



HIGHGROVE



**14**

**THINGS YOUR  
COMMERCIAL**

**LANDSCAPE CONTRACTOR  
IS AFRAID TO TELL YOU**

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# INTRODUCTION



It's important, as a commercial property manager in metro-Atlanta, to trust all your service providers, especially your landscape contractor. After all, your property's turf, plants, flowers and exterior are the first thing your customers see when they arrive.

But it's equally important to be an educated client, so you know the right questions to ask — and which you might not have to ask, because the answers are simply common sense.

At **HighGrove Partners**, we value trustworthiness in a big way, but we also love to educate our clients, both present and prospective! Rest assured that if you've ever had any burning questions you've been afraid to ask your commercial landscape contractor, there are just as many things they're not keen on telling you.

Let's pull back the curtain! Here are 14 things your commercial landscape contractor is afraid to tell you — or, at least, they're not sure how to go about it.

# OUR CLIMATE

1

## Atlanta? Not the best place to grow turf.

Atlanta is situated in what we call a "transition zone." Our summers are too hot for cool-season turfs like fescues, but our winters tend to be too cold for warm-seasons like Bermudas and zoysia grasses.



How do you reconcile that on your property? Consider your site (how much sun does it get?) and pick the right turf for the majority of it. Then just know that there will be some months where your turf won't be gorgeous.

# AESTHETICS



2

**Your flowers will be small, far apart and less lush than you want when we first plant them.**

If you have your flower beds refreshed every season, this may be a "problem" you recognize.

At every seasonal color change-out, the commercial landscape crew will plant them on-center, anywhere from 8 to 15 inches apart, depending on the plant type. That gives them time and enough space and air to fill in and become as lush as possible at the height of the season, but not earlier.

3

**We can't remove every single leaf from your property every week in fall.**

It's called "fall" for a reason. During the peak of leaf season, you could blow all the leaves off a property, and three hours later, it'll look like no one was even there. There's no way to get them all, but rest assured your crews are doing their job.

Your commercial landscape maintenance crew may even end up storing leaves in natural areas, off the grass, sidewalks, and other public areas, for another crew with a leaf vacuum truck to haul them away.

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## We don't prune every shrub every single week. (Sorry.)

A good commercial maintenance crew knows to prune to each individual plant's growth pattern, not on a blanket schedule. Some shrubs need to be pruned monthly, some twice a month, some only once a year.

The commercial landscape contractor you hire will be staffed with professionals who know what they're doing — and when to do it. Just because you see growth doesn't mean we aren't maintaining it, and at HighGrove Partners, we're eager to help people understand how the process works.

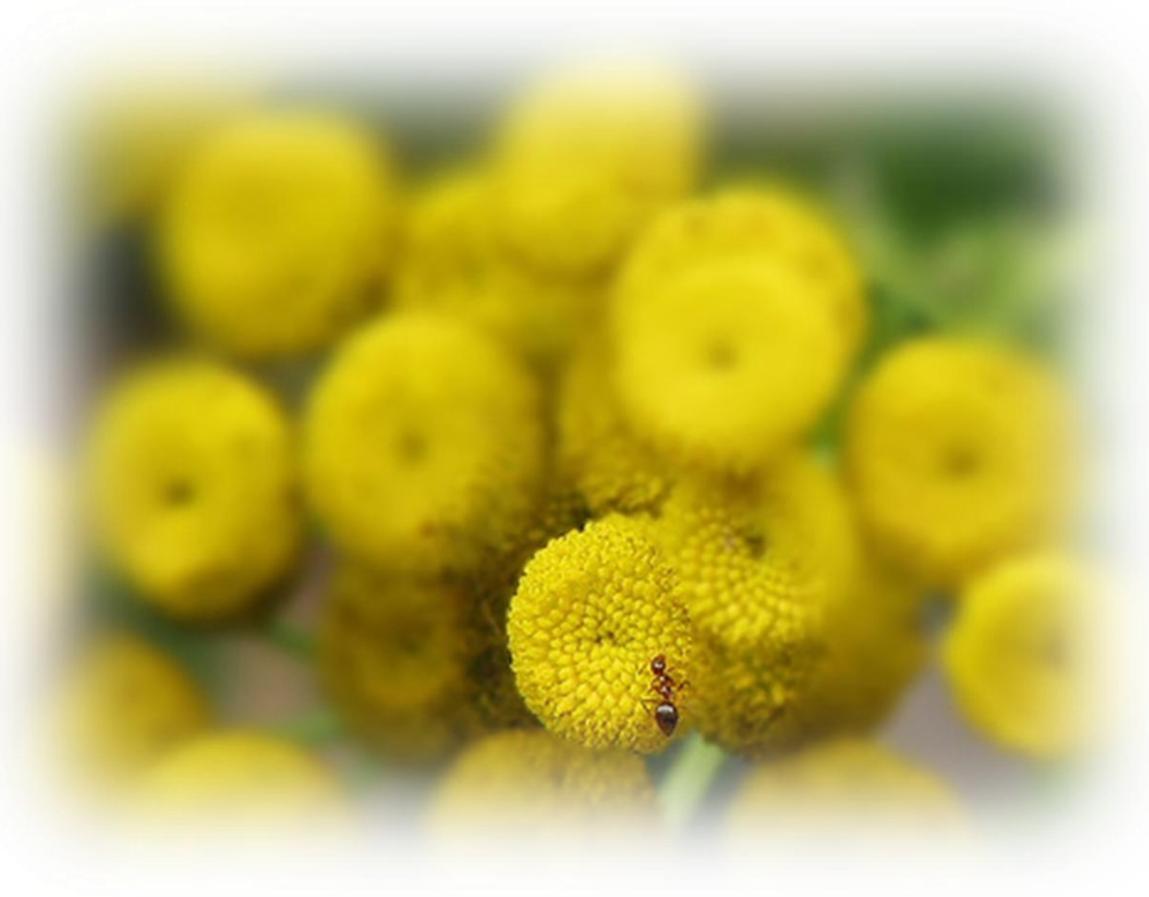
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## We can't blow pollen.

