2027 international landscape design awards



2026 Landscape Designer of the Year – Gold Award, Residential Design
Allen Denomy, Denomy Designs
Pueblo Paradise



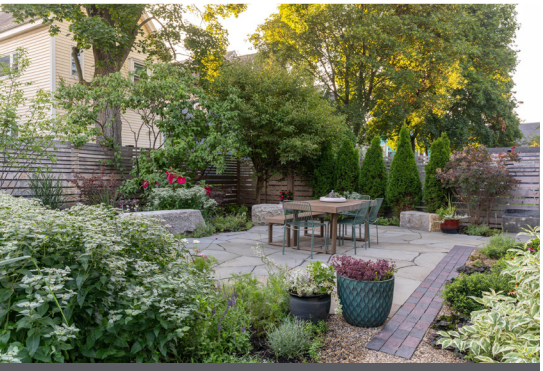
2026 Best of Show
Gold Award
Alexis Davis Millar Landscape Architecture
Paramount Enchanted
Small Gardens



Gold Award
Katherine Field and Associates
Bay Bridge
Residential Design



Gold Award
Prideaux Design
Bedford Place
Residential Design



Gold Award
Joanna McCoy/a Blade of Grass
Between the Lines
Residential Design

2027 APLD International Landscape Design Awards Call for Entries

The APLD International Landscape Design Awards Program honors excellence in landscape design by recognizing individual landscape designers and their projects. The program brings exceptional talent to the attention of peers, potential clients and the world of design.

All entries will be part of an intensive multi-level screening process. A distinguished panel of experts judges the entries to select Gold, Silver and Bronze award recipients. Projects are judged on the basis of difficulty, craftsmanship, attention to detail and specific criteria outlined in the awards entry packet. There are no set number of awards to be presented. Judges may select multiple Gold, Silver and Bronze awards in each category based on qualifying scores. Awards may or may not be given in every category.

Each entry category is evaluated independently. The type, size and cost of the project will not be criteria for judging. The judging criteria totals 100 points. Projects scoring 90 points or above will receive Gold awards. Projects scoring between 80 to 89 points will receive Silver awards. Bronze awards are given at the judges discretion for projects scoring between 75 and 79 points.

From the gold award winning entries, the judges will choose the 2027 APLD Best of Show. This award can be given to an individual designer, design collaboration, or design practice.

The 2027 Landscape Designer of the Year is a judges' award, based on the following criteria:

- Interprets the space in a unique way
- Shows a creative solution to a landscape challenge
- Is innovative with the use of materials and resources
- Has a uniquely creative vision for the space
- Their project elicits a, "Wow, I wish I would have thought of that!" response to the design

Entrants are encouraged to use the online application, **www.apld.org/landscape-design-awards-entry**, to submit their projects for consideration.

Deadline for entries: January 15, 2027

Publicity for Winners

Award winners are promoted on the APLD website, social media, to the press and through the association's publications. Winners are also provided with digital resources so they can self-promote as a 2027 APLD International Landscape Design award recipient.



Gold Award
Nick Ackerman/Glengate
Beyond the Hedges
Residential Design



Gold Award
Hess Landscape Architects
Family Sanctuary
Residential Design



Gold Award
Melissa Horner/Refugia Design
Garden District Reimagined
Residential Design



Gold Award
David Thorne Landscape Architect, Inc.
Hillside Hacienda
Residential Design

Landscape Design Categories

Submissions in each of these eight categories will be judged based on the criteria outlined elsewhere in this packet.

Residential Design
Design of a single family residential property regardless of size and based on the following cost categories:

Residential #1: under $25,000
Residential #2: between $25,000 – $100,000
Residential #3: over $100,000

Non-residential Design
Non-residential #1: under $100,000
Non-residential #2: between $100,000 – $500,000
Non-residential #3: over $500,000

Small Gardens
Designs in a limited space of no more than 1500 sq. ft. (140 sq. meters)

Planting Design
Any installed project where the primary focus is planting design

Specialty Projects
This area includes garden features, theme gardens, therapeutic gardens, educational gardens, rooftop gardens, sustainable designs, green roof installations, historic preservation, permaculture, etc.

Show Gardens
Temporary gardens, including conceptual gardens that are designed and constructed for a garden show or exhibition

Details
Specific, constructed hardscape detail that is unique, creative and unusual. Focus on sustainable or repurposed materials, a challenged budget and/or a high degree of difficulty should be noted.

