Outdoor Living

DESIGN PACKAGE

Your backyard, designed.

Warm modern backyard with a large plunge pool, with the planting, lighting and watering plans to build it.

- 20 ft × 10 ft plunge pool
- Shade & cover
- Fire pit
- 5 planting beds + new lawn
- 7 landscape lights + string lights
- 5 watering zones

INSTALLED ESTIMATE

$93,600 – $125,000

Do it yourself: $69,100 – $90,100

November 3, 2026

Design no. MVU7DK



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HOW TO USE IT

Three ways to put this to work

1 **Get bids**
Send this PDF to two or three landscape contractors and ask them to price it by the budget categories on page 5. Every bid prices the same plan.

2 **Build it yourself, in phases**
Use the plant schedule, the materials list and the build order. Phase it over a season or two; the do-it-yourself column shows what you'd spend on materials.

3 **Go Pro**
Want it measured and modeled in 3D? A designer builds the whole plan from your home. Your $49 counts toward it.

This is a concept plan made from one photo. Sizes, quantities and prices are estimates. Measure on site and confirm with your installer before you dig, buy or build.

THE DESIGN

Your backyard, redesigned





Your bare, weedy yard becomes a backyard with a pool, a light porcelain patio, a cedar pergola over the dining table, and a fire bowl lounge beside the water. A green lawn for dogs and kids, tall grasses and a clipped evergreen hedge for privacy, and soft purple flowers all around finish the look.

Everything you asked for

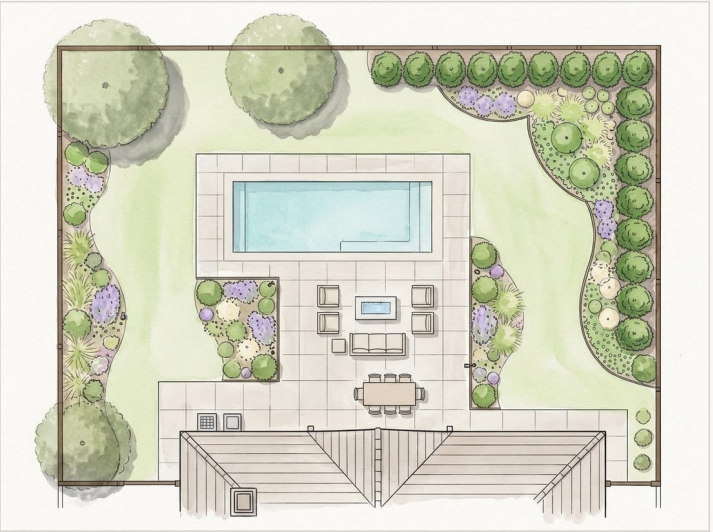
- **Dogs**
  Open lawn on the right, no toxic or thorny plants.
- **Shade & cover**
  Cedar pergola over the dining table by the house.
- **Fire pit**
  Square gas fire bowl in front of the sofa.
- **Lighting**
  String lights on pergola, path light at left bed.
- **Kids**
  Open lawn beside the pool and patio.
- **Privacy**
  Tall evergreen hedge along the right fence, grasses on left.
- **Outdoor dining**
  Table and chairs under the pergola, near the house.

DAY AND NIGHT

Lit for evenings, laid out from above



At night: path lights, uplights, string lights, and the pool lit from within.



From above: the layout everything else is drawn on. The planting, lighting and irrigation plans on the next pages sit on this sketch. An artist's sketch, not to scale.

