

LANDSCAPE LIFESTYLES

Tips & Tools For Landscape Professionals

January 2004



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Plan - Design - Build: Backyard Oasis In New Jersey

A pool can be a welcoming focal point for any home; appealing to the entire family. For water-lovers and sun-worshippers of all ages, the backyard pool is a private vacation get-away, without having to leave home. This spectacular pool and landscape project in Middletown, New Jersey, reclaimed unusable land and now provides a beautiful gathering spot for the entire family.

Plan: The backyard had a steep elevation, rendering it unusable. The homeowners wanted to reclaim the unused space and build a recreation area for the whole family, including placing a pool in the center of the hillside. A plan was developed to extend the house into the surrounding landscape using a terraced approach, greatly increasing the total



Dover

square footage available for recreation and entertainment.

Design: In order to reclaim the steep backyard hillside, the design included multi-tier retaining walls, accommodating an elevation drop of more than 20 feet. Designed and built by Jeffrey

“ This complex project included multiple patio areas, stairs and retaining walls. Using Allan Block products made it not only beautiful to look at, but easy to accomplish.”

Jeff Hatoff, co-owner
Top Seed Landscaping & Gardening Co. Inc.

Hatoff, Top Seed Landscaping and Gardening Company, Inc. in Metuchen, New Jersey, the project used AB Europa blocks for the tiered-walls, creating an elegant backyard surround. Clayton Block Co., located in Edison, New Jersey, provided the structural design and engineering support, ensuring the soundness of the construction and design. Curved steps flowing down from the home into the pool area required the use of Dover and Palermo blocks in a tight radius. Cinnamon-colored stone was used to flatter the house and create an elegant setting.

Build: Because of the steep elevation and multi-tiered wall design, a standard, gravity wall approach was not possible. Geogrids - flexible, high-tensile, synthetic mesh - were used to reinforce the soil behind the walls. Installation was fast; the retaining walls were completed in one month.

The finished project is stunning. No longer a plain, unused hillside, this inviting area is now a private oasis for family and friends.



Dover

Attention Landscape Professionals

Build It! Contest

Full details on the net: www.allanblock.com

Show off the new outdoor living spaces you create. Send a photograph of your completed Allan Block project and you could win \$1,000 for the top Allan Block project of 2004.

We will be featuring successful projects in newsletters, advertisement and promotions throughout the year. Share your design, build your business and get national recognition for your work!



Ashlar Blend

How-To: Building Steps Into A Wall

Plan:

Choose Your Path Wisely

Find the most natural path and maintain a comfortable rhythm to your stairway.



Design:

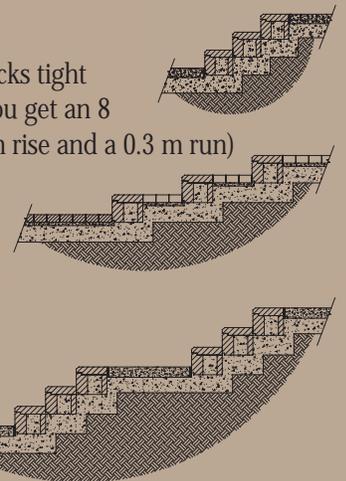


Classic and Jumbo Junior

Tackle Your Slope

Match your stairway design to the natural grade of your slope.

- On steep slopes, keep the blocks tight together. With Allan Block, you get an 8 in. rise and a 12 in. run. (0.2 m rise and a 0.3 m run)
- On gentle slopes, add pavers or other materials to increase the depth of the tread and length of the run
- Landings can soften a long stairway and provide an easy way to tie the sets of steps together.



AB Three

Stairs can be designed with flowing curves or straight lines. Curved sidewalls create a softer, natural look. Straight sidewalls and corners offer a crisp, traditional style, however require AB Corner blocks and more time to build.



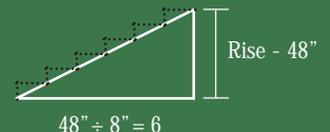
Barcelona



AB Stones

How Many Steps?

To find the number of steps needed, measure the total rise of your slope in inches and divide by eight.



all - Plan, Design, Build

Build:

One of the unique benefits of Allan Block Retaining Wall Systems is a wide variety of options for designing and building steps.

Starting the Project:

Take Time to Build In Quality. Building stairs and steps requires careful planning, flexibility on the job site and an eye for detail. Be sure to allow adequate time for lay-out and building of stairs.

Select Stair Tread Materials. Allan Block's patented, raised, front-lip design provides built-in edging for a variety of tread materials, including AB Capstones, landscape pavers, poured concrete, crushed rock, mulches and flagstones.

Begin with the Base Course:

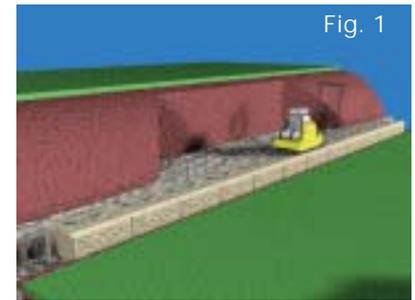
1. Excavate a 6 in. deep x 18 in. wide (15 cm x 45.7 cm) base trench.
2. Place 4 in. (10.2 cm) of granular material in the trench and compact with a mechanical plate compactor.
3. Position the base course of AB Blocks as shown (Fig. 1). Level blocks from side-to-side and front-to-back.
4. Place granular material in block cores and 6-12 in. (15-30 cm) behind the blocks. Compact to lock them into position (Fig. 1).