Outdoor Lighting
This category focuses on outdoor lighting design installations.
Please be sure to review the entry requirements on the following pages thoroughly for instructions specific to outdoor lighting projects.

The same project may be entered in more than one category. A second entry of the same project should be treated as its own entry, meaning it should have its own photos, its own distinct written brief describing the merits of the project specific to that category as well as its own entry form and payment.

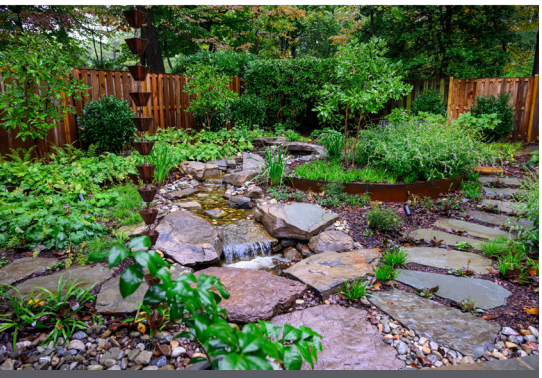
The APLD Awards Committee reserves the right to move an entry into a more appropriate category if it deems it necessary.



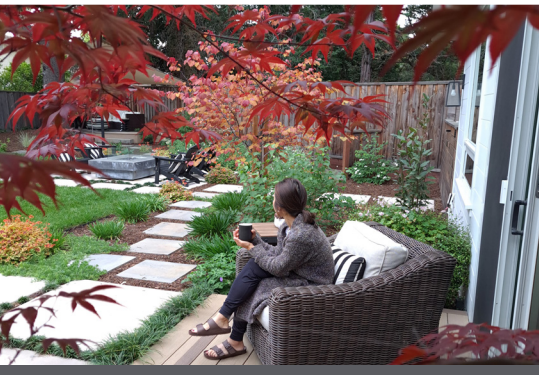
Gold Award
Susan Cohan Gardens
Pelham Garden
Residential Design



Gold Award
Trace Robinson, Landscape Designer & Builder
Picacho
Residential Design



Gold Award
Edamarie Mattei & Rebecca Wall, Backyard Bounty
Streamside Retreat
Residential Design



Gold Award
Laura Kukulski & Linda Middleton, Terralinda Design
Suburban Serenity
Residential Design

Entry Requirements

- Submitted projects must have been installed for no fewer than two years. The following entry categories are the exception to this rule: Show Gardens (where there is an allowance for the temporary nature of the project), Details and Outdoor Lighting.
- Entrants must adhere to APLD's standards of practice as they relate to commitment to the environment: www.apld.org/standards-of-practice
- Projects that do not receive an award may be resubmitted in another year.
- APLD is not responsible for lost, damaged or incomplete entries. Submission materials will not be returned, and will be retained by APLD for use as necessary for the advancement and educational purposes of APLD.

Written Brief – Required

Submit written documents in a PDF format. The brief cannot exceed 500 words, using a font size of 10 pt, in an easily read font such as Arial. The brief will contain, in this specific order:

1. USDA hardiness zone, climate zone, or worldwide equivalent
2. Site conditions
3. Client's needs
4. Design intent
5. Project description (overall scope of project, specific features – structural, or plantings)
6. Environmental responsibility
7. Individual designer's role or collaborative effort
   Specify pre-existing or work performed by others, over which you had no control. State specifically what portions of the project were designed or directed by you or the team. (For example, responsible for planting design; or worked with owner and contractor during plant installation, specifying substitutions as necessary, and directed plant placement.)

Landscape Plan – Required

One landscape plan is preferred, but up to three plans will be accepted. Plans should include: **main landscape design, feature/hardscape plan and planting plan with plant locations, quantities and spacing.** Plan must include:

- Labeling of all woody plant material, either on the landscape plan or a separate planting plan. Plant masses may be labeled as a group (wooded area, etc.) *Note: Entries in the category of Planting Design must label both woody and herbaceous plant material.*
- Drawing Scale, including graphic scale, to portray relevance in a PDF format
- North arrow (the exception to this is a show garden)
- Identification of prominent features in the landscape
- Plans may include contours, or spot contours, if pertinent
- Specialty Category ONLY: Other sketches/drawings may also be included, if necessary to illustrate the project
- Plans do not have to be colored
- Convert all plans, drawings and CAD files to a PDF file ***(should not exceed 2 MB)***

In lieu of a landscape plan, entries in the Outdoor Lighting category should include a lighting plan showing locations and types of light fixtures.