A landscape committee once asked us why, after our maintenance crews left, there was still pollen on their paved surfaces. The answer? On heavy-pollen days, it fills the air and covers every surface just as quickly as leaves in the fall. One more thing about pollen: It's sticky!

We can blow leaves, grass, and other plant material, but blowing pollen is a tall order.

# PESTS AND SUCH



6

## Grassy weed control in turf isn't included in your contract.

Grassy weeds like nutsedge and goosegrass emerge only in the summers of really wet years (like 2013). So sometimes you'll need it, and sometimes you won't — it would be silly to make a client pay for it contractually.

HighGrove Partners prices grassy weed control as a separate line item — and we're up front and honest about when it's needed. (Nickel-and-diming isn't our business.)

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## Diseases like brown patch and zoysia patch aren't included in your contract.

Like grassy weeds, brown patch and zoysia patch only appear once in a while — some years you need to control it, and other years it won't even cross your mind. So it should be approached — and attacked — separately.

HighGrove Partners wants to educate the masses on being smarter about contracts and what to look for when you're evaluating...before you sign it!

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## Weeds happen.

Weeds can be controlled, but you'll never completely eliminate them.

Weeds are just part of nature. They can pop up seemingly out of nowhere, and they grow (and spread) quickly. We can put pre- and post-emergents down, pull them, blow them, mulch over them... They're still going to happen, and you will probably notice them, too, if your commercial landscape maintenance crew is only out to your site once a week.

9

## Fire ant control doesn't control any other type of ant.

If you spot big black ants — carpenter ants, sugar ants, and the like — you're facing a pest-control issue, not a landscape maintenance issue.

Fire ants are the only types of ants your landscape contractor will be able to help you control, as much as they'd love to help with the rest of your problems!

# YOUR CONTRACT: THE NITTY-GRITTY



10

## There's a difference between routine and seasonal maintenance.

Routine commercial landscape maintenance involves tasks like mowing, edging, blowing, weed control and other day-to-day tasks. Seasonal maintenance is the more horticulture-heavy work like hard pruning, seasonal color change-outs, [aeration](#), and [overseeding](#).

Depending on which service you need, a different crew will visit your site to take care of the work.

## 11 Your irrigation contract doesn't include repair costs.

Irrigation contracts cover installation and maintenance costs: winterization, spring start-up, and managing the system throughout the season.

Repair costs aren't included in your contract to protect you. Irrigation systems are so complex that many other problems can occur. At HighGrove Partners, we evaluate each repair issue individually so we can offer a price quote that's fair and tailored to each specific problem.

## 12 Even with a punch list of other items to be addressed, we may not be able to take care of them on our next maintenance visit.

Property managers often pass a list of items that need to be taken care of to the contractor that handles the landscape maintenance.

But that doesn't mean it'll be immediately taken care of unless agreed to prior to the visit. Core maintenance takes precedence, followed by those other items on the punch list, prioritized week by week.

## 13 We may not get to all the enhancements you've signed off on during the next maintenance visit, either.

If you've requested enhancements, remember that a different landscaping crew will be taking care of them than the guys who normally visit your property!

Say you want to add 50 new plants in an area of your property. Your weekly maintenance crew won't do that — and you wouldn't want them to. Another crew with more specific landscape installation knowledge will come in to do that enhancement.

14

## "You can get a much better price if you include a lot more service providers in your RFP process"? Actually, that's a myth.

More isn't necessarily better! After a certain point, things just get muddled, with prices all across the board. It becomes hard to differentiate. We recommend carefully choosing among commercial landscape contractors who compete within your price range.

Then limit your requests for proposals to three to four of those landscape contractors who can give you an apples-to-apples comparison when you make your decision.

# AFRAID? NOT HIGHGROVE PARTNERS!

The commercial landscape contractor that's right for your business and Atlanta properties won't shy away from your tough questions, whether they're about your property, your contract or the work they're doing for you once you've hired them.

They should give you up-front answers to your questions — or, better yet, anticipate your questions before you even get started.

Looking for an honest commercial landscape contractor in Atlanta to partner with? Give HighGrove Partners a call. With our signature mix of quality people who provide quality service, we'll help your landscape be the first thing you see...and the last thing you worry about.

Start the conversation [by filling out the web form on our website for a free property assessment!](#) Or, earn valuable CEUs by attending one of our FREE Real Estate School courses, accredited by the Georgia Real Estate Commission. [Learn more about our courses here.](#)

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