

HINTS FOR HOMEOWNERS

Plan Now for Your Spring Planting: Hire A Landscape Architect To Add Value To Your Home

(NAPSA)—Any time of year can be the right time for a homeowner to consider hiring a landscape architect. Enhancements to a property made under the direction of this kind of professional can not only improve the look of your home, but increase its value by up to 20 percent.

Landscape architects are licensed to practice in 47 states and must pass a rigorous exam. Members of the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA) have met the organization's membership requirements and keep up with the latest technology and trends through ASLA publications and continuing education programs.

Here are some tips to help you make an educated choice when selecting a landscape architect:

- Think about what you want and how you will use your landscape. Formal entertaining, herb gardens, and children's playgrounds are all possibilities. Don't limit yourself to plants and trees; maybe you would like a fence, a fountain, a deck, a patio, a fire pit, an outdoor kitchen, or another outdoor element.

- Look at books and magazines for ideas and start a file of plants, trees, gardens, yards, pools, patios, decks, fences, etc., that you like—or dislike—to show your landscape architect. This will help you communicate what you want to achieve—or avoid.

- Ask about maintenance. Be sure to let your landscape archi-



Landscape architects can enhance a property's look and value (ASLA 2005 Award Winning Livingood Residence—landscape architecture by VLA, Inc., Jackson, WY).

tect know how you feel about the upkeep of your investment.

- To find residential landscape architects, go to the Firm Finder section of ASLA Web site at www.asla.org.

- Interview a few landscape architects and ask for references.

A good designer will walk around the home and ask a lot of questions about your lifestyle, what you want to accomplish, and your budget. They will not hesitate to provide references for you to call, or to answer questions you may have about their services and fees.

Founded in 1899, the American Society of Landscape Architects is the national professional association representing landscape architects. To learn more or to find a landscape architect, visit the Web site at www.asla.org.