

# Realtime Landscaping Photo™

Professional Landscape Design Software



PC CD-Rom  
Software

## Quick Start Guide

**IDEA Spectrum**  
[www.IdeaSpectrum.com](http://www.IdeaSpectrum.com)

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## Introduction

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Welcome to *Realtime Landscaping Photo*, the ideal software for designing your landscape.

Realtime Landscaping Photo is very easy to use: just import a picture of your house and property as a background picture and design the landscape on top. This is a fast way to try out different ideas before you commit to a final design.

Thousands of plants and other items are included. You can adjust these as needed to match the size and perspective of your picture.

## System Requirements

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Realtime Landscaping Photo has the following system requirements:

- 1 GHz processor
- 512 MB System RAM
- Microsoft® Windows® XP Service Pack 2, Vista (all versions)
- DirectX 9.0c (automatically installed if needed)
- 2 GB available hard drive space
- DirectX 9-compatible video card with 128 MB graphics memory

Realtime Landscaping Photo uses the latest graphics technology. Using a high quality video card will help the program run smoother and improve the quality of the graphics. If your video card does not meet the requirements for hardware acceleration, then software emulation will be used automatically.

Please check with your video card manufacturer and make sure you are using the latest video drivers.

## Installing the Software

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To install the software, insert the CD and follow the installation instructions. If the installation program does not automatically start:

1. Click the Windows **Start** button and select **Run**.
2. Type **d:\setup.exe**, replacing **d:** with the drive letter of your CD-ROM if needed. Then click **OK**.
3. Follow the installation instructions.

## Installing DirectX

DirectX 9.0c is required to run Realtime Landscaping Photo. The installation program will ask you if you want to install it. Be sure to click **Yes** to allow the installation to continue. The DirectX installer will detect if a newer version is already present on your computer and only proceed if needed.

## Program Help

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Realtime Landscaping Photo comes with comprehensive help built into the program. To learn more about the currently selected object or dialog box, press **F1**. To learn more about other options, select **Help > Contents**.

## Running the Program

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Once the program has been installed, double-click the *Realtime Landscaping Photo* icon on your desktop. The **Welcome Menu** will then appear:



### Open a Saved Landscape

Click this option to open a landscape you have previously created and saved.

### Open a Sample Landscape

Click this option to open a sample landscape. The examples are a great way to see what the program is capable of.

### Import a new Background Picture using the Wizard

Click this option to open the **Picture Import Wizard** and import a new background picture.

### View Online Tutorials at IdeaSpectrum.com

Click this option to view online tutorials for Realtime Landscaping Photo. This is a great way to continue learning how to use the software.

## Show these options at startup

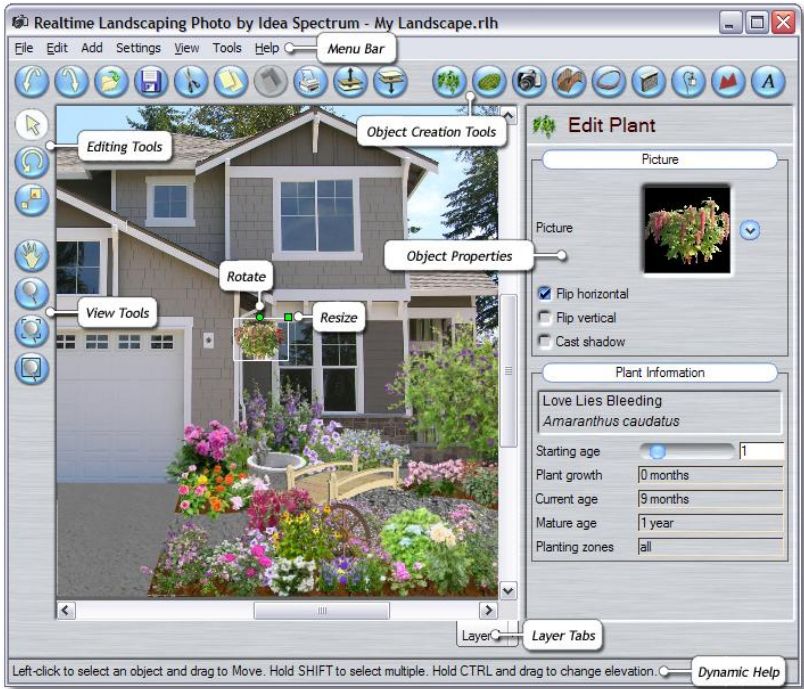
If you do not want the Welcome Menu to appear each time you run Realtime Landscaping Photo, uncheck this option.

## Exit Button (top right)

Click this button to exit the welcome menu and start a new landscape design from scratch.

## User Interface

The user interface has the following elements:



## Menu Bar

This is the standard Windows menu bar. For a quick description of a particular menu command, point to the command and read the description from the dynamic help window. For more information about using menus, please consult your Windows documentation.