Planting List – Required

All entries must include a complete planting list including quantity, botanic name (in alphabetical order) and size. The list may be included on the landscape plan. Projects in the Outdoor Lighting category should include a materials list stating types and quantities of fixtures, controllers, etc.



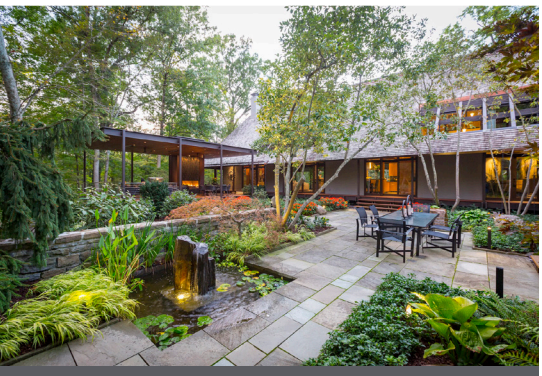
Gold Award
Tish Campbell — Tish Landscape Design
Stillwater
Residential Design



Gold Award
Mullein Designs
The Gathering Scene
Residential Design



Gold Award
Envision Landscape Studio
Warford
Residential Design



Gold Award
Stride Studios
Woods Edge
Residential Design

Photo Files – Required

Specifications:

- Photos must be submitted in JPG format (orientation can be either landscape or portrait).
  -> Projects less than 15,000 square feet may submit up to 10 photos
  -> Projects more than 15,000 square feet may submit up to 15 photos
- Individual photos should not exceed 2MB. If your project is selected as an award winner, you will be required to submit high resolution photos of your project. (Winner photos will require image resolution at no less than 300 dpi; and should not be smaller than 6000 x 4000 pixels.)
- For entries subject to the two year minimum installation requirement, most photos should reflect the mature landscape (please do not submit only photos of the project taken shortly after installation).
- If possible, please include at least one 'before' photo. A 'before' photo that shows as much of the project's scope as possible is very helpful during judging and makes for a stronger submission.
- Entries in the Outdoor Lighting category should include both daytime photos of the landscape and nighttime photos of the illuminated landscape to help judges evaluate the effectiveness of the lighting design.
- Upload and label the photos in the order that you would like them viewed during judging in this specific manner (projectname_01.jpg, projectname_02.jpg, etc.). Do not have any other information in the file titles.
- Indicate which photo would be preferred for the plaque on the entry form. If a plaque photo is not designated, APLD Headquarters and the Awards Committee reserve the right to choose the plaque photo.
- Do not alter/retouch photos in a way that creates deception, including adjustments using AI technology.

Photo Descriptions – Required

Enter a photo description online for each photo before it is uploaded. Limit photo descriptions to 10 words for each photograph. Number each description the same as the particular photo. Use these to organize your brief.

Photo Plan – Required

- Include a simplified landscape plan, in PDF format, with labeled identification of photographic positions.
- Number the location of each picture.
- Photo locators may also be included on the landscape plan.

Material Use and Photo Credit Release – Required

- A release form must accompany all entries, which is part of this package.
- All submissions become the property of APLD. The winning projects may be used by APLD for promotional purposes, including but not limited to promoting the association, promoting the profession, promoting award entries and recipients using communication vehicles that include, but are not limited to, the APLD website and association publications, accompanying news releases to online and traditional media and social media.
- Do not use the client's name on a submission without permission.
- APLD will provide a photo credit if the name of the photographer is included.

NOTE: Submissions must be kept anonymous for judging. Please ensure that client and company names (including collaborators) are not included on any submission materials, except the entry form. Projects that do not meet all of the submission requirements will be automatically disqualified. The ruling of the judges is final.



Gold Award
Angell Landscape Architecture PLLC
Cape Dune Garden
Planting Design



Gold Award
Nate Huse and Jenika Florence, Kinghorn Gardens
Overlook Meadow
Planting Design



Gold Award
Howrks
Eco-Courtyard
Specialty Projects



Gold Award
Harris Bugg Studio
Horatio's Garden Sheffield & East
Specialty Projects

Judging Criteria

Project creativity – 25 points

- Has the space been transformed creatively?
- Does the design have clarity and spatial awareness?
- Does the design result in a unified, harmonious garden/landscape?
- Does the design flow and have good transitions between elements?
- Is design in scale with the size of the site/property, etc.?
- Does the design meet the client brief?

