

Vectorworks Landmark

Helps Behnke Nurseries with a Project for *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition*





Two weeks' notice 'til filming begins. One week to design. Three days to install. Vectorworks Landmark goes to the extreme with Behnke Nurseries for the season premiere of ABC's Extreme Makeover: Home Edition.

When the producers of *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition* approached Behnke Nurseries about participating in the Emmy Award-winning reality show's seventh season premiere just two weeks before filming was scheduled to begin, the family-owned nursery was honored to accept the challenge. The two-hour season opener would feature a brand-new 4,800 square-foot house and landscaping for a single mother with four kids of her own, as well as ten nieces and nephews who were in danger of being forced into foster care, since the family had been living in a hotel. The only requirement was a traditional landscape design to complement the Colonial-style house.

But the nursery's landscape design and installation department had only one week to design a plan for the one-acre lot. Even more extreme, it had to complete installation the following week, in just three days—a third of the time it normally took Behnke installation crews for a project of that size. With the tireless efforts of hundreds of volunteers working nearly around the clock, the generous support of several donors who contributed thousands of dollars in hardscaping and plant materials, and a little help from Vectorworks® Landmark, Behnke Nurseries pulled it off.



Extreme Capabilities

Using Vectorworks Landmark, Behnke landscape designer Andrea Becerril, CPH, very quickly put together a design that included front-yard plantings, a U-shaped driveway in the front, and a patio and outdoor fireplace in the back with accompanying plantings. The plan also included a mature tree and accompanying brick seat wall to serve as a memorial in honor of the homeowner's deceased sister and mother.

"The only directive was to design something with a clean, classic style, with lots of pops of color and plenty of mature plants for the camera," explains Becerril. "So we had free reign. Classic Homes e-mailed me PDFs of the house plans and property lines, which I imported right into Vectorworks Landmark, then I began working immediately."

Typically, Becerril imports all the information she can gather about a property before she begins to design. Such information can include a plat, existing site conditions, property lines, house plans, dimensions for proposed additions, and so on.

"Importing different types of files is a breeze with Vectorworks Landmark, whether they're PDFs, TIFFs, JPGs, GIS data, or other CAD files," she affirms. "Being able to import whatever file I need using Vectorworks gives me a complete picture of what I'm working with."



Extreme Flexibility

Then Becerril gets down to designing and includes everything she can in her plan, using the custom tool sets within Vectorworks Landmark that were created especially for landscape design. She also includes a custom title block, giving the plans the nursery's own signature look.

"I include as much detail as I can about bed lines, drainage work, and hardscapes, so clients can see exactly what they'll be getting—and having all the right tools right at my fingertips in Vectorworks Landmark allows me to do that quickly and easily," Becerril says. "The Hardscape tool is a fantastic feature, as I can add patterns and hatches, which put nice finishing touches on plans for clients. The Freehand tool really lets me be creative with bed lines and doesn't confine me to certain shapes. When it comes time to do reports, which, for us, are mainly plant and hardscape materials quantities, I can easily figure out square footages and quantities using Vectorworks."