Build the next Courses:

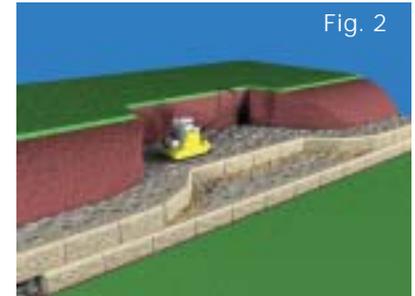
5. Place the second course riser blocks on top of the compacted backfill material (Fig. 2).
6. Place a small amount of gravel in front of the second course blocks - before adding the infill and backfill materials - to hold them in place when backfilling and compacting.
7. Place granular material in the second course block cores and 6-12 in. (15-30 cm) behind the blocks.
8. Fill in backfill soils behind the granular material.
9. Compact the granular material and the infill soils behind the second course to lock the blocks into position (Fig. 2).
10. Repeat the process for each course of the stairs, up to the top of the wall (Fig. 3).

Build the Stair Treads:

11. Finish off the steps with any of a variety of stair tread materials. (Fig. 4) When using a rigid dimension tread material such as AB Capstones or landscape pavers, carefully plan the stair dimensions to reduce the amount of cutting required. The application of a construction adhesive is recommended to secure rigid dimension stair treads in place.



Install, level and compact base course.



Position second course, curving the wall in to create the first step, install and compact base material.



Repeat the process for each new stair.



Finish stair treads using AB Capstone, landscape pavers or flagstone. Adhesive is recommended on tread material to secure in place.



Additional stair designs and technical information explaining the construction process is available on our website at www.allanblock.com or from your local Allan Block representative.

Allan Blocks patented front lip provides a built-in edging that works well with Allan Block Capstones, pavers, poured concrete, crushed rock, mulches and flagstones. Ensure stair treads are secured in place for safe use.



Outdoor Living Trends Create Demand For Landscape Professionals

Do you know what the most popular American pastime is today? Can you identify the hottest new area in new home construction? If you guessed gardening and landscaping, you got both answers right. It's a fact. The landscaping market is hotter than ever. More people will invest more time and more money in their yards than ever before. It's a booming trend that shows no signs of slowing down.

Rising real estate values make it easier for homeowners to invest in their property. Low interest rates and a shaky stock market make home investments the safest and most secure place to put extra earnings. An uncertain world makes it easier to stay at home and enjoy the safety and security found in your own backyard.

Outdoor living has become a passion for both new and existing homeowners. Creating great outdoor settings is big business. People are looking for ways to turn their underdeveloped outdoor spaces into extensions of their

"Housing trends reveal homeowners are focusing more on outdoor spaces, making them more like living spaces with high-end amenities and custom features".

Source: Hanley-Wood Consumer Buyer's Data 2003.

homes, just like - dining rooms, living rooms, pool rooms, and family rooms. Landscape professionals can capitalize on the trend by becoming outdoor living experts.

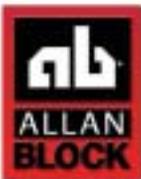
Allan Block is here to help. Take one of your local AB Contractor Certification classes to learn how to plan, design and build great outdoor

spaces with our products. Learn how our full line of block collections can provide you unlimited design options and efficient construction. Be ready when our national promotion on HGTV drives consumers to call looking for help with their outdoor living dreams.



Sign up to get **LANDSCAPE LIFESTYLES** through e-mail.

To receive the AB Landscape Lifestyles Newsletter directly in your e-mail box each quarter, sign up online at www.allanblock.com.



The Latest in Professional Landscaping Solutions

Allan Block Contractor To Be Featured On HGTV “Curb Appeal”

Curb Appeal, a weekly Home & Garden Cable TV program, showcases residential exterior makeover projects. The January 6th show features a landscape renovation project in San Francisco. Landscape contractors, Cagwin & Dorward, walk through the design and installation of an Allan Block retaining wall that expands the homeowner’s outdoor living space to the front curb!



Visit Allan Block At These 2004 Trade Shows

Mid-America Horticultural Trade Show, Jan. 14-16
McCormick Place, Chicago, Ill.

APWA - International Public Works Congress and Expo, Sept.12-15
Georgia World Congress Center, Atlanta, GA.

ALCA - Green Industry Conference and Expo, Nov. 3-7, Charlotte, N. C.

Tools of the Trade - Help To Grow Your Business

Allan Block offers a vast array of resources to help with all aspects of your next project. From design ideas to guidelines for estimating material, see your Allan Block dealer for a selection of CDs, specification books and literature. All materials, literature and dealer information are also available on our website at www.allanblock.com.



Landscape Design CD - Complete Design & Install Info

For professional landscape ideas and inspiration, sign up to receive Allan Block’s Landscape Design CD on our website at www.allanblock.com. Packed with information to help you plan, design and build landscape walls up to six feet high, this CD includes product specifications, installation guidelines and a valuable material estimating program.



Winnipeg Allan Block Project Wins NCMA Design Award!

Congratulations! The National Concrete Manufacturer’s Association’s 2003 Design Awards of Excellence granted an Award of Honor to the Kilkenny Drive North Community Ring Dike project in Winnipeg, Canada. The project was a community ring dike that would retain flood waters from the Red River and was structurally sound and aesthetically pleasing. The design goal was to avoid future risk, stress and disruption to residents as well as minimize environmental impacts to preserve existing trees and vegetation in the riverbank settings.

A detailed project description is available at www.allanblock.com.

