

**Imagine having a
Beautiful Back Yard
And the Time to Enjoy It!**

**Tips for Hiring the Right Lawn Care
Company for You and Your Family**

**The Things YOU Should Look for when Hiring a Lawn Care
Company That will Keep YOU and Your Family Safe.**

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**Hi, I am Chris Dominy,
Owner of BestYard.com.**

**Thank You for taking the
time to read this guide.**

**I have advised thousands
of homeowners on how
to choose the best lawn
care company for their
homes, and more
importantly, their
family's Safety and
Health.**

**Please use the
information in this guide
to help you keep both
your lawn, and your
family safe.**



Tip #1. Know What You Need or Want.

If you're looking for a cheapo, cut and run, inexperienced, no guarantee, won't call you back, doesn't show up when they say they will lawn care company...

Save yourself the aggravation, pay the neighbor's son to do it. You come off cheap, the kid learns about responsibilities.

Are you a DIY, or do you want a professional maintenance programs?

Consider the various categories of lawn and garden care:

- ✓ mowing and edging;
- ✓ fertilizing;
- ✓ weed pulling or killing;
- ✓ bug and/or disease treatment;
- ✓ lawn aeration;
- ✓ irrigation system maintenance and repair;
- ✓ trimming of shrubs or hedges;
- ✓ planting or reseeding;
- ✓ mulching;
- ✓ clean-up and hauling;
- ✓ seasonal color;
- ✓ and more.

How much time, energy and money is needed to accomplish each one?

Do you have the time, health or knowledge to do them well?

Which of these are on your "to-do" list, and which do you want to move to someone else's list?

Do you want a company to take care of your landscape needs and turn it into the real paradise you desire?

How would your quality of life or your yard improve by making certain changes?

Tip #2. Check Company History and Reputation

How long have they been in business?

It takes little more than good intentions and a mower to start a lawn business, but it takes far more to run a professional, sustainable company. As a result the failure rates for the industry are staggering. 50% will go out of business within the first year. By the end of the fifth year, nearly 90% will have closed their doors for good. This is not to say you should not consider hiring a newly formed company (we all start somewhere,) but generally the longer a company has been in business the more likely they are to be around in the future.

What type of reputation do they have?

✓ Have they won awards for providing outstanding service?

Recognition by outside independent organizations give homeowners a sense of the quality of the services and the professionalism of the company.

✓ What are their reviews on Google, Yelp, Yellow Pages, Super Pages, BBB?

Reviews can give you a preview of the company. In today's internet world your reputation precedes you. Companies with a number of consistently high reviews give social proof of a company's reputation. Beware of only a few reviews that are overly positive as they may have been written by the company. Even the best service companies make mistakes. Look for an occasional bad review and how the company responded.

✓ Are they members of professional organizations with high standards?

Professional organizations promote training, education, certification, high standards, and ethical behavior to raise the standard of their industry.

✓ Are they a local, family owned business vs. a large national chain?

A local, family owned business can offer better, more personalized service than large corporations or national chains because their personal reputation and income depend on it. Large chains have one size fits all national standards. It is okay for food from McDonalds, but not for lawn care that needs to be tailored to the varying climate, soil, and unique conditions on the Colorado Front Range.

Tip #3. Keep your Family, Pets, & Lawn Safe.

Do you prescreen your employees?

Does the company check references? Perform criminal background checks? Are they legally in the country? Do they speak fluent English? Do you have **strict written policies** that prohibit the use of drugs or alcohol by your crews?

Are you insured? What happens if something is broken or damaged?

Proper insurance (at least one million dollars in coverage - two million is better) is vital. An uninsured company will absolutely be cheaper, but when damage is done, they are also the ones who will not be able to afford to compensate you for it, leaving you to foot the bill. Always verify insurance coverage through the company's insurance provider.

Do you carry workman's compensation insurance on all of your employees? Workman's comp is required for all employees under Colorado law, yet many companies do not comply because it is so expensive. This opens you up to significant risk of lawsuit if a employee is injured in your home. The risk is even greater with an independent contractor, since technically YOU are their employer.

