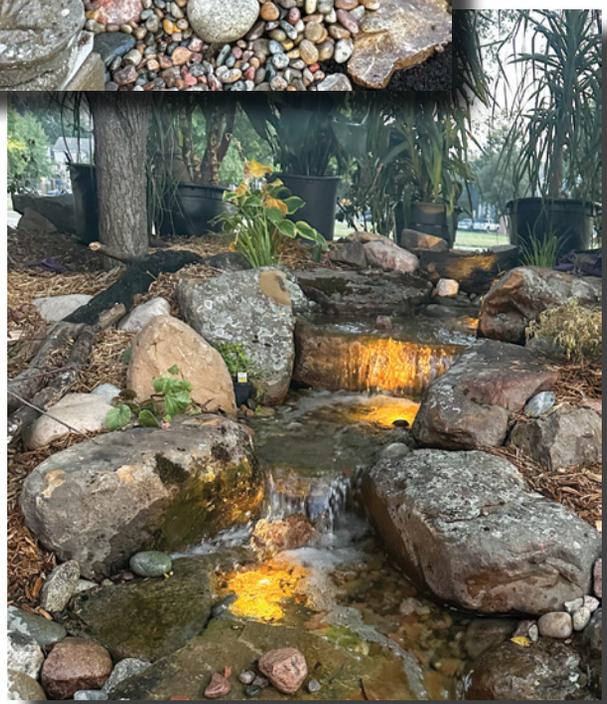
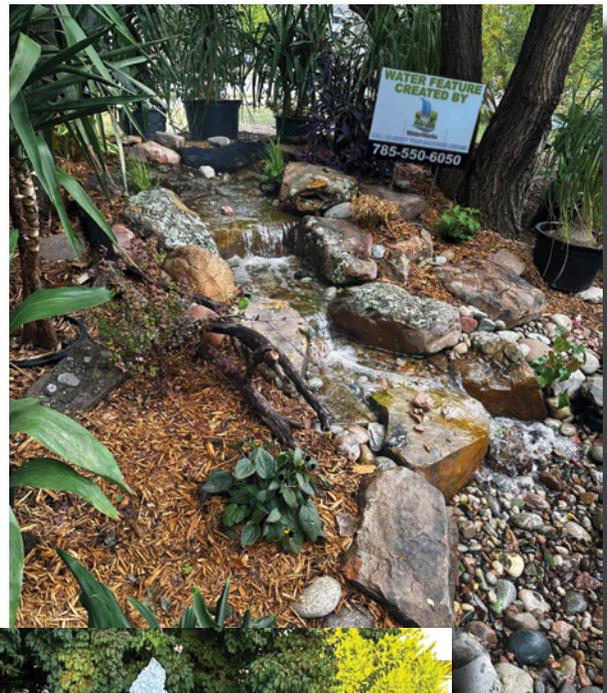
Llewellyn took classes from Aquascape and developed his skills further before completing a waterfall at his restaurant, which has generated a lot of inquiries and interest, he explains. He's created pondless waterfalls, water fountains and ponds with waterfall features. He's also worked on koi ponds and rebuilt fountains that were in need of upgrades. Recently, he completed an indoor water feature at Botanical Dreams, an aquatic plant store in North Lawrence.

Llewellyn feels that water features bring a focal point to people's homes—something they can enjoy listening to or kick back, relax and watch. A common misconception he often hears is that these features add extra work to a home.

When done correctly, it's pretty low maintenance, he explains. Picking out leaves and adding water are the main needs after installation. Tinkering with it is one of his favorite parts, he says, whether that's adding new natural rocks or new components.

"I want to share my love for this with other people, and I know that I'm doing that," he says. If you love doing projects as a DIYer, Llewellyn is more than willing to offer help and guidance.

It's no surprise that these features add property value to a home, but the curb appeal they bring is the main plus, Llewellyn continues. "It's going to be one of those things that could help you sell your home because it's so cool." ▲





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