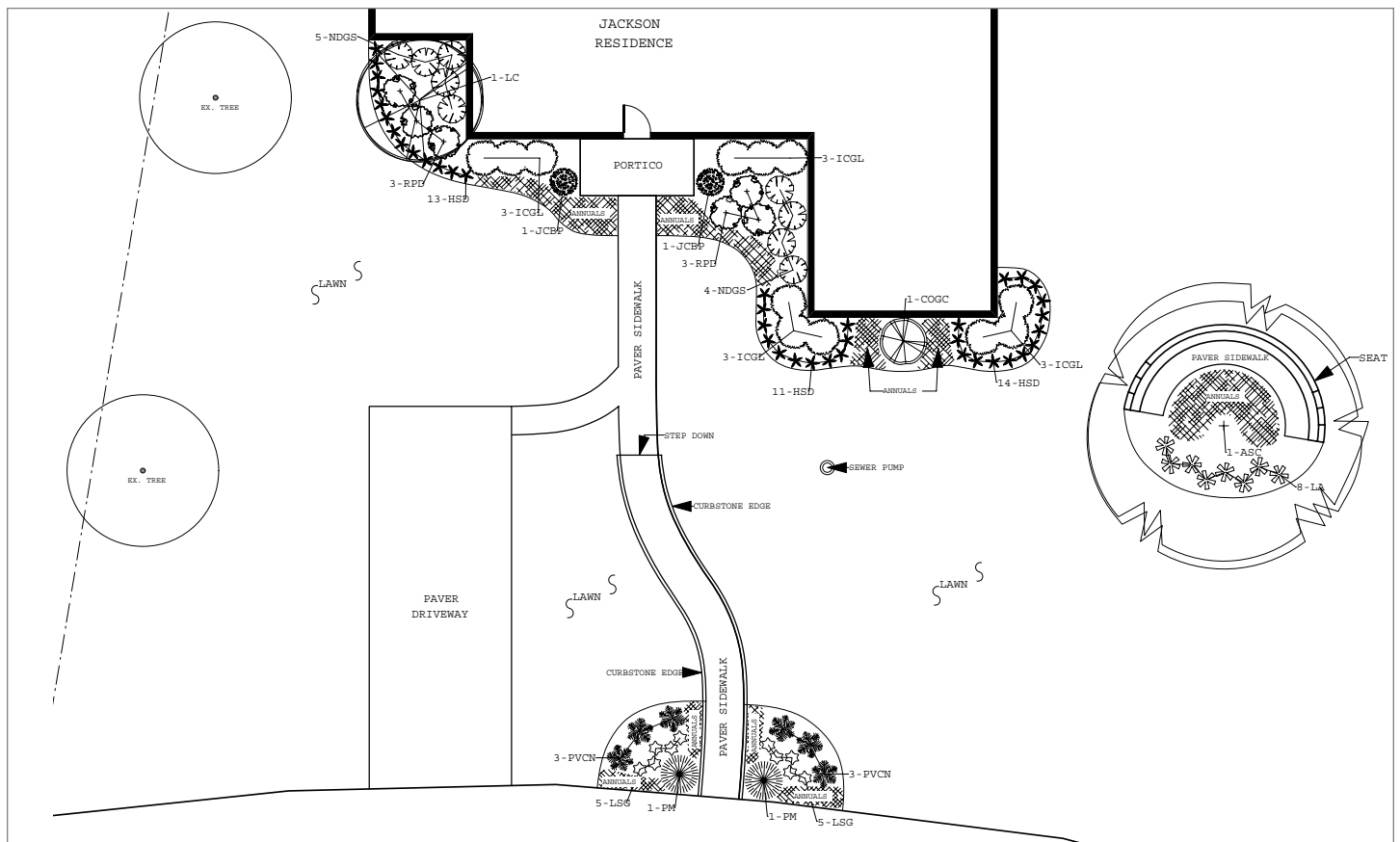
She continues, "Using the Place Plant tool ensured everything was accurate down to each plant we used on the *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition* project. Each symbol was labeled, so we gave the family a copy of the plan to keep, too."



Extreme Collaboration

While Becerril received PDFs of the house plans for *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition*, she prefers AutoCAD files, since she can convert them to Vectorworks.

"We work closely with architecture firms who use different CAD programs, and the ease of transferring information through Vectorworks is amazing," she says. "Even though we're working with different programs, we're completely compatible and can exchange quick emails with updates without a problem. Once I convert other files into Vectorworks files, I can also make edits easily."





