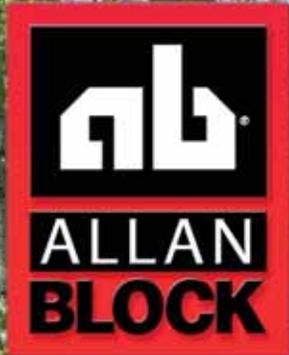


ALLAN BLOCK LANDSCAPES

Newsletter for the Landscape Professionals

Issue 19



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Backyard Renovation - AB Walls and AB Courtyard A Perfect Match



Creating usable and beautiful space in your own backyard can be an exciting adventure as these homeowners in Calgary discovered when they decided to tackle their barren backyard.



With several design factors to take into account, this total yard makeover took some very special planning. "We wanted to keep the yard open and inviting, while still being able to utilize the area to relax with family and entertain with friends".

In addition to the aesthetic needs of the homeowners, there were some structural challenges that had to be addressed.

One of the challenges was an existing wood retaining wall built directly against the fence line. The wall was restricting proper drainage on the lot, causing the neighbor to have water

problems every time it rained. With the help of their AB certified contractor, Neil Zeller of LeeDavid Landscapes Inc., they were able to create a design that re-graded the lot and replaced the wood retaining wall with an Allan Block wall to address their water management issue.

The contractor chose to incorporate both the AB Courtyard Collection™ and AB Europa® Collection because of the ease in which the two products work together. With the retaining wall topping out at 2 feet (0.6 m) at its tallest point, the contractor recommended using the AB Barcelona blocks of the AB Europa Collection to complete the retaining wall to give the wall a low profile and keep it to scale with the rest of the yard.



While designing the entertainment area, the contractor was able to create the look and feel the homeowner's were looking for using the AB Courtyard Collection. The design included a beautiful patio surround that incorporated benches, posts to support a pergola and an alcove for the homeowners new spa.

The adventure continued as construction began and the contractor was faced with inclement weather, battling delays due to



torrential rains and blinding snow storms. "Even though mother nature threw us for a loop and caused some delays, the project went together very smoothly", stated Neil Zeller.

The task of planning, designing and building their new outdoor living space may be over, but the next chapter of enjoying their backyard has just begun.

Get the Right Amount of Materials - Every Time

Estimating Tools for AB Landscape Walls

The Allan Block estimating tools make it quick and easy to determine the amount of materials you will need for your project. Available in two formats, an estimating tool based in Microsoft Excel that you can download from allanblock.com and a rotating estimating wheel that you can use for fast, on-the-go estimates. Contact your local Allan Block representative for details.

Helpful Hints

When estimating, remember to include buried block in your total wall height. Bury 1 in. (25 mm) of block for every 1 ft. (0.3 m) of wall height. Projects with a slope below the wall will require additional buried block.

Order 2-5% extra materials to allow for any step-ups, curves and minor project changes that can occur as you build.

The amount of wall rock for your project should include the material for the base, filling the block cores and the 12 in. (300 mm) behind the block.

On patterned walls, such as the AB Ashlar or AB Abbey Blend a two course pattern is recommended when building curves and will require little to no cutting or adjusting of blocks.

A drain pipe should be included in your AB landscape wall estimates when needed and should be installed in the location shown on the approved plans.

Estimating Tools For AB Courtyard Walls

The estimating tool for the AB Courtyard Collection allows you to easily calculate all the materials you will need to build a courtyard wall. Whether building with one or two block shapes, combining posts into your project, or just building wall panels, this handy tool gives you all the answers. Available in two formats, a downloadable estimating tool based in Microsoft Excel available at allanblock.com and a rotating estimating wheel you can use for on-the-go estimates. Contact your local Allan Block representative for details.

Helpful Hints

For **straight walls** with two block shapes, use a 60/40 block mix, where 60% of the blocks are AB Dublin Blocks.

For **curved walls** with two block shapes, use an 80/20 block mix, where 80% of the blocks are AB York Blocks, as these walls must be built with the AB York Block.

For **straight walls** using one block shape, twice as many AB York blocks are needed to complete the same size wall using just the AB Dublin blocks.

When adding corners to your project, use one **corner block** per corner for each course of wall. Use four **corner blocks** for each course of a post.



AB Estimating Tool



AB Wheel

**Download your
estimating
tools today at
allanblock.com.**



AB Courtyard Estimating Tool



AB Courtyard Wheel

**Makes
ordering a
snap!**

How To Build A Raised Patio

Want the look and feel of natural stone without the maintenance? An Allan Block raised patio may be just what your project needs. You can incorporate curves, corners or even stairs into your patio design. Building a raised patio is easy and can add more usable living space and lasting value to your landscape.



Once you have determined the location and design of your raised patio, stake out the location and use a string line or paint to mark out the area. A garden hose is an excellent tool for marking out curves. Then excavate the area by removing all the surface vegetation and organic materials from the area. **These cannot be used as backfill material.**

- Starting at the lowest point dig a base trench 24 in. (600 mm) wide by 6 in. (150 mm) deep plus 1 in. (25 mm) deep for each 1 ft. (300 mm) of wall height.
- Compact the base trench as well as the entire patio base area, making a minimum of 2 passes with a walk behind plate compactor. Compaction of these areas are very important as they make up the foundation of both your wall and raised patio.