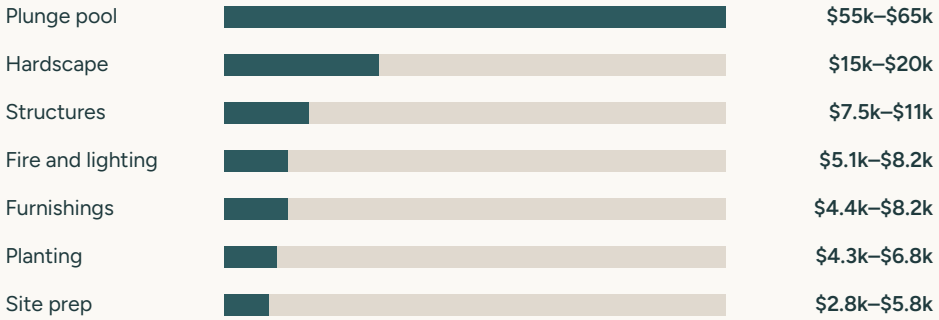
BUDGET

What it costs, two ways

CATEGORY	HIRE IT OUT installed	DO IT YOURSELF materials only
Hardscape	$14,500 – $20,000	$5,400 – $7,600
Planting	$4,300 – $6,800	$1,900 – $3,100
Structures	$7,500 – $11,000	$2,000 – $3,500
Fire and lighting	$5,100 – $8,200	$3,700 – $6,400
Furnishings	$4,400 – $8,200	$900 – $2,200
Plunge pool	$55,000 – $65,000	$54,500 – $65,500
Site prep	$2,800 – $5,800	$700 – $1,800
Total	**$93,600 – $125,000**	**$69,100 – $90,100**

Typical mid-market installed prices for your area. The do-it-yourself column is materials only; Gas fire pit / bowl and the plunge pool stay at the installed price because they need licensed trades. Not included: permits, design fees, lawn sprinkler zones (ask your installer to price them).