Overall design – 25 points

- The design shows sensitivity to the client's needs, the site's potential and the environment
- Design principles are appropriately used (i.e. unity, balance, scale, etc.)
- The elements of the design blend harmoniously

Technical merit – 25 points

- The design functions well
- Quality of workmanship and finish is of a high standard
- The choice of materials enhances the design
- Difficult problems have been solved
- The project shows sensitivity to sustainable practices for its location (conserve natural resources and energy, reduce waste, protect ecosystems, etc.)

Planting design – 25 points

- Appropriateness is displayed in plant selection
- Creativity is displayed in plant use
- Design principles are clearly displayed (i.e. unity, balance, layering, etc.)
- Planting design displays masterful use of texture, color, scale and form
- Plants have been chosen to minimize future maintenance and negative impact on the environment

Please note:

Entries in the Planting Design category will only be judged by the criterion of planting design. (100 points)

Entries in the categories of Details, Outdoor Lighting, Show Gardens and Specialty Projects will only be judged by the criteria of project creativity and overall design. (50 points for creativity, 50 points for overall design)

Projects are not competing against each other for Gold, Silver or Bronze awards. Only gold award winning projects will be judged against each other for the top awards of Landscape Designer of the Year and Best of Show.

Make sure to review the tips for a strong entry on the next page before preparing your submission!

Association of Professional Landscape Designers
APLD

Tips for a Strong Entry

Be SURE to follow the entry instructions.

Be prepared. Try to avoid sending your entry in at the last minute when there is no time to rectify errors.

Be confident in your project's excellence. If you consider your project to be exceptional, then offer it for judges review.

Be patient. If plants are a key component, allow plantings to mature sufficiently. Judges strongly advise that you do not enter your garden too early.

Be careful in your category selection. Call the office if you question your selection choice.

Be clear and concise in your narrative. Convey your site's conditions and challenges as well as your project's story and uniqueness. Judges often mention that they do not have a good sense of the overall project.

Be fastidious in preparing your project for photos. Make sure the area has been recently maintained.

Be aware of the importance of good photography. Let the photos embellish the story of the project. An early photo should show the totality of the project, so judges can sense the scope – this helps orient them to the space. Remember your photos are the only way the judges can view your project. Choose them carefully. Tips:

- If applicable, be sure to include a before and after photo taken from the same vantage point.
- Take photos in the best light. You should usually avoid bright sunlight.
- If you doubt your abilities, consider consulting a landscape photography book, such as *The Art of Garden Photography*, by Ian Adams, buying a tripod or hiring a professional photographer.
- Make sure walks and patios are clean; leaves are picked up, spent flowers and brown foliage removed. Remove hoses and other items that distract from the landscape project.
- Include close-up shots of important details and big picture landscape photos taken from a deck, balcony, etc.
- Avoid close-up pictures of flowers and plants.
- Photograph when planting is mature and filled in.

Be creative. Consider portraying your project at various times of the day or season, or after a rain or a watering. Wonderful focal points may warrant photos from differing perspectives. Sometimes the angle of a shot can help. Think about climbing a ladder. Move the subject off-center in the shot. If you created an outdoor room, help make it look lived in. Set the table. Display candles for evening shots. Staging shots often helps tell a story.

Be discriminating. You only have 10 photos, make each one count! Do not waste a shot on construction work, or a close-up of a plant, if it doesn't embellish the story of your project.

Be organized. Take plenty of photos so you can submit the very best. Set up a schedule to photograph your best projects at peak times. Have your entry proofread.

Be persistent. Definitely consider resubmitting a project that you believe warrants recognition. Categories sometimes change, and judging panels usually do. Perhaps better photos or more maturity could make the difference.

Be proactive. Show your entry to other designers to solicit opinions.

Be mindful of grammar. Have your entry proofread and spell checked.

Association of Professional Landscape Designers
APLD

Entry Instructions & Checklist

Submit your entries online at:
www.apld.org/landscape-design-awards-entry

If you choose to enter a project in multiple categories, you will need to enter it separately each time and upload the appropriate photos, written brief, etc. that are specific to the category. Note that each entry is an additional fee.

Checklist for Entering the Awards Competition:

Prepare and upload the following items.

- ☐ Material Use and Photo Credit Release
- ☐ Written Brief
- ☐ Landscape Plan(s)
- ☐ Planting List
- ☐ Photo Plan
- ☐ Photos: Projects less than 15,000 square feet can submit up to 10 photos
  Projects more than 15,000 square feet can submit up to 15 photos
  (labeled projectname_1-10; one photo should be a before photo)

REMINDER: Submissions must be kept anonymous for judging. Please ensure that company names are not included on any submission materials, except the entry form.