Like any other Allan Block landscape wall, your raised patio needs to have proper drainage. A drain pipe is used to prevent water pressure from building up behind the wall. Place the drain pipe at the back of the trench and vent to daylight at the lowest point. In addition to managing the water the drain pipe, you will need to manage the water flow around the house foundation (if you are building against a house). To do this you will need to waterproof the foundation wall. Check with your local building officials or with the material manufacturer on recommended installation of this waterproofing material.



To begin building the wall that will make up your raised patio, start by preparing the base.

- Place the required amount of wall rock in the base trench and rake smooth.
- Compact the entire trench, then check for level making adjustments as needed.
- Starting at the lowest elevation, place the blocks on the base material near the front of the trench. Check each block for level and alignment as it is installed.



Make minor adjustments by using a dead blow hammer or by placing up to 0.5 in. (13 mm) of course sand under the blocks. Keep in mind irregularities in the base course become larger as the wall stacks up, causing your patio to be uneven. Paying extra attention to your base will ensure your wall is level.

- Fill in the area in front of the blocks with on-site soils. This will keep the blocks from shifting while filling and compacting.
- Fill the hollow cores and 12 in. (300 mm) behind the block with wall rock up to the height of the block.
- Fill in the area behind the wall rock with approved materials for below your patio.

Want more information? Check out the AB Landscape Walls Guide for information on Planning, Designing

Finishing Options For Your Raised Patio



Use a compactible rock or sand behind the entire wall. This provides a fill that is less likely to settle over time. Compact the entire area behind the blocks making a minimum of two passes with a walk behind plate compactor.

Next, remove all excess material from the top of the blocks and stack your next course. Check for level and alignment and adjust as necessary.

- Then backfill the entire area behind the blocks and compact in lifts of 8 in. (200 mm) or less. Make sure to use wall rock in the block cores and directly behind the wall.

- From the second course and above, use a plate compactor to compact directly on top of the blocks as well as the rest of your patio area.

Repeat these steps until you get to the desired height of your patio. **Taller walls may require additional reinforcement. See the Allan Block Landscape Walls Guide to determine if your wall will require additional reinforcement.**



Once the walls of your raised patio have reached the proper height it is time to place in your patio flooring. Choose a flooring option like concrete, pavers, brick or natural stones to fit the design and style of your landscape. Depending on your choice of pavement, the final course of your wall may be backfilled differently. Check with the manufacturer of your patio flooring for proper installation instructions. Allan Block's raised front lip provides a perfect edge for AB capstones, or pavers.

Keep in mind, a slope in the patio surface is needed to allow water and runoff to drain away from the house foundation. While a typical slope of 2% is recommended for driveways, patios can be set at a 1% slope. This will provide the balance and comfort for patio users, while still allowing for proper drainage.

Now your beautiful raised patio can be finished off with with the AB Courtyard Collection by incorporating seating walls or even a pergola.



Now that you have finished creating your raised patio, you can finish it off with the AB Courtyard Collection in a variety of ways. Here a few ideas to get you going:



Pergolas and Arbors



Seating Walls



Decorative Enclosures

**There is so much more...
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for hundreds of great ideas**



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& Building your Landscape Project. Available at allanblock.com

Help Your Business Grow Using Allan Block Tools

Contractors - Want to build your Allan Block business? Become a Certified Allan Block Contractor

Allan Block has developed a variety of tools and materials with, the AB contractor in mind. Tools to estimate your projects, photo galleries to help with design ideas, postcards and door hangers to promote your company and so much more... Contact your local AB sales rep today to see how Allan Block materials can help.

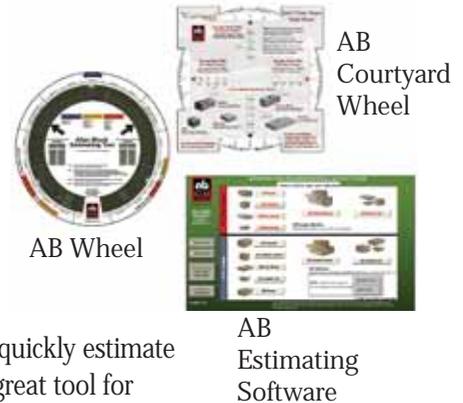
Allanblock.com

The one stop shop for all your information needs. Download videos and photos to show customers, look up technical and installation information and so much more!



Estimating Tools

The estimating software gives you the ability to get a complete detailed list of materials needed for your project as well as being able to bid jobs with ease and accuracy. The wheel estimators allow you to quickly estimate your projects and are a great tool for those on-the-go projects.



AB Wheel

AB
Courtyard
Wheel

AB
Estimating
Software

Door Hangers

Keep those neighbors in the loop - It's always nice (and smart too) to let the neighbors know about your project before you begin. Door hangers are a great way to let them know you are working in the area. A great tool to promote your business and even land a job or two.



Postcards

Want to get the word out? Our customizable postcards to let your customers know what you are all about. Announce special promotions you may have, applications your company specializes in, or even announce projects you have done in the area. Don't be the best kept secret in town!



To receive this *Landscape Lifestyles* newsletter by e-mail, sign up at allanblock.com.

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