

Step 8 Phasing in the landscape design

Every garden and every gardener possesses a unique set of priorities and issues related to what to do first, how much can you get accomplished at once, in what sequence to do things, and what parts of the landscape can be phased in.

The following set of phases are listed in approximately the order in which they will be done, though each installation will vary. For instance, although mulch is listed here after irrigation, in some instances it may make more sense to mulch in the first year, even if you will not be installing your irrigation until the second year, as the mulch will help with weed and erosion control.

Call Before You Dig! Call the Utility Notification Center of Colorado (UNCC) at 8-1-1 to locate underground Utilities before you begin your project!

Phase 1: Remove Sod, Brush and Weeds

It may not be necessary to remove sod from the areas you want to convert from high water turf grass to other uses. The local Colorado State University Extension office can advise you about killing the turf. It can then be either tilled under or left in place, especially if it is on a steep slope.

Initial weed control on sites which are currently growing weeds or those adjacent to weeded lots significantly affects the future maintenance of the site. Killing currently growing weeds is only the first step in the process, for most certainly the site contains weed seeds. Again, contact the local Colorado State University Extension office for advice regarding initial weed control. Organic mulch applied four to six inches deep over the site will help a great deal, but be aware that controlling weeds will be an ongoing maintenance issue.

Contact the El Paso County [Colorado State Extension office](#) at 719-636-8920 for more information.

Phase 2: Construct Walls, Grading and Drainage

This is an important early step in the development of your site. Insuring that the site drains properly and that all use areas are at the needed slope is critical to the success of the rest of your landscape. So revisit any slope improvements you identified in previous steps and take care of them early.

Related Fact Sheets:

[Slopes, Berms and Grades](#)

[Evaluating and Improving Your Slope](#)

Phase 3: Improve the Soil

Rototilling organic material into the top six inches of soil will improve the soil structure, aid in subsurface drainage issues, and can be critical to future plant health.

Related Fact Sheet:

[Soil Amendments](#)

Phase 4: Construct the Irrigation System

Use your design from Step 7. Underground water lines should be installed before any planting takes place. Consider placing sleeves under paths, patios, and other hardscape to make future additions or adjustments easier.

Phase 5: Construct Paths, Patios and Other Hardscape

If heavy equipment will be used to deliver or carry materials for paths, patios or other hardscape, have the materials delivered and installed before planting.

Phase 6: Mulch the Landscape

This phase is pretty flexible, and you may do it more than once in the overall process. Organic mulch can be installed before or after plants, irrigation and hardscape.

Related Fact Sheet:

[Mulches in the Home Landscape](#)

Phase 7: Planting

Plan to further amend the soil around large trees and shrubs with organic material. Begin your installation with trees. Then proceed to plant shrubs and vines, and finish up with perennials, ground covers and turf.