

BBB Tips: Lawn Care Services

Column

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The first day of Spring is just days away, and that means green grass and blooming bluebonnets are near! Spring is a busy time of year, so keeping up with your lawn and yard maintenance may quickly become a hassle. With over 200 industry complaints against landscaping services in Texas alone in 2018 (including advertising concerns, service and billing issues and more), choosing trustworthy lawn care can seem intimidating. Luckily, Better Business Bureau has tips on finding a landscaping service that is right for you.

There are generally four categories of lawn and plant care:

- **Landscaping.** These companies design landscapes for designated areas, select the appropriate plants, and install them.
- **Lawn maintenance.** These businesses provide services that may include mowing, edging, weeding flower beds, trimming shrubs, weed control, treating for insect disease, irrigation systems check, and fertilizing.
- **Interior plant maintenance.** Most of these companies provide services like design, watering, fertilizing, pruning, trimming, insect and disease control, and cleaning. Some lease indoor plants with decorative containers.
- **Sprinkler systems.** Services provided by these businesses typically include design installation, general maintenance and repair. Check to be sure the sprinkler system company you choose is licensed, as it is required by the state of Texas.

Once you've decided which category your needs fall under, keep the following tips in mind when searching for prospective vendors:

- **Request an inspection and estimate.** You can't get an accurate estimate from a service that hasn't actually seen your lawn.
- **Ask for pictures and references.** Speaking with references can give you an opportunity to ask about their experience dealing with the company and having pictures to look at (or even looking at the work in person) offers you the ability to see the quality of their work. You can also view complaint histories and customer reviews on business profiles at bbb.org.
- **Learn about timing and safety.** It is important to ask questions such as whether the work will be done while you are at home or away. Are there precautions you need to take for yourself, pets and family if pesticides are being used?
- **Get receipts for any payments.** Request a receipt marked "Paid in Full" once you've paid for the completed job. It is especially important to get written verification of payment (with a list of labor and material charges) and any verbal agreements you may have. Paying with a credit card is usually a safer option than paying with cash.
- **Find multiple quotes.** It's always best to shop around and make sure you're getting the best deal and get at least three quotes from different companies. If you use BBB Request-A-Quote, you can get quick and easy quotes from BBB accredited businesses for free.

To learn more, visit bbb.org.

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