Features

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Landscape Software: An Irresistible Image

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Our society is increasingly visual, and images sell far better than any description of a landscape. That's why retailers and landscapers are offering more services like creating digital images of landscapes. Customers can use a photo of their area to be landscaped and designers can drag and drop plant material to show customers just how great their front yards, back yards and any other yards can truly be. But that's not all landscape software can offer; these days the entire job can be managed from start to finish via the computer. So what kind of landscape software is available today to get the job done? There are lots, with many different offerings based on what type of operation you are and your scope of operation. One note—most, if not all, of the companies listed here have support via their website, as well as a vast array of training tools to get you up to speed on their software.

Drafix Software
PRO Landscape design software is in version 19 and features 2D and 3D photo imaging, as well as night and holiday lighting, 2D and 3D CAD, and complete customer proposals. The software will take a photo image file of a created design and convert it to CAD, and the underlying database allows you to enter prices just one time, eliminating duplicate work. Drafix also recently added the PRO Landscape Companion for iPad and Android tablets, allowing designers to create and present designs on their tablet. With one touch of a button, designs can become 3D, able to be viewed from any angle. www.prolandscape.com

DynaScape
Manage 360 takes your staff from the beginning of a landscape job to end. It starts with sales and estimating to allow your team to create accurate and profitable estimates, manage the sales cycle and create a reliable cost book. For on-site work through Manage 360, your team can route crews, create purchase orders, log jobs, field reports, track employee time on the job, manage change orders and prepare invoices. The software allows for accounting integration for invoices, employee hours and even customer contact information. Manage 360 is just one part of the DynaScape suite of software, including design, color and more, powered with the Horticopia online plant database of professional photography. www.dynascape.com

Idea Spectrum
This company offers a variety of software options depending upon your needs. The first step is Realtime

Landscaping Photo, which allows you to import a photo of the property and create a design from a database of 3,200 high-resolution plant images. Realtime Landscaping Plus provides a database of 10,000 objects that can help you create 3D and photo-based landscaping designs. Realtime Landscaping Pro includes all the attributes of the previous two software programs, along with extensive support for water features, such as swimming pools, ponds, waterfalls and sprinkler systems. And Realtime Landscaping Architect features 16,000 objects, including 6,900 high-resolution plants and 3,000 accessories with comprehensive support for designing landscape plans and CAD drawings. www.ideaspectrum.com

RazorSync

The RazorSync mobile field service software can be used in pretty much any field where there's a technician and it applies to landscape crews as well. Downloaded to a smartphone or tablet via iTunes or Google Play, the software can be used for a myriad of tasks, including but not limited to: managing invoices; creating customer databases; communicating with customers; creating and viewing a work history; customer notes; creating estimates; scheduling and dispatching jobs; dragging and dropping jobs into time slots to re-assign work; viewing service forms; calendar integration; mapping jobs; tracking employee time; payroll management; mobile invoicing; signature capture; and tracking job hours. www.razorsync.com

Vectorworks

Landmark software takes design to the next level by offering 2D and 3D designs with the patent-pending X-ray Select technology, which allows you to see through models to select, move and modify hidden objects with ease. The modeling tools sense working planes as you move the cursor, giving the user more depth and greater functionality. It features a large industry library, including furniture, outdoor equipment, lighting and irrigation objects, as well as plant material. www.vectorworks.net/landmark

Visual Impact Imaging

Earthscapes from Visual Impact Imaging allows garden centers and landscape designers to instantly create landscape makeovers by dragging and dropping hardscape and plant elements into a photo of the existing yard. The operation can use the Earthscapes library of 5,500 plant and hardscape images or create a custom image library based on their own availability. The program can create job estimates and provides a realistic "after" photo design to give to customers. Earthscapes supports Go iLawn and Google Map aerial map files and is compatible with AutoCAD, but no training with AutoCAD is necessary to run the software. www.visualimpactimaging.com **GP**