

BC DESIGN JUDGING CRITERIA

Note: half points are acceptable. Where criteria does not apply disregard and adjust total accordingly.

OVERALL IMPRESSION - 35 TOTAL POINTS	Description	Outstanding to Excellent (9 to 10)	Good (7 to 8)	Fair (1 to 6)	TOTAL VALUE
	a) Overall first impression and general appearance	Outstanding Aesthetic Impression; Striking and memorable visual impact with exceptional polish, detail, and harmony that delivers a clear "wow factor".	Good Aesthetic Impression; Visually appealing and cohesive with thoughtful execution that contributes to a strong overall impression.	Fair to poor Aesthetic Impression; Lacks strong visual impact or feels inconsistent, underwhelming and unfinished.	10
		Excellent proportion and scale achieved with balanced integration of well chosen hardscaping and softscaping elements	Average proportion and scale achieved with balanced integration of good hardscaping and softscaping elements	Proportion and scale not achieved; little or no balance between hardscaping and softscaping elements	
		Ideal suitability and creative application of design for site and purpose	Appropriate suitability and application of design for site and purpose	Lack of cohesiveness; inappropriate application of design for site and purpose	
		Outstanding to Excellent (4 to 5)	Good (2 to 3)	Fair (1)	TOTAL VALUE
	b) Harmony of design elements (line, form, shape, color, texture, etc)	Multiple design elements are used in a clear, consistent, and refined way throughout the design.	Several design elements are represented, though their application may lack depth or consistency.	Few design elements are clearly demonstrated or used with intention.	5
		Design shows strong and thoughtful use of artistic elements, creating a cohesive and visually appealing result (like line, form, shape, colour, and texture).	Basic artistic principles are used effectively, with some attention to balance, contrast, or repetition.	Minimal or unbalanced use of lines, colour, texture, or form results in a flat or disconnected visual impression.	
		Excellent spatial flow, with a well-composed layout that feels intentional and unified.	Overall layout is functional and visually appealing, though opportunities for stronger unity or rhythm may exist.	Layout feels underdeveloped, with limited flow or cohesion.	
		Outstanding to Excellent (4 to 5)	Good (2 to 3)	Fair (1)	TOTAL VALUE
	c) Integration of hard and soft materials: visually cohesive, ecologically, and functionally appropriate blending of structural and planted elements	Hardscape and softscape materials are purposefully selected for compatibility in scale, texture, and function, enhancing the design intent.	Materials generally support the design concept and show an effort to coordinate textures, scale, and spatial function.	Materials appear selected without regard to contextual harmony or long-term performance.	5
		Integration demonstrates a deep understanding of spatial hierarchy, with materials working in unison to support visual rhythm and user experience.	The integration of elements is serviceable, though opportunities for stronger design cohesion or functional layering are missed.	Hard and soft elements are visually or spatially disconnected, leading to a fragmented user experience.	
		Sustainable principles are clearly evident, such as stormwater management, microclimate moderation, or low-impact material sourcing.	Environmental strategies are present but not fully developed or optimized across the site.	Little consideration is given to ecological function, longevity, or sustainable sourcing in material choices.	
SOFTSCAPING - 20 POINTS		Outstanding to Excellent (9 to 10)	Good (7 to 8)	Fair (1 to 6)	TOTAL VALUE
	a) Overall impression / use of plantings as focal points throughout the project	Plantings are thoughtfully placed to guide the eye and create strong focal points. The design shows excellent proportion and layering, with well-chosen plants that enhance the overall concept and suit the space.	Plantings are generally well used, with some focal points and a clear attempt at balance. The plant choices support the design, though there may be missed opportunities for stronger visual flow or impact.	Plantings feel more like background elements than intentional features. Focal points may be unclear or lacking, and the arrangement appears basic or disconnected from the broader design vision.	10
		Outstanding to Excellent (4 to 5)	Good (2 to 3)	Fair (1)	TOTAL VALUE
	b) Unique use of plant material	EXCELLENT selection of unique or diverse plant material suited to the site, design and the relationship with hardscaping features	GOOD selection of diversity plant material suited to the site, design and relationship with hardscaping features	AVERAGE selection of commonly used plant material suited or somewhat suited to the site and design and hardscaping features.	5
		Outstanding to Excellent (4 to 5)	Good (2 to 3)	Fair (1)	TOTAL VALUE
	c) Plant species are chosen for site suitability and arranged to showcase form, texture, colour, shape, and scent.	Plant choices expertly address site conditions and design intent, forming innovative focal points and harmonious groupings that enhance both functionality and visual impact.	Plants generally suit the site and provide clear visual interest, with some thoughtful groupings, though their use isn’t consistently integrated into the overall concept.	Plant selections show little regard for site requirements or design vision, resulting in a disjointed layout lacking cohesive focal areas.	