Where the money goes

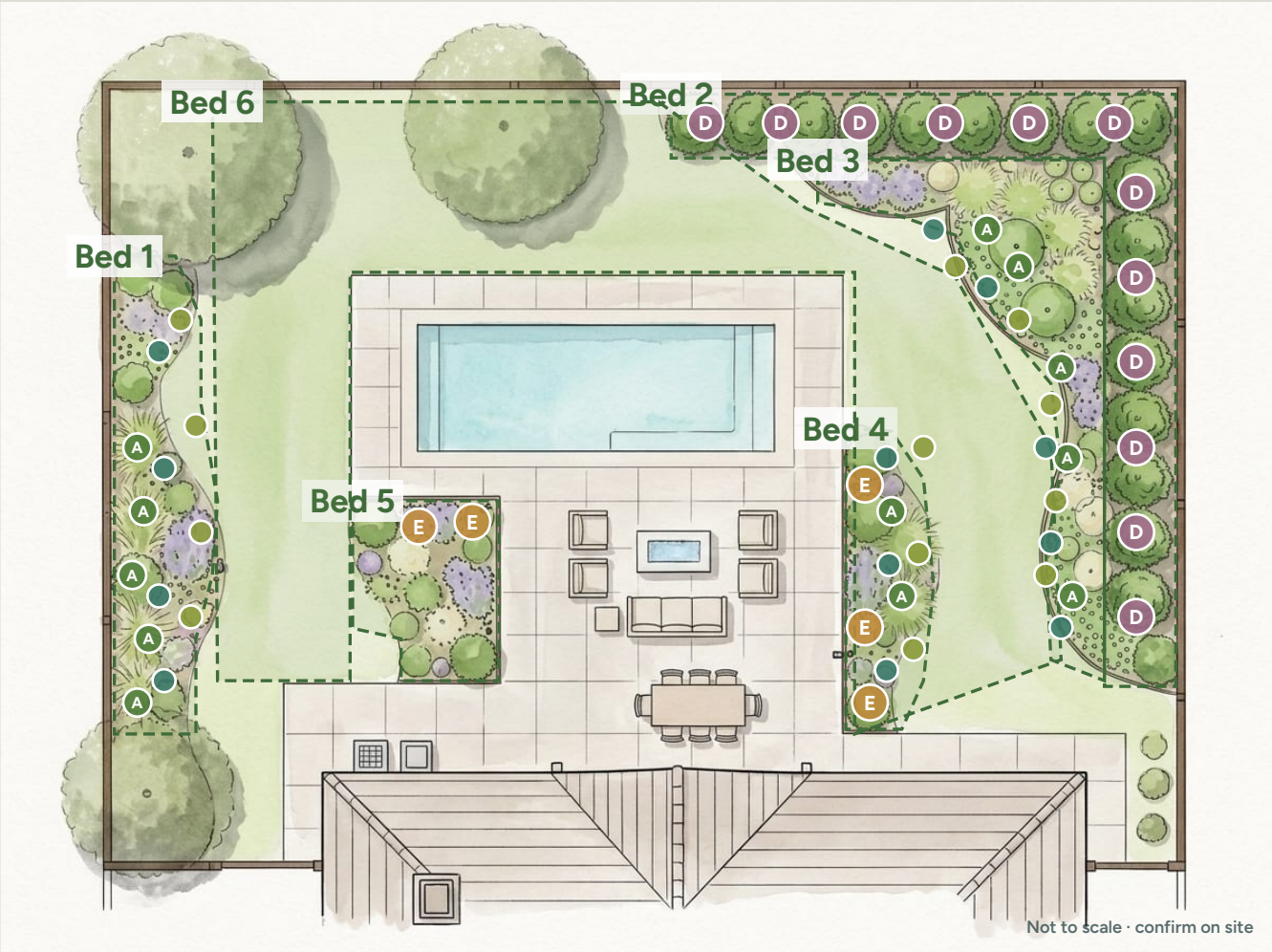


The pool is most of it

The large 20 ft × 10 ft precast plunge pool is about $35,000 for the shell, plus $18,000 – $32,000 for delivery, crane and install (5,335 gal). Without the pool, the rest of the yard runs about $38,600 – $60,000 installed. Confirm crane access, the electrical run and the permit with the installer.

SHEET L-1

Planting plan



Dots show where each plant goes. Set the plants out in their pots, step back and adjust, then plant. Bed-by-bed counts and spacing are on the plant schedule.

Plant key

A		**Feather reed grass** 18 × 1 gal
B		**May Night salvia** 20 × 1 gal
C		**Walker's Low catmint** 14 × 1 gal
D		**Emerald arborvitae** 14 × 3 gal
E		**Shamrock inkberry** 5 × 3 gal
		Bobo hydrangea 3 × 3 gal · not drawn; see the schedule

Beds

1. **Left bed along the fence**
2. **Right fence screen (arborvitae hedge)**
3. **Right-hand border at the lawn edge, below the hedge**
4. **Bed by the AC units and fence corner**
5. **Patio edge by the fire pit and seating**
6. **Lawn (new sod)**

PLANT SCHEDULE

74 plants, bed by bed

	PLANT	QTY	POT	SPACING	WHAT IT IS
A	**Feather reed grass** Calamagrostis × acutiflora 'Karl Foerster'	18	1 gal	24 in	Tall grass · full sun
B	**May Night salvia** Salvia nemorosa 'May Night'	20	1 gal	18 in	Purple spikes · full sun
C	**Walker's Low catmint** Nepeta × faassenii 'Walker's Low'	14	1 gal	24 in	Blue blooms · full sun
D	**Emerald arborvitae** Thuja occidentalis 'Smaragd'	14	3 gal	3 ft	Evergreen screen · full sun
E	**Shamrock inkberry** Ilex glabra 'Shamrock'	5	3 gal	3 ft	Round evergreen · sun to part shade
F	**Bobo hydrangea**	3	3 gal	3 ft	shrub

1 Left bed along the fence

Back: Feather reed grass ×9, in a loose drift against the fence. Middle: Walker's Low catmint ×4. Front: May Night salvia ×6 along the steel edging.

Grass 24 in. apart. Catmint 24 in. apart. Salvia 18 in. apart. Stagger the rows.

4 Bed by the AC units and fence corner

Back: Shamrock inkberry ×3 to screen the AC units, 3 ft off the unit and leaving 2 ft of service access. Middle: Bobo hydrangea ×3. Front: May Night salvia ×6 and Walker's Low catmint ×4.

