

Planting customers' expectations

Stark Bro's Nursery finds software indispensable for helping customers decide what they like in a landscape plan

Life is a series of compromises," notes Mike McQuay, Landscape Manager/Designer for Stark Bro's Nursery, who quickly adds, "so we don't think our customers should have to settle for anything less than perfect in their yard and gardens. We're using PRO Landscape to create landscape plans in a way that gives customers an exceptionally realistic view of how a plan will transform their property."

Demonstrating how landscape designs will look before and after the nursery completes its work has become instrumental for customers who also want an opportunity to play an active role in comparing and making selections of individual plants.

That was very hard to do a few years ago. Without specialized landscape design software available today, designers drew plans by hand without a practical way to show how the finished design would appear after planting, after ten years, at night, or through the change of seasons.



Three years ago McQuay began evaluating landscape design applications. His goal was to boost the design side of Stark Bro's business. He found applications were underpowered and lacked realism. AutoCAD was both difficult to use and extraordinarily expensive, especially considering all of the many features that would go unused.

"The traditional design process," said McQuay, "is painstaking and time consuming. It was mandatory to make this work much faster and much easier, while also improving aspects for our customers." Capabilities of PRO Landscape such as three-dimensional perspectives, lifelike images of plant specimens, water features and other hardscape features such as paving stones that are now regular hallmarks of what McQuay presents in his plans clearly impress Stark Bro's customers.

Customers Make the Future Their Way

Says McQuay, "Now, when I work with a customer at my PC, we use the software to experiment with all of the details that factor into a

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Mike McQuay,
Landscape Manager/
Designer
Stark Bro's Nursery



landscape plan, one-by-one making it perfect for them. We don't have to rely on imagination anymore— they can tell me, 'I like that other plant better', or, 'let's see what another color of brick or stone looks like on the retaining wall.' In seconds I can make a change, altering a plant selection so they see one that's more to their liking, with just a few mouse clicks."

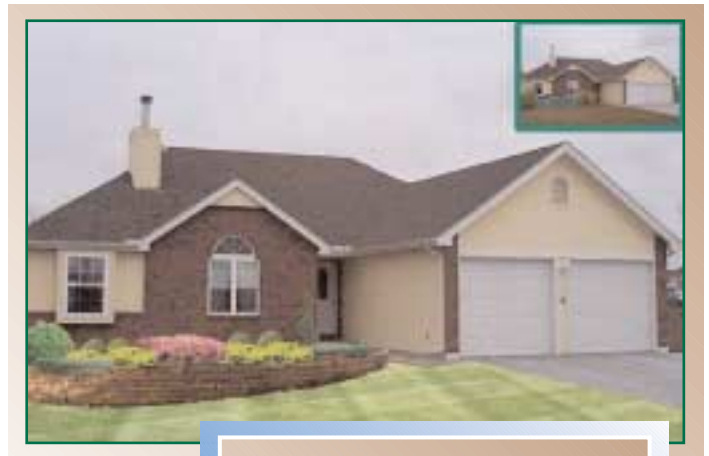
McQuay is a self-taught user; "I picked it right up, learning to drag and drop images of plants and materials from the image library as customers asked to see different combinations of plants. Using my own digital camera to import views of the owner's home and add new plants all proved very easy."

After using PRO Landscape for a short time, the full impact of its realism and how other features of the software dramatically enhance the design group's processes and relationships with customers are apparent. "When customers see how the finished plan looks, after we've tended to every aspect they care to, it is so convincing that something on the order of 98 percent ask us to implement the plan."

About Stark Bro's Nursery

Stark Bro's is familiar to many as the patent holder for Delicious apples and, anticipating its 200th birthday, it is the oldest fruit tree nursery in the nation. The nursery's long history of success garnered attention of prominent radio commentator, Paul Harvey who featured the nursery in one of his series. The Rest of the Story, reported how the company reorganized, reenergized to operate in today's challenging marketplace — with the quickest bearing trees ever offered and "bottomless" pots that naturally air prune the roots so plants establish faster, encourage early flowering and fruiting.

Continuing many traditions of the past, new technologies and savvy applications including PRO Landscape helps Stark Bro's maintain its long standing edge in customer service.



Mike McQuay notices his customers are drawn to the life-like details and perspective of his plans. His presentations build immediate appeal and inspire confidence for approving the landscape plan.



Stark Bro's Nurseries & Orchards Co.
P.O. Box 1800
Louisiana, MO 63353