

Landscaper interview questions

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What to expect

Landscaper interviews mix hands-on technical checks with client-facing and safety questions, since the role sits between horticulture, construction and direct customer contact. Expect the interviewer to probe how you handle real site conditions rather than just what qualifications you hold.

- **Technical/process:** Questions about reading plans, sequencing installation work, and handling irrigation or hardscape tasks correctly.
- **Behavioural:** Past-experience questions about adapting plant selection, managing setbacks or working within a team on site.
- **Scenario/client-facing:** Judgement questions about handling client requests that conflict with sound horticultural practice.
- **Safety:** Questions on worksite safety, especially around power tools, chainsaws and ride-on equipment.

Most landscaper interviews start with a rundown of your trade background and qualifications, move into technical questions about reading plans and installation methods, then shift into scenario or client-handling questions, and usually close with safety procedures and questions about your availability or willingness to work outdoors in all conditions.

1. Walk me through how you'd approach installing an irrigation system for a new garden bed.

Why they ask

Checks whether you understand the practical sequence of ground prep, irrigation layout and integration with planting, not just theory.

How to structure your answer

Step-by-step process walkthrough: describe the order of tasks from site assessment through to system testing, noting decision points along the way.

Example answer

"I'd start by checking the site plan for zone layout and water pressure requirements, then assess the soil and slope to work out where drainage or levelling is needed. Once the ground's prepared, I'd lay out the mainline and lateral pipes according to the plan, install drippers or sprinklers at the correct spacing for the plant types going in, then pressure test the system before backfilling trenches. I'd finish by setting the controller and running it through a full cycle with the client present so they understand how to operate it."

2. Tell me about a time you had to adjust a planting plan because of soil or climate conditions on site.

Why they ask

Tests horticultural judgement and whether you'll flag problems rather than install to a flawed spec.

How to structure your answer

STAR: situation, task, action, result.

Example answer

"On a job with a plan specifying moisture-loving shrubs, I found the soil was free-draining sand once I started digging. The task was to get the planting right without blowing the timeline. I tested drainage properly, then substituted species suited to drier conditions and adjusted the irrigation schedule to match. The result was a garden bed that established well within the season, and the client was glad"

I'd raised it before planting rather than after losing stock."

3. A client insists on a plant selection that won't suit the site's soil or sun exposure. How do you handle that conversation?

Why they ask

Assesses client-facing judgement and how you balance customer preference against professional advice.

How to structure your answer

Judgement-under-pressure: outline the immediate response, the reasoning you'd apply, and how you'd resolve it without damaging the client relationship.

Example answer

"I'd explain clearly what the site conditions are and why the chosen plants are likely to struggle or fail, using specific examples rather than just saying no. I'd then offer alternatives that give a similar look or function but suit the conditions. If the client still wants to proceed after being informed, I'll note it in writing so expectations are clear, but in most cases showing photos or examples of the alternative is enough to bring them around."

4. What steps do you take to work safely with chainsaws, hedge trimmers or ride-on mowers on an occupied residential site?

Why they ask

Safety is central to this role given the equipment involved and the presence of clients, pets and other trades on site.

How to structure your answer

Procedural checklist: talk through pre-start checks, PPE, site controls and ongoing awareness.

Example answer

"Before starting, I check the equipment for faults, wear the correct PPE including hearing and eye protection, and set up exclusion zones or signage if the client or others are on site. With chainsaws I keep a clear escape path when felling or pruning larger limbs, and with ride-on mowers I check the area for obstacles, pets or uneven ground before starting. I stay aware of who's around throughout the job, not just at the start."

5. How do you read and interpret a landscape plan before starting installation work?

Why they ask

Checks core technical literacy: can you translate a design document into a buildable sequence on site.

How to structure your answer

Step-by-step walkthrough of how you extract information from a plan and turn it into a work sequence.

Example answer

"I go through the plan for scale, levels, plant schedules and any hardscape or irrigation details, then walk the site to check it matches what's drawn, especially for services, drainage and existing structures. I note anything that doesn't line up, like a level change not shown on the plan, and raise it before work starts. From there I build a task order: ground prep and drainage first, hardscape and irrigation next, then planting last."

6. How do you approach quoting a landscaping job for a new client?

Why they ask

Tests estimating skill and commercial awareness, both listed as core to this role.

How to structure your answer

Process walkthrough: describe how you scope the job, cost it and present the quote.

Example answer

"I start with a site visit to measure the area, check access for equipment and note any complications like slope or poor soil. From there I itemise materials, plant stock and hardscape supplies, then calculate labour based on how long each stage will realistically take. I build in a margin for unexpected site issues, then present the client with a written quote that breaks down the main cost areas so they can see where the money's going."