Inkberry 3 ft apart. Hydrangea 3 ft apart. Salvia 18 in. and catmint 24 in.

2 Right fence screen (arborvitae hedge)

Emerald Green arborvitae ×14 in a single row in front of the fence. Add Feather reed grass ×4 as a transition at the near end.

Arborvitae 3 ft apart, 3 ft off the fence. Grass 24 in. apart.

5 Patio edge by the fire pit and seating

Shamrock inkberry ×2 as a low rounded accent in the bed corner nearest the seating. Keep this area open, with no tall plants.

3 ft apart, 2 ft from the pavers.

3 Right-hand border at the lawn edge, below the hedge

Back: Feather reed grass ×5 in small clumps. Front: May Night salvia ×8 and Walker's Low catmint ×6, in alternating drifts of 3-4.

Salvia 18 in. apart. Catmint 24 in. apart. Grass 24 in. apart.

L Lawn (new sod)

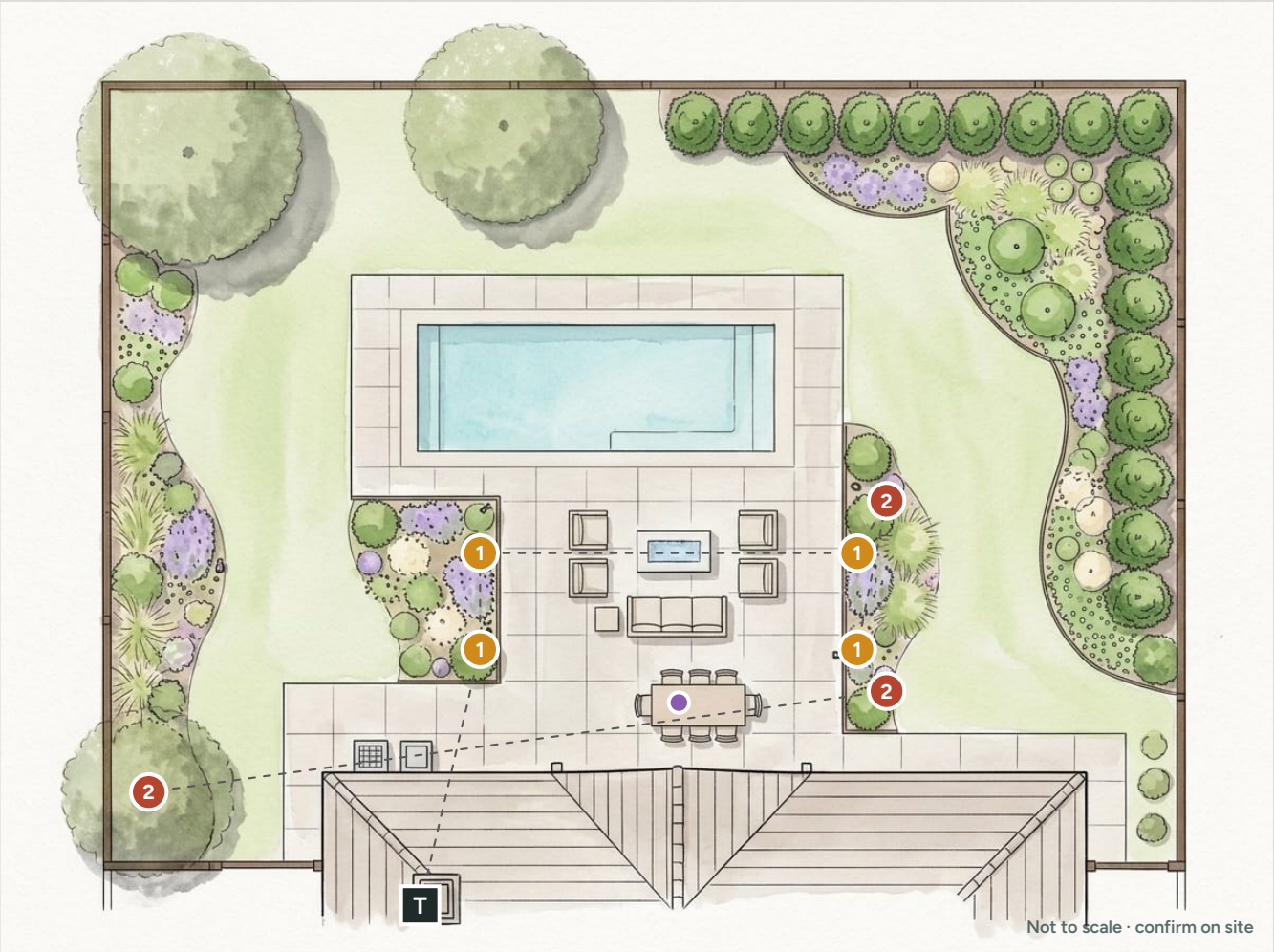
Lay 900 sq ft of sod around the pool and along the right border.