If you have any questions about the awards program or entry process, please contact:

APLD Communications Manager
awards@apld.org
717.238.9780

APLD 2027 International Landscape Design Awards Program Entry Form

Association of Professional Landscape Designers

Entries must be received no later than January 15, 2027.
All requirements must be met or your submission may be excluded from the competition.

If you do not want to pay online or prefer to submit a check, please complete the information below and send via:

Mail: 2207 Forest Hills Drive, Harrisburg, PA 17112 **Email:** awards@apld.org **Fax:** 717.238.9985

Please submit a separate form for each entry; however, you may remit one payment for ALL of your entries.

Name of Designer: _____

Company: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ Email: _____ Website: _____

☐ Project is under 15,000 square feet
☐ Project is over 15,000 square feet
☐ Project was done by a single designer
☐ Project was a collaborative group effort

Award Plaque Information:

Project Title: _____

(Exactly as it should appear on the award plaque)

Project City/State Location: _____ Date Completed: _____

Designer/Company: _____

(Exactly how credit for project should appear on the awards plaque, i.e. XYZ Design Associates, or Joe Smith, or Joe Smith & XYZ Design Associates, etc.)

Photo # _____ should be used for award plaque. USDA Hardiness Zone, Climate Zone, or Worldwide Equivalent: _____

Category (check one):

☐ Residential #1: under $25,000
☐ Residential #2: $25,000 – $100,000
☐ Residential #3: over $100,000
☐ Non-residential #1: under $100,000
☐ Non-residential #2: $100,000 – $500,000
☐ Non-residential #3: over $500,000
☐ Details
☐ Outdoor Lighting
☐ Planting Design
☐ Show Gardens
☐ Small Gardens
☐ Specialty Projects

If you could not adhere to APLD's standards of practice with this design, please provide an explanation:

_____

_____

Entry Payment (before 11/30/26)	**Entry Fee**	**# of Entries**	**Amount**
Certified Designer/APLD Fellow	$200	_____	_____
Non-Certified APLD Member	$225	_____	_____
Non-Member	$500	_____	_____
Entry Payment (after 11/30/26)	**Entry Fee**	**# of Entries**	**Amount**
Certified Designer/APLD Fellow	$225	_____	_____
Non-Certified APLD Member	$250	_____	_____
Non-Member	$525	_____	_____

TOTAL: _____

Method of Payment

☐ Check enclosed (made payable to APLD*) ☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard ☐ Discover ☐ AmEx

** Please note: any checks not drawn on a US bank cannot be deposited by APLD.*

Card Number: _____ Expiration Date: _____ Sec. Code: _____

Billing Address: _____

Name on Card: _____ Signature: _____

APLD 2027 International Landscape Design Awards Program Entry Form

Association of Professional Landscape Designers

Designer or Team's Role

Project Name: _____

Which of the following did the designer(s) have final responsibility for on this project?

- ☐ Drainage/Grading
- ☐ Shrubs/Flowers/Trees/Turf
- ☐ Walls
- ☐ Rock/Boulders
- ☐ Water Feature/Fountain
- ☐ Decks/Patios
- ☐ Planters/Containers
- ☐ Lighting
- ☐ Walks/Paths
- ☐ Pool/Spa
- ☐ Art/Sculpture
- ☐ Outdoor Furnishings
- ☐ Outdoor Amenities
- ☐ Outdoor Kitchen/Fireplace
- ☐ Shade Structure/Pergola

Other:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

APLD 2027 International Landscape Design Awards Program Entry Form

Material Use and Photo Credit Release

Please complete the information below and return the form to APLD Headquarters along with your entry and payment.

I verify that all of the information contained on this form is accurate and I understand that photographs of winning entries become the property of APLD and I have client permission for them to be used for promotional purposes. If a photographer requests credit be given for his/her photos, please list the photo credit information to be used below next to the specific photo.

(Please note: Entry will not be judged without an authorized signature.)

Project Name: _____

Signature of Release: _____

Photo Credits

Photo 1: _____

Photo 2: _____

Photo 3: _____

Photo 4: _____

Photo 5: _____

Photo 6: _____

Photo 7: _____

Photo 8: _____

Photo 9: _____

Photo 10: _____

Optional additional 5 photos for projects over 15,000 square feet.

Photo 11: _____

Photo 12: _____

Photo 13: _____

Photo 14: _____

Photo 15: _____