

## Timeline for Tropical Paradise

The first thing to do is purchase about 100 stakes and a large amount of string and lay out exactly where everything should go. You don't want to put your pool in and find out you don't have room for the center fountain or the beach. Staking everything out, checking it two or three times is a wise move on Tropical Paradise.

The pool has to be installed before anything else. Pile the dirt (if it's not all clay and rock) in the far corner for use in all the planting boxes. Carefully photograph and measure where all the drains, plumbing, and electrical are buried for future reference. Next, dig out and pour concrete footings under your raised planting box walls. Pour these at the same time you are pouring your pool decking and patios. Have the pool contractor build the central fountain for you at the same time the pool is going in.

After your pool, fountain, planter wall footings, patios, and pool decking are in, bring in a mason to build all your planters. The rock for your planters should match the waterfall wall behind your pool. Have him lay a pipe or two into each one in case you put a sprinkler system in. Keep the pipe low enough to go under your paver paths to the outside edge of the yard. Start moving some of the excavated pool dirt into your planters. Mix generous amounts of compost into the dirt for a good, rich, planting soil.

Now, finish your hardscaping by building your paths. You will have a lot more soil because the dirt needs to be excavated eight inches deep to be replaced by crushed gravel and sand for under the pavers. While ordering sand for under your pavers, order an extra load for your beach. It is extremely important to lay pipes under the pavers for a sprinkler system and electrical runs for your landscape lighting. Make sure you do this now! Again, use the dirt mixed with compost for your planters and beds. Fill all these high because they will settle quite a bit. Figure on two to four inches of settling. Leave enough room in your planters for a four-inch layer of mulch on top of the dirt/compost mix. Don't forget the decorative cornerstones. These will make your paths exciting and tie all of them together.



## Timeline for Tropical Paradise (continued)

Put in your sprinkler system, if desired; and sod or seed your lawn.

By now, all your hardscaping is in and your beds and planters are full of good soil and mulch. Three fun weekend projects would be installing your landscape lighting, building your greenhouse from a kit, and installing your beach. To build your beach, we suggest removing 12 inches of dirt, lay down landscape fabric, and install 12 inches of sand; or you could build a 12-inch high wall (match your planters) and save the work of digging out soil. Building your four planters - the two along the perimeter walk, the one by the pool, and the one by your hammock would also fill a weekend.

You will be anxious to start planting, but let the soil settle first. Start by planting the trees that are out in the yard. Plant the bamboo view-block for the pool. You can also plant the shrubs along the perimeter path.

Now, have fun planting your planters, and turning your backyard into a Tropical Paradise!