Butt the seams tight and stagger them like brick.

Plant list for your area (Midwest and Northeast (cold winters; zones 4–7)). Ask your nursery to swap anything that doesn't suit your yard.

SHEET E-1

Lighting plan



String lights plug into a GFCI outlet on their own; they aren't on the transformer. Low-voltage lighting is a homeowner-friendly job; anything on 120 V needs a licensed electrician.

Fixture schedule

1 Path light ×4

Two in the left-hand bed along the fence, 8 ft apart, to light the patio edge. Two in the right-hand bed by the lawn, set 8 ft apart and 12 in.

2 Uplight ×3

One aims up at the tree behind the house on the left. Two go in the planting bed near the AC units, washing the stucco wall and the taller arborvitae beside it.

String lights (run) ×1

Hang the single run across the cedar pergola above the dining table, in 2-3 swags on the beams. Plug it into a GFCI outlet on the house wall.

T Transformer

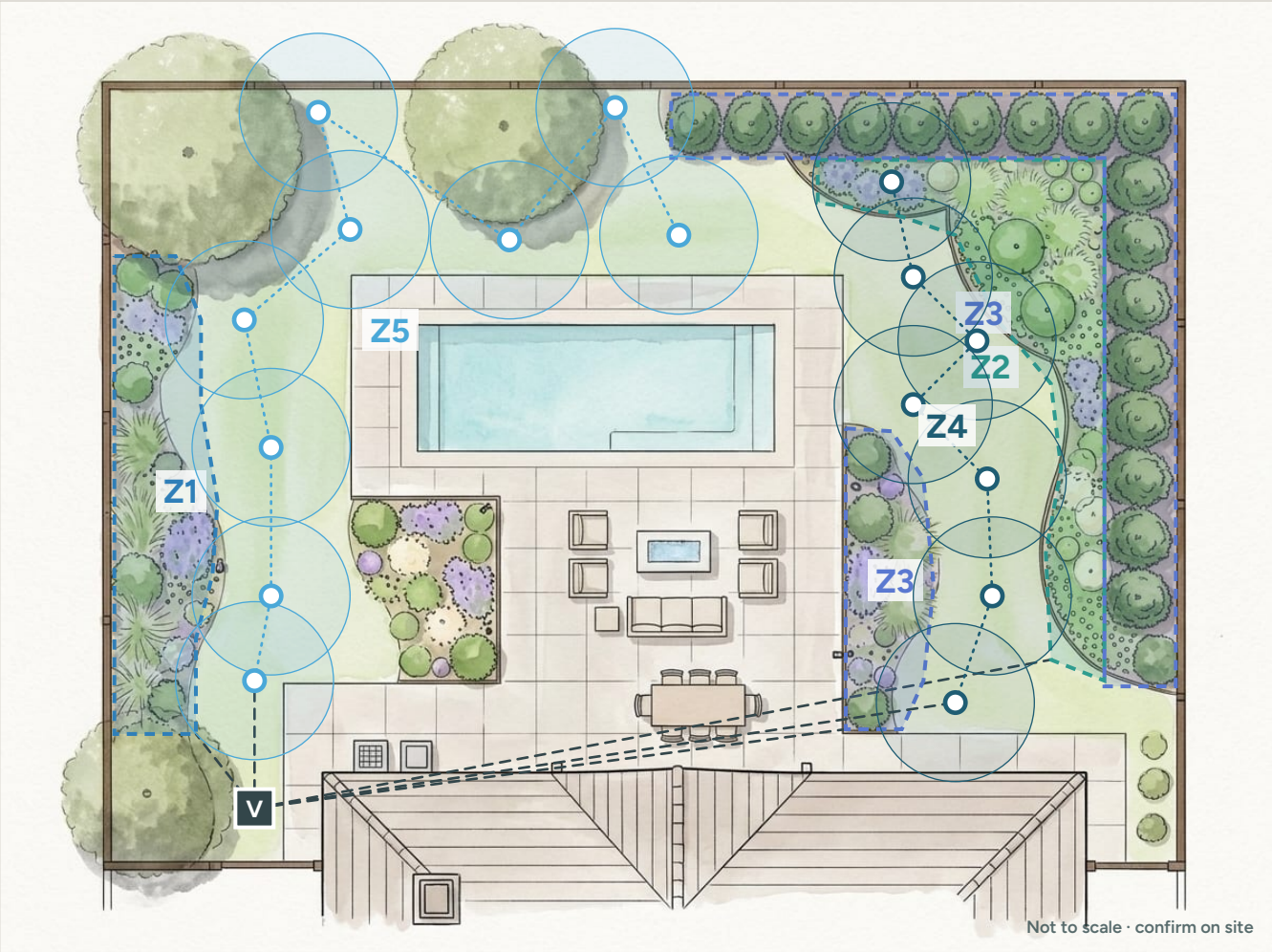
Buy a 150 W low-voltage transformer with a photocell and timer. The 7 fixtures draw about 35-50 W, which leaves room to add more. Keep each cable run under about 100 ft and use 12-gauge wire.

Cable run

Suggested path for the low-voltage cable, buried about 6 in. Keep each run under about 100 ft.

SHEET I-1

Irrigation plan



