

Paving on a Budget | Earth911.com

Paving on a Budget



Share this idea!

Big landscaping projects like installing pavers can quickly run into thousands of dollars, and many of the most [sustainable paver products](#) come at a premium. If you are on a tight budget — and who isn't? — it can be tempting to settle for lower-priced options that have higher environmental costs down the road. Here are a few tips to help you keep costs low for yourself and the planet.

Shop Around

While many sustainable paving products cost more than just buying whatever is available at the hardware store, it's not always the case. For example, [prices for GraniteCrete](#) are higher on average than decomposed granite but are significantly lower than purchasing concrete pavers. Site preparation costs are a significant part of any paving project. They can vary depending on both soil local conditions and the type of paving system that will be installed. So, it's hard to generalize the relative costs of different paving systems.

However, looking strictly at [material costs](#), porous pavers tend to be the cheapest eco-paver option, followed by [pervious concrete](#), with interlocking permeable pavers the most expensive. Researching manufacturers and contractors carefully before committing will help you get the lowest price.

Think Pervious and Take the Long View

There is more to the story than upfront costs. Don't forget the lifecycle of the products you're considering. A concrete patio will crack and stain over time, and eventually need to be replaced. Permeable pavers, on the other hand, are [unaffected by freeze-thaw cycles](#). They also rarely require de-icing products, which will save in maintenance costs. (De-icing products can also be [dangerous for pets](#).)

At the very least, a porous or permeable pavement system will save you a little money on your wastewater utility bills. But if you

have a very large project, you might also save the cost of building and maintaining a retention pond. That's a project that costs considerably more than most paving projects.

Remember All Three R's

It's easy to focus on the greenest product to buy. But the most eco-friendly course is almost always to buy less. By all means, choose a [sustainable paver](#) for your project, but consider carefully how much area you really need to pave. By paving less, you will save money on site preparation and materials. You will also use fewer natural resources and help recharge groundwater. If you really just want less area to mow, consider replacing grass with [beautiful native](#) shrubs and ground cover plants instead of pavers.

Reducing the size of your paving project can also facilitate reuse. It's easier to source used pavers for a small project than a big one. Check your local construction salvage store for reclaimed pavers or use websites like Freecycle or [PlanetReuse](#) to find homeowners and contractors who are getting rid of their old bricks or broken up concrete. Not only will you close the recycling circle, you could get your materials for free.

You Might Also Like...



The Search for Sustainable Pavers

When people hear the word "pavement," asphalt and concrete are ...Gemma AlexanderMay 20, 2019



3 Cool Uses for Repurposed (or Reclaimed) Wood

Whether you are working with repurposed wood or reclaimed wood, ...Anna Dement January 21, 2019



3 Green Building Solutions That Will Save You Money

You might think that going green means choosing the environment ...Anna Johansson January 8, 2019