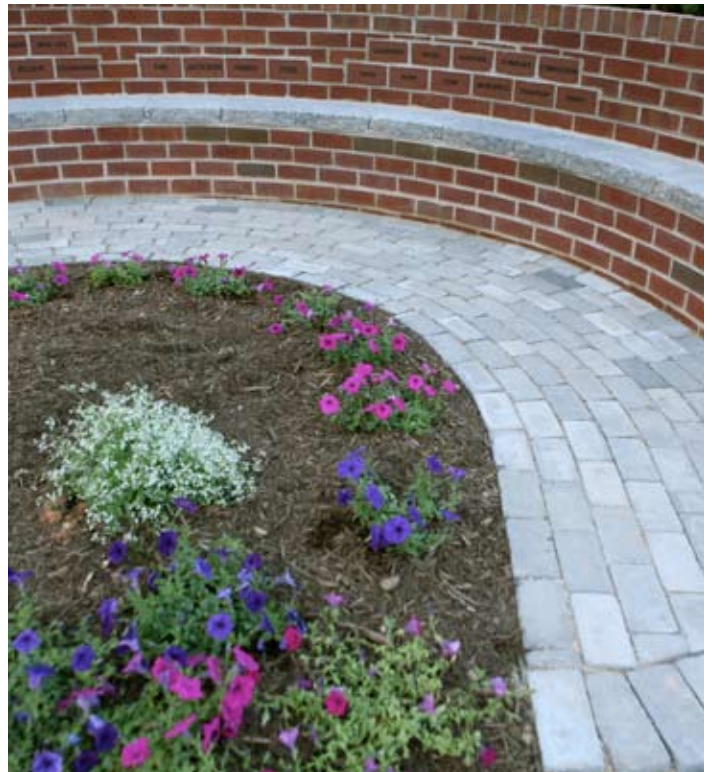
Extreme Speed

That came in handy during of installation on the project, when a new challenge presented itself. On the first day of installation, after the house was built, show producers saw that the originally proposed U-shaped gravel driveway lined with pavers was going to overpower the front yard. And the backyard patio design didn't take into account emergency-escape windows and a steep grade.

So the whole plan had to be revised on the spot, as crews had just two days left to complete the installation. Since it was a hot day, Becerril had left her laptop back at the office. She quickly sketched a new design on the 24" x 36" printout the team had onsite and made the changes to the Vectorworks files that night at home.

The new design included a parking pad off to the side, a sidewalk that extended from the front door across to the parking pad and down to the street—all in pavers, which doubled the quantity of pavers originally proposed. The patio design remained the same, but it was moved further from the house and built up several feet to accommodate the windows and grade.

"Vectorworks Landmark helped me get things done very quickly on the *Extreme Makeover: Home Edition* project, as we were down to the wire from the start," Becerril reaffirms.





Extreme Productivity

In fact, using Vectorworks makes everything a lot easier for Becerril, which has helped her increase her productivity significantly. She is the nursery's top salesperson, and, since the nursery charges for design time, Behnke plans to get its other designers up and running on Vectorworks, full speed ahead.

"I can't emphasize enough that Vectorworks is a whole lot faster than drawing by hand, and it takes only seconds to make changes and edits," says Becerril. "If I had to draw everything by hand, I'd never get this amount of work done. I can give clients several design options and let them know what they'll all look like—with a minimum of production time and effort. Yet, I can still achieve the hand-sketched look they like. There's just no comparison to the quantity and quality of designs I can produce using Vectorworks Landmark."

Extreme affordability

And compare she did. Before switching to Vectorworks, Becerril had been working with an old version of AutoCAD LT® but wasn't satisfied with it. After investigating the latest version, as well as several competitors' products, she determined Vectorworks Landmark was the best solution for several reasons.

"PRO Landscape™ wasn't sophisticated enough," she begins. "AutoCAD is twice as expensive and much more complicated to use. And we still would have had to buy another expensive add-on to get the landscaping capabilities that Vectorworks Landmark already has built right into the program—the libraries, plant symbols, plant table reports, lighting, hardscaping, and so on. "Vectorworks Landmark is the best well-rounded option out there for landscape designers—and you can't beat the price."