



Expand Your Definition of *Cost*

Initial price gives only a peephole view of a product's true cost. A higher purchase price can actually mean a better deal in the long run. This is especially true for landscape materials, which are exposed to extreme conditions—from being driven over to months of rain and even freezing temperatures. Focus on a product's durability and ease of upkeep, not just initial price. That “bargain” now may translate into frequent replacement and costly maintenance down the road.

Consider, too, factors other than monetary savings. A product's price tag rarely includes environmental and social costs. Research can uncover some of these hidden costs, and help you make more informed choices. By asking questions of retailers and avoiding suspect products, you're sending a market signal that these “big picture” costs matter, as well.

Do Your Homework

Research helps you ask retailers, or your designer/contractor, the right questions—or avoid costly mistakes if you are doing the work yourself. Finding green products can sometimes be a challenge, but is becoming easier as more enter the marketplace. Start early to look for businesses that carry the products you like. Keep a file of contact names

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