Before buying, check your water pressure (aim for 40-60 psi) and flow with a gauge and bucket test. Confirm local watering rules, permit needs and backflow preventer requirements with your water district.

Zone schedule

Z1 — Zone 1: Drip

Left bed along the fence: grasses, salvia and catmint. Parts: 3/4 in. valve with filter and 25-30 psi regulator. 1/2 in. drip tubing with 12 in. spaced emitters (or 1 gal/hr emitters on each plant). Stakes, end cap and flush valve.

Z2 — Zone 2: Drip

Right border below the hedge: salvia, catmint and grass. Parts: Valve, filter and regulator. 1/2 in. tubing with inline emitters. Stakes, end cap and flush valve.

Z3 — Zone 3: Drip

Arborvitae hedge (14 plants) and the AC-unit bed (inkberry, hydrangea). Parts: Valve, filter and regulator. 1/2 in. tubing with 2 emitters (2 gph) per 3 gal shrub, placed at the root ball. Stakes, end cap and flush valve.

Z4 — Zone 4: Spray or rotor

Lawn on the right side and along the front of the pool. Parts: Valve. Pop-up spray heads (4 in. or 6 in.) with matched-precipitation nozzles for the narrow strips, or rotors for the wide lawn. 3/4 in. poly pipe, swing joints and fittings. 7 heads shown; the circles are roughly what each one throws.

Z5 — Zone 5: Spray or rotor

Lawn on the left side and any remaining lawn behind the pool. Parts: Valve. Pop-up spray heads or rotors with head-to-head coverage. 3/4 in. poly pipe, swing joints and fittings. 9 heads shown; the circles are roughly what each one throws.

V — Valve box and controller

Valves in one box near the house and the water supply, wired to a smart controller. Run the mainline from here to each zone.

MATERIALS

Shopping list

ITEM	QTY	INSTALLED
Plunge pool, large 20 ft × 10 ft Precast shell about $35,000; delivery, crane and install $18,000 – $32,000	1 each	—
Porcelain pavers	520 sq ft	$12,480 – $19,760
Cedar pergola	150 sq ft	$6,750 – $12,000
Outdoor lounge or dining set	2 each	$3,600 – $9,000
Gas fire pit / bowl	1 each	$3,000 – $6,000
New sod 900 sq ft laid, plus extra for cuts and waste	1,000 sq ft	$1,200 – $2,200
Low-voltage lighting 4 path lights, 3 uplights, transformer and cable	7 fixtures	$1,050 – $1,800
Bed prep, soil and mulch	360 sq ft	$900 – $1,800
Steel edging	95 lin ft	$950 – $1,520
String lights (run)	1 each	$400 – $1,000
Drip / irrigation Drip for the beds. The lawn sprinkler zones aren't in this estimate	360 sq ft	$360 – $720
Plants 6 kinds; see the plant schedule	74 plants	—

BUILD ORDER

Build it in this order

1. **Plan and permits**
   Get bids, pull the pool and gas permits, and call 811 to mark utilities before anyone digs.

2. **Pool and rough-in**
   Set the pool by crane, then run the gas line, the electrical, the irrigation mainline while the yard is open.

3. **Hardscape and structures**
   Base and paving, then the pergola or shade, then set the fire feature.

4. **Beds and lighting**
   Edge and prep the beds, lay the drip lines, plant and mulch, then set the lights and the transformer.

5. **Lawn last**
   Lay sod or seed once the heavy equipment is gone. Water daily for the first 2 weeks and keep traffic off until it roots.

> **Phase it if you like**
> The first phases are the big spend and the messy work. Beds, lighting and lawn can wait a season and still go in cleanly.

GETTING BIDS

Five things to do before you hire

1. **Send the same plan to everyone**
   Email this PDF with two or three fresh photos of the yard. Ask each contractor to price it line by line using the categories on page 5, so the bids compare side by side.

2. **Ask who handles the licensed work**
   The plunge pool, the gas line, any 120 V wiring need licensed trades and usually permits. Ask who pulls the permits and who does each part.

3. **Check crane access for the pool**
   A precast pool comes in by crane. Ask the installer to confirm the crane can reach the yard and what that costs.

4. **Get the warranty and schedule in writing**
   Ask what the plant and workmanship warranty covers and for how long, the start and finish dates, and a payment schedule tied to finished work.

5. **Call 811 first**
   Free utility marking before anyone digs. Your contractor should do it; make sure it's done.

YEAR-ONE CARE

Keep it looking like the picture

Late winter
Cut ornamental grasses and perennials back before new growth starts. Prune shrubs that bloom on new wood.

Spring
Top up mulch to 2–3 in. Turn the irrigation back on, flush the drip lines and check every head.

Summer
Water deeply once a week through the first summer, more in a heat wave. Deadhead and shear perennials after their first bloom.

Fall
Keep watering evergreens until the ground freezes. Where winters freeze, blow out the irrigation lines.

Notes for this design
Build first: the patio base, pergola and gas line, then the pool area. Plant the beds and lay sod last so heavy machinery doesn't tear them up.

Water new sod daily for the first 2 weeks. Put the beds on drip, then water deeply once a week in the first summer. After that, the grasses, salvia and catmint need little extra water.

Cut grasses and perennials back in late winter. Keep the arborvitae hedge trimmed lightly, and fence off new sod from the dogs until it roots in.

Want it measured and modeled?

A designer models your home in 3D, with a video walkthrough, renders with the lights placed, and measured planting and materials plans. Your $49 counts toward it.

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