

Bocce Courts Made Easy
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Bocce courts are taking world class landscapes by storm. Folks have found that bocce is a fantastic game that works great with entertaining. I've had a court in my yard for ten years and am thrilled to walk you through easy installation.

The game of bocce goes back to Roman times. In Monterey County, you'll see Sicilian fishermen in white suits at the customs house plaza still playing the game on Sunday afternoons. You too can join such a distinguished league of people tossing balls for fun and good spirited competition in your very own backyard.

Installation of a bocce ball court is easier than you think. The first step is a good design. You'll need to consider prevailing wind, leaf litter and sunlight. If you locate your court in a poor spot, you will be much less likely to use it. You also need to determine if you're going to roll for fun or serious competition. Most of my clients simply want something fun to engage in with guests when they entertain.

According to serious players associated with the United States Bocce Federation, a league court measures 91 feet long and 13 feet wide. 90% of the courts I assist folks with adapt the width and length to fit their space. In most cases six feet wide and thirty-five to fifty feet long will do the trick. You'll find that a smaller court is less expensive, easier to install and easier to keep up.

Building your bocce court will make for a great weekend project. Start in advance of the weekend with the design, layout & materials list. You'll want to make sure the court is completely level. For my court, I used Railroad ties to frame it in. Most folks will use 2 X 8 redwood. I always recommend using two boards back to back and a reinforced backstop. You'll be amazed at how hard and fast those balls will get going.

When it comes to the court material, you'll need a good four inches of decomposed granite (DG) base. I also recommend contractor grade weed fabric underneath the DG. You will want to apply the decomposed granite using water and a vibra-plate to make sure it's well compacted. Ultimately, the finishing touch is ¼ inch of oyster shell flour added to the surface of the court. Your local landscape supply will have it in forty pound bags.

Ultimately, you'll need to give your court an annual checkup. I find myself pulling the occasional weed and reapplying oyster flour every couple of years. Be sure to keep after any weeds and leaf litter as well. A clean court makes for great play.

At the end of the day, a bocce court adds incredible value to your property and provides you with an excellent activity while entertaining. Best of all, there is little upkeep and no water required. Let's get rolling!

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Steve McShane Biography (Revised 5-18)

Steve McShane is Owner & General Manager of McShane's Landscape Supply in Salinas, California. He has a B.S. in Soil Science from Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo and an M.B.A. from Santa Clara. He serves on the Salinas City Council. When not working, he loves hiking, traveling to far reaches of the planet and experimenting with exotic fruits. He can be reached at steve@mcshaneslandscape.com or (831) 455-1369.