Do you only use employees instead of sub contractors that are paid by the job (and have no liability insurance)?

Are all of your crew members in uniform and trained to be attentive to domestic and security needs?

Are your Lawn Technicians Colorado State Licensed Applicators?

Lawn care companies may boast that they have licensed technicians. But is the person fertilizing your lawn licensed? Often, due to staffing costs, lawn care companies staff ONE licensed technician so they can advertise that they are State licensed and certified. So it's best to check to make sure YOUR LAWN'S technician is. Licensed technicians are trained by the State to safely apply your fertilizer products. Don't gamble with your family's safety!

Are all materials you use on my yard approved by the EPA and safe for my family and pets?

Tip #4: Check Guarantee & Service Policy.

Everyone says they have great guarantee and service.

Unfortunately the industry is full of fly by night service companies that deliver poor quality, never call you back, have lousy communication skills, and are generally unprofessional and unreliable.

Here are questions to differentiate good from the bad.

✓ Is your guarantee in writing and on your website? Is it this good

- **My Personal 100% Iron-Clad, Risk Free, Money-Back Guarantee to You!**
- I want you to be totally thrilled with our service... so absolutely delighted you will recommend us to your friends and neighbors. I want to care for your lawn forever. If our work is not excellent, I will re-do the item in question for FREE. If you are still not happy, you will not owe one red cent.
- Nothing is more important to me than your complete satisfaction.

For Service ask these questions:

- ✓ **Do you have a written 18 point Customer Service Commitment?**
- ✓ **Do you conduct frequent Customer Satisfaction Surveys to insure and maintain quality work and service?**
- ✓ **Do you have a full time office and customer service staff we can call and speak to personally?**
- ✓ **Can we call you 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year and leave service requests?**
- ✓ **Do you have a firm policy to return all calls?
Morning calls by 1 PM and all afternoon calls by 6 PM.**
- ✓ **Do you respond to service calls within 48 hours?**
- ✓ **Do you do call ahead notification before lawn care or sprinkler visit so I will not be surprised and have the gate unlocked and pets inside?**

Tip #5: Check Training, Quality, & Follow Through

✓ **What does your training program consist of?**

The turnover in the industry is high, and many services are just desperate for “warm bodies” to throw out there and get the work done. It is not uncommon for new hires to get very little training, or no training at all. The best companies will have formal, documented, on-going training programs. This helps ensure consistency in quality and reduce the turnover of the staff who service your yard.

✓ **Are they are backed up and supervised by a certified agronomist?**

✓ **Are all your Lawn Technicians Colorado State Licensed Applicators to apply fertilizers and chemicals so it is safe for my pets, children, me, and the environment?**

✓ **Are your gardening Crew Leaders Certified or have horticulture degrees to provide me the best knowledge and care?**

✓ **Do you have a formal quality assurance program in place?**

What methods do the company use to measure quality on an ongoing basis? Do they perform regular quality checks, mail surveys, leave behind comment cards, or do follow up phone calls? If so how frequently? Do they have a specific person in charge of quality assurance?

✓ **Do you provide a warranty for projects on all labor and workmanship?**

✓ **If you damage sprinkler heads when on my property, do you have an in house sprinkler technician that will fix the damage for free?**

✓ **Do you provide a free mid-summer written inspection of my lawn telling the status of my lawn, any issues, and recommendations for a better yard?**

Tip #6: Check Services and Pricing

✓ **Do they offer the services I want?**

Some independent guys focus on just mowing, blowing and going -- on to the next yard. Others offer a full spectrum of lawn or yard services.

If you need multiple services it is best to go with one company.

You want to be certain the same company providing your lawn mowing service also provides the fertilization and weed control service.

The mowing service needs to be timed and coordinated around each fertilization, weed control treatment, pre-emergent application and any necessary turf disease treatments.

Likewise, if mowing or aeration breaks a sprinkler head or cuts a landscape lighting or invisible dog fence, the company should have a certified sprinkler technician to make the repairs and for free.