## **Object Creation Tools**

To create an object, first click the toolbar button representing the desired object. Then follow the instructions in the dynamic help window.

To determine the function of a particular button, position your mouse over the button and wait a few seconds for the corresponding tooltip to display. For detailed information, click the button and then press **F1**.

## **Object Properties**

These controls allow you to modify the appearance and other options of your objects.

## **Editing Tools**

The Editing tools allow you to select, rotate, and resize your objects. When you select an object, you can also edit its properties.

## **View Tools**

The View tools allow you to pan and zoom the view. You can also use your mouse to adjust the view.

## **Layer Tabs**

The Layer tabs help you organize your landscape design into layers. For example, you could place all of your fill regions into a layer and lock them to prevent them from being selected while you work on other areas of your design.

## **Rotate & Resize**

Click and drag these handles to quickly rotate or resize your objects.

## **Dynamic Help**

This area displays dynamic help for the currently selected object or tool. When creating an object, for example, the dynamic help will give you a description of each step.

## **Importing a Background Picture**

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The first step to designing your landscape is to take a picture of your house and property using a digital camera. For best results, take the picture on a clear day with the sun behind you (to avoid glare). Try to get as close as possible to the area you want to landscape. If the area is too big to fit in a single picture, then you can take several pictures and create a separate landscape design for each.

Next, upload the picture to your computer using the software that came with your camera. (Scanned pictures will work as well.)

Then import your picture using the Picture Import Wizard with the following steps.

### To import a background picture:

1. Start Realtime Landscaping Photo.
2. From the welcome menu, click **Import a new background picture using the wizard**. Or, if the welcome menu is not active, select **Tools > Picture Import Wizard**.
3. Click **Next**.
4. Select **Background** and click **Next**.
5. Navigate to your picture and click **Open**.

*Note:* When you upload pictures from your digital camera, they are usually placed in the folder named *My Pictures*.

6. Your picture will then be displayed. To select a different one, click the picture and repeat the previous step. If this is the picture you want to use, click **Next**.
7. Click **Set File Name** and enter a name for the imported picture. Pictures from digital cameras usually have cryptic names, such as DSCN1668.JPG. This step lets you give the imported picture a name that is easier to remember.
8. Click **Next** and then **Finish**. Your picture will appear in the background and you can begin designing the landscape.

**Important:** The wizard will make a copy of your picture. If you change the original, then you will need to re-import it using the wizard.



*Use the Picture Import Wizard to import your background picture*

## Changing the Background Picture

Once you have imported a picture, you can choose it without having to import it again. Click **Tools > Background Picture Settings** and click the picture to select a new one.

You can edit the imported background picture using the *Realtime Picture Editor*. See the program help for details.

## Designing your Landscape

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Once you have imported your background picture, you are ready to begin designing the landscape. Realtime Landscaping Photo includes a large variety of plants and other objects to help you create your designs. The software includes powerful tools for adjusting the shape and size of the objects to help them fit seamlessly with your picture.

## Adjusting the View

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Using the Pan and Zoom tools, you can adjust the view to more easily work on any portion of your landscape design.

### Panning the View



**To pan the view:**

1. Click **Pan**.
2. Position the cursor inside the view, then click and drag. When finished, release the left mouse button.

*Mouse Shortcut:* You can pan by clicking and dragging with the middle mouse button. This is quicker than clicking Pan every time you want to pan the view.

*Keyboard Shortcut:* The keyboard arrow keys can also be used to pan the view.

### Zooming the View



**To zoom the view:**

1. Click **Zoom**.
2. Position the cursor inside the view, then click and drag up or down to adjust the zoom. When finished, release the left mouse button.

*Mouse Shortcut:* You can zoom by rotating the mouse wheel. Or, you can hold down the left & right mouse buttons while you drag up and down. Either way is quicker than clicking Zoom every time you want to zoom the view.

## Zooming into the Selection



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**To zoom into the current selection:**

1. Click **Zoom to Selection** or press **Z**.

The view will zoom into the selected objects. If no objects are selected, then the view will zoom to the entire landscape design.

## Zooming into a Rectangle



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**To zoom into a rectangle:**

1. Click **Zoom to Rectangle**.
2. Click and drag to draw a rectangle. When you release the mouse button, the view will be zoomed so that the rectangular area fills the view.

## Adding Objects

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Realtime Landscaping Photo includes nine powerful objects that you can use to build your landscape. Each object has a specific set of options for controlling its appearance and behavior. For example, the *Light* object has options for setting the color and intensity of the light.

**To add a new object:**

1. Click the toolbar button for the object you want to add.
2. Change the object's default properties, if desired.
3. Follow the instructions in the Dynamic Help window to add the object to your landscape design.