HARDSCAPING - 20 TOTAL POINTS		Outstanding to Excellent (9 to 10)	Good (7 to 8)	Fair (1 to 6)	TOTAL VALUE
	a) Overall impression	OUTSTANDING Aesthetic Impression	GOOD Aesthetic Impression	FAIR to POOR Aesthetic Impression	10
		Excellent proportion and scale achieved with balanced integration of well chosen hardscaping elements relative to the site	Average proportion and scale achieved with balanced integration of good hardscaping elements relative to the site	Proportion and scale not achieved; little or no balance of hardscaping elements relative to the site	
		Outstanding to Excellent (4 to 5)	Good (2 to 3)	Fair (1)	TOTAL VALUE
	b) Correct choice for all hard surfaces and design elements (wooden, natural or fabricated)	Hardscape materials and design elements are thoughtfully chosen to complement the intended function. Selections show strong awareness of durability, climate suitability, and aesthetic harmony.	Most materials and design elements are appropriate for the purpose, with generally good integration into the overall design. Some minor improvements could be made in material suitability or cohesion.	Material or element choices appear somewhat mismatched to use, or design. There may be concerns with long-term performance or climate suitability.	5
SITE & CLIENT - 20 POINTS		Outstanding to Excellent (9 to 10)	Good (7 to 8)	Fair (1 to 6)	TOTAL VALUE
	a) Design is grounded in the site's unique conditions	The design expertly integrates site-specific elements—such as topography, views, and microclimate.	The design addresses most of the site's characteristics with minor aspects overlooked.	The design shows limited adaptation to the site's unique features.	10
		Outstanding to Excellent (4 to 5)	Good (2 to 3)	Fair (1)	
	b) A clear, consistent theme unifies form, materials, and plant choices that fulfills the client's objectives.	A strong, coherent theme is evident in every element, creating a seamless and memorable design—while fully meeting the client's primary goals.	A recognizable theme appears in many areas but varies in strength or consistency across the project and mostly satisfies the client's key objectives.	The project lacks a clear thematic focus, resulting in disjointed pieces and only partially meets the client's objectives.	5
		Outstanding to Excellent (4 to 5)	Good (2 to 3)	Fair (1)	
	c) Lighting and irrigation suit the site and support functional, sustainable outcomes.	A well-integrated irrigation and lighting plan is clearly tailored to site conditions and client use, with efficient, environmentally conscious choices that enhance usability and plant health.	A complete irrigation and lighting plan generally fits the site and client needs, with some consideration for efficiency and environmental impact.	Irrigation and lighting are minimally addressed or poorly suited to the site, with limited evidence of sustainable or functional planning.	5

**BONUS POINTS:** These can be distributed as one point for each statement below or any combination there of at the discretion of the judge, up to a max of 5 Total Bonus Points.

Landscape clearly has a dynamic “wow factor” and incorporates innovative selection / use of softscape and hardscape materials.
The design demonstrates exemplary creativity in implementation or achieves success in overcoming site challenges.
The design and/or installation/construction promote a concerted effort in sustainability or environmental stewardship.
The landscape permits universal accessibility. (no barriers to accessibility for wheelchairs, strollers etc)
There some evidence of use of recyclable materials, water conservation methods, or other like innovations.

**FOOTNOTE:**  
 The following definitions apply to the terms above, with the exception of aggregate mulches, where it is included for ease of evaluation within the maintenance category.

**Ground Cover:** Low-growing plant (such as turf, clover, or creeping time) or low-pile material (such as mulch or gravel) used to protect soil, reduce weeds, retain moisture, and unify the landscape.

**Softscape:** Is the living plant elements of design, installation and maintenance of any landscape project. The living plant element includes vegetation such as: trees, shrubs, vines, woody tropical plants or herbaceous plants (annuals, perennials, bulbs, vegetables, tropical or aquatic plants).

**Hardscape:** Is the inanimate element of design, construction and installation of any landscape project that includes a diversity of materials and respective technical requirements. It may include brick, stone, rock, wood, metal, or other natural (landscape construction aggregates) or fabricated materials used in landscape structures, furnishings, or features and includes, but is not limited to: walls, walkways, driveways, curbs, patios, living walls and green roof systems, pools, ponds, water features (waterfalls or fountains), fences, decks, structures or features (edging, plant supports, arbors, gazebos or other like décor features), drainage systems, landscape lighting and irrigation.