Separate companies cannot deliver this important coordination of lawn services. It is easier for the client in dealing with only one company and not have to coordinate services.

✓ **Buyer Beware: The LOW-LOW First Application Price.**

You see it in your mailbox: "First Application \$29.99." What they don't tell you is that for the rest of the season they are going to charge you \$75 an application. It's the old bait-and-switch tactic that the "national" guys play. They get you to sign up based on the low first application price, and continue to provide services at a much higher price throughout the rest of the season. Make sure that you compare annual costs when shopping lawn care companies.

✓ **All Programs ARE NOT Created Equal, Compare Apples to Apples.**

Every company is different. From the number of treatments to insect and weed control. Make sure when you compare quotes you are comparing the same services. Be sure you are getting prices based on the same measurements. Don't think you need one of the services? The company should be able to tell you why the service is important. If not, they could be adding the cost of something you don't need. This is a very competitive industry. If something is dramatically cheaper, they may be leaving something out or cutting corners. **The price between a poor-fair job vs. a great job, or damage vs. no damage, or poor service vs. good service, is often the cost of a Starbuck's Latte.**

Tip #7: Choose Experts Who Provide Education

✓ **All Mowers or Landscapers ARE NOT Lawn Care Companies.**

While cardiologists and optometrists may both deal with medicine, they have two very different practices.

The same is true with landscapers and lawn care companies.

Just because a mower or landscaper has a spreader, does not mean that they are licensed and trained to apply fertilizer products. Always check to make sure that your lawn technician is in fact licensed and trained in lawn care.

Would you want your eye doctor performing heart surgery on you?

✓ **A Good Lawn Care Company Provides Education & Advice.**

Good lawn care companies want to answer your questions and provide education. The best client is an informed one.

Lawn care is a partnership between you, the client, and the service provider. Both have responsibilities to perform to get your lawn to look it's best.

A good lawn care company provides on line resource libraries and guides, monthly newsletters, weekly tips, lawn alerts and overall education and advice on how to get your yard to look its best.

Tip 8: Get Best Practices on Each Service

Mowing Best Practices

- ✓ For the best cut use small 21 - 30" mowers to avoid scalping, soil compaction, ruts, and damage done by big equipment.
- ✓ Sharpen blades every 6 – 8 hours of mowing time for better and crisper cuts.
- ✓ Cut no more than the top 1/3 of the grass blade at a time to avoid stressing the grass.
- ✓ Cut at 3" to promote deep root development. Cutting shorter will stress the grass and cause shallower root development more prone to disease, weeds, and drought.
- ✓ Change your mowing patterns weekly to avoid ruts and soil compaction.
- ✓ Train your technician on proper techniques to produce a "Great Cut" every time. (Think barber or beauty college training and certification for lawn care providers.)
- ✓ Use a 23 point Quality Control Checklist that ensures everything looks its best, and the dog doesn't get out.

Lawn Care Best Practices

- ✓ Make sure your lawn care technician is trained and licensed by the State of Colorado to apply products.
- ✓ Use lawn Use 65 - 85% slow release, granular phosphorous free fertilizer. Fertilizer is available in two forms: slow release and quick release. Slow release provides more uniform plant growth over a longer period of time, with less chance of injury to the grass and a reduced potential for leaching. Quick release nitrogen promotes rapid grass growth and dark green color, but is more likely to leach through the soil.
- ✓ Fertilizer 3x per year
- ✓ Use "Professional Use Only" chemicals for weeds, insects, and disease to get better results.

Aerations & Over seeding Best Practices

- ✓ Do both Spring and Fall aerations.
- ✓ Water thoroughly before aeration to insure "good plugs" are pulled.
- ✓ Over seed to build density on thin lawns, and keep thick lawns thick.

Extra Tip: To get the Best Yard in your neighborhood, the envy of your neighbors, use BestYard.com

OF COURSE we would love to care for your yard.

BUT whether we provide for your yard or not, we want it to be the best it can be.