Once an object has been added, it is automatically selected for editing. See *Editing Objects* on page 20 for instructions on how to select and edit objects.

**Tip:** Press **F1** while adding the object for detailed instructions.

## Adding a Plant



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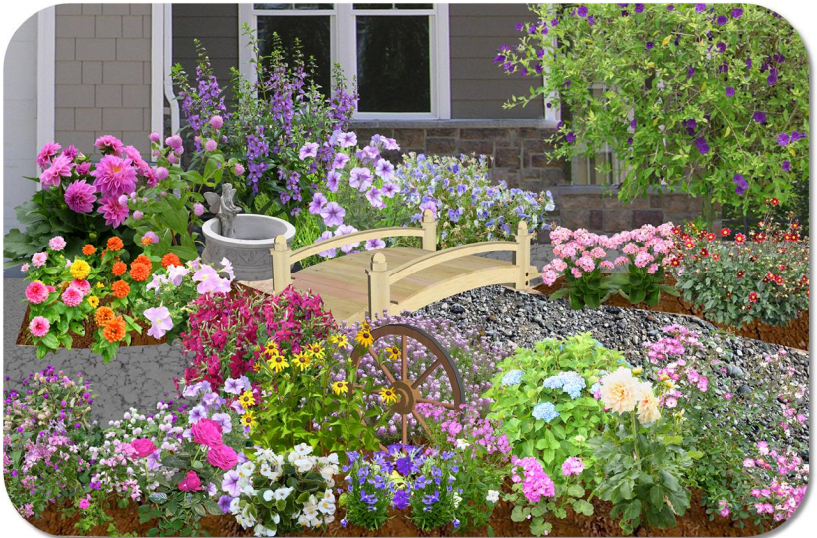
Realtime Landscaping Photo includes a large variety of plants commonly used in landscapes around the world. These are high-resolution photographs of real plants, not drawings or models. The background has been professionally removed so they can be seamlessly placed in your landscape designs.

All of the plants included with Realtime Landscaping Photo can be edited using the Realtime Picture Editor (included), so you can easily make changes and even create new varieties. You can also import and edit pictures of plants that you have photographed using a digital camera or downloaded from the Internet.

**To add a plant:**

1. Click **Add Plant**.
2. Select the desired plant by clicking the picture in the property window.
3. Click to add the plant. Hold **Ctrl** while you click to add more than one.
4. Move and size the plant as desired. To move the plant, position the cursor over the plant and drag using the mouse. To resize, click and drag the green rectangle to the upper right of the plant.

Press **F1** for more detailed instructions, including details on how to search for plants, edit their color and brightness, create custom plant varieties, and more.



*Some of the many plants included in Realtime Landscaping Photo*

## Adding a Fill Region



A region is a closed area filled with a material. It can be used for ground cover, driveways, patios, and more. Regions can be any shape or size. Many materials are included, such as grass, rock, stone, and brick.

### To add a region:

1. Click **Add Region**.
2. Select the desired material by clicking the picture in the property window.
3. Draw the region's outline by clicking to add points. Press **Backspace** to remove the last point. Press **Esc** to cancel.
4. Click the starting point to close the outline. Or, right-click to automatically join the last point to the first.

Once you have added a region, you can easily change its shape. See *Editing Points* on page 24 for details.



*A fill region was used for the new lawn in this design*

## Adding a Picture



In Realtime Landscaping Photo, the *Picture* object is used to add pictures of planters, rockery, statuary, and other objects. Many different types of pictures are included, and you can import your own.

### To add a picture:

1. Click **Add Picture**.
2. Select the desired picture by clicking the picture in the property window.
3. Click to add the picture. Hold **Ctrl** while you click to add more than one.
4. Move and size the picture as desired.



*The Picture object was used for the bench in this design*

## Adding an Accessory



A large variety of accessories are included for use in your landscape designs, including arbors, greenhouses, planters, outdoor kitchens, and more.

Accessories are 3D models, not pictures. While pictures of real objects are very realistic, they don't always match the viewpoint or perspective of your background picture. With the extensive library of 3D models in Realtime Landscaping Photo, you can rotate, scale, and change their perspective as needed to seamlessly blend into your landscape design.

### To add an accessory:

1. Click **Add Accessory**.
2. Select the desired accessory by clicking the picture in the property window.
3. Click anywhere in the view to add the accessory.
4. Using the property controls, adjust the accessory's size, rotation angles, and perspective to match your design.



*The brick columns, fencing, and bridge in this design were added using the Accessory object*

## Adding Edging



Edging adds a nice border around your flower beds, paths, and other areas of your landscape. You can easily adjust the size and shape of your edging. Realtime Landscaping Photo includes many types of edging materials, including rock, stone, brick, and marble.

### To add edging:

1. Click **Add Edging**.
2. Draw the edging's outline by clicking to