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.

Helpful Hints

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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. 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 that you can use for on-the-go estimates. Contact your local Allan Block representative for details.

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For straight walls with two block shapes, use a 50/50 mix, when 60% of the blocks are AB Dublin Blocks. For curved walls with two block shapes, use an 80/20 mix, when 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, choose any 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 Wheel

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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 backyards.

Backyard Renovation - AB Walls and AB Courtyard A Perfect Match

One of the challenges was an existing address. “We wanted to scale with the rest of the yard,” said Neil Zeller of LeeDavid Landscapes Inc., they were able to use the AB Europa Collection to complete the retaining wall with an Allan Block raised patio and 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 topped out at 2 ft (600 mm), the contractor recommended using the AB Europa® blocks of the AB Europa® Collection to complete the retaining wall to give the wall a solid profile and keep it stable with the rest of the yard.

While designing the entertainment area, the contractor made sure to keep the homeowner’s eye 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 homeowner’s new oven. The adventure continued as construction began and the contractor was faced with inclement weather, battling delays due to torrential rains and blinding snow storms. The design included a beautiful patio that incorporated benches, posts to support a pergola and an alcove for the homeowner’s new oven. The adventure continued as construction began and the contractor was faced with inclement weather, battling delays due to torrential rains and blinding snow storms.

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Get the Right Amount of Materials - Every Time

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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 block 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.

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Helpful Hints

For straight walls with two block shapes, use the AB Dublin blocks, when 80% of the blocks are AB Dublin Blocks.

For curved walls with two block shapes, use the AB Abbey Blend blocks, when 80% of the blocks are AB Abbey Blend Blocks. As these walls must be built with the AB York Block.

Makes ordering a snap!

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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.

Backyard Renovation

How To Build A Raised Patio

How To Estimate Your Allan Block Project

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AB Wheel

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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 backyard headaches.

One of the challenges was an existing building management issue. The homeowners needed more usable space and lasting value to their landscapes. The task of planning, designing and building their new outdoor living space began and the contractor was faced with torrential rains and blinding snow storms.

The adventure continued as construction was started at the lowest elevation, place the blocks on the base trench using the AB Europa® Collection. The contractor recommended using the AB Europa® Collection to complete the retaining wall topping out at 2 feet (0.6 m) at its tallest point, incorporating both the AB Landscape Walls Guide and AB Europa® Collection to complete the retaining wall. The contractor was able to create the look and feel the homeowners 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.

With several design factors to take into account, the total yard makeover took nearly a year to complete. With the help of their AB certified contractor Neil Zeller of LeeDavid Landscapes Inc., they were able to create a design that grad- ed the lot and replaced the wood retaining wall with an Allan Block wall to address their water management issues. 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 minimum wall topping out at 2 feet (0.6 m) at its tallest point, the contractor recommended using the AB Europa® blocks of the AB Europa® Collection to complete the retaining wall.

The adventure continued as construction began and the contractor was faced with indentured weathering but dealing due to 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 grad- ed the lot and replaced the wood retaining wall with an Allan Block wall to address their water management issues.

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One of the challenges was an existing structural challenge that had to be addressed to keep the yard open and inviting, while managing an important management issue.

“We wanted to give the wall a low profile and keep it balanced and comfort for slope. This will provide the balance and comfort for patio users, while it also contributes to proper drainage,” says Neil Zeller.

The contractor chose to incorporate both the AB Courtyard Collection and the AB Europa Collection, because of the ease in which the two products work together. With the minimum wall topping out at 2 feet (0.6 m) at its tallest point, the contractor recommended using the AB Europa blocks of the AB Europa® Collection to complete the retaining wall.

Like any other Allen Block wall, you will need 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 base of the wall and vent it at the highest point. In addition to managing the water, the drain pipe, you will need to include the AB Europa Collection to complete the retaining wall. Check all your local building codes or with the manufacturer on recommended technology of the two products work together.

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

- Place the required amount of sand in base trench and take smooth. Build 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 plate compactor to compact directly on top of the wall. This will provide a fill that is less likely to settle from shifting while filling and compacting.
- Fill in the area behind the wall rock with approved materials for below your raised patio, stake out the location and use a string 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 wall behind plate compactor. Compaction of these areas are very important as they make up the foundation of both your wall and raised patio.

- Fill in the hollow cores and 12 in. (300 mm) behind the block with wall rock up to the height of the block.

- Fill the hollow cores and 12 in. (300 mm) behind the block with approved materials for below your raised patio.

- Fill any remaining space with fill in the base trench and take smooth. Use a plate compactor to compact directly on top of the wall. This will provide a fill that is less likely to settle from shifting while filling and compacting.

- Fill in the area behind the wall rock with approved materials for below your raised patio.

- Place the required amount of sand in base trench and take smooth. Compact the base trench as well as the entire patio base area, making a minimum of 2 passes with a wall behind plate compactor.

- Fill in the area behind the wall rock with approved materials for below your raised patio.

- Pour a concrete slab, pavers, brick or natural stones to fit the design and style of your landscape. Depending on your choice of pavement, the final course of crete, pavers, brick or natural stones to fit the design and style of your landscaping.

- Seal the 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 slope of 2% to 3% is recommended for driveways, patios can be set at a 1% slope. This will provide the balance and comfort for patio users, while it also contributes to proper drainage.

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