THEREFORE we want to provide you the best professional advice for your lawn care.



THIS IMPROVES our neighborhoods, community, and environment.

The best clients for BestYard.com Professionals are knowledgeable clients.


We realize that most people want great looking lawns, beautiful gardens, and efficient sprinklers but are unsure of where to start in knowing the right questions to ask to choose the right company.

For your convenience I have included a three page checklist of questions to help you choose the right lawn care company for you, your family, and your yard.

As you might expect coming from a company named BestYard.com, it sets a standard few companies will be able to meet.

Best wishes to you in hiring the right company for you.

Homeowner's Guide for Hiring a Professional Landscape Contractor
Before You Hire Any Landscape Contractor
Make Sure They Answer YES to All 30 Questions

Use These 30 Questions to Make an "Apples to Apples" Comparison of the Companies You Talk To About Your Project.	 720-851-7550	Company 2	Company 3
History, Reputation and Stability of Contractor:			
Have you been in business for 20 consecutive years under the same company name?	✓		
Do you have the highest ratings on Google, Yellow Pages, Super Pages? Yes. Over 275 Reviews with 94% Satisfaction. Click Happy Customers.	✓		
Are all employees US citizen or have valid VISAs, speak fluent English, have a clean background check, and have a drug, alcohol, smoke and tobacco free free workplace?	✓		
Do you maintain \$2 Million of Liability, Commercial Vehicle and Workers Compensation insurance to cover damage to my property, and cover employees injured on the job?	✓		
Are you a member of ALCC, the Association of Landscape Contractors in Colorado, and NALP, the National Association of Landscape Professionals, the most recognized state and national professional associations in the landscape industry?	✓		
Do you maintain business accounts with local suppliers and are you in good standing?	✓		
Have you won The Best Lawn & Garden Maintenance Company for the past 10 years?	✓		
Does the Better Business Bureau (BBB) give you their highest rating of A+	✓		
Agreements & Guarantees:			
Do your agreements specifically spell out all contingencies regarding the price?	✓		
Do you have the strongest 100% Iron-Clad, Risk Free, Money-Back Guarantee to You! in Colorado for any lawn care company?	✓		
Do you commit to provide for our lawn in an environmentally responsible way?	✓		
Projects and Experience:			
Does the owner have over 12 years of experience in the lawn maintenance industry?	✓		
Are all of your technicians certified as required by the State?	✓		

Do you have a written 23 step-by-step quality check list for the work we perform on my property?	✓		
Have you successfully completed over 100,000 jobs in the last 10 years?	✓		
Do your gardening crew leaders have horticulture degrees to provide you with the best knowledge and care?	✓		
Service:			
Do you have a full-time office and customer service staff we can call and speak to personally instead of getting only voice mail?	✓		
Do you have a firm policy to return all morning calls by 1 PM and all afternoon calls by 6 PM?	✓		
Are all of your crew members in uniform and trained to be attentive to domestic and security needs?	✓		
Do you have 24/7 access to your web site to search for lawn care information, request & cancel services, manage my account, pay for my services?	✓		
Do you have strict written policies that prohibit the use of alcohol, drugs, tobacco, or smoking by your crews?	✓		
Do your crews have a written daily cleanup procedure?	✓		
Do you respond to all service calls within 48 hours?	✓		
Do you offer free monthly and weekly lawn care tips?	✓		
Does your web site offer free information about lawn care, problems, diagnosis, and what to do instructions?	✓		
Follow Up and Follow Through:			
Do you provide a warranty for projects on all labor and workmanship? (If you are not satisfied, we fix it or it is free.)	✓		
Do you conduct client satisfaction surveys on regular intervals to maintain quality and satisfaction?	✓		
If you damage sprinkler heads when on my property, do you have an in-house sprinkler technician that will fix the damage for free?	✓		
Do you provide a free mid-summer written inspection of my lawn telling the status of my lawn, any issues, and recommendations for a better yard?	✓		
Do you notify me before lawn care and sprinkler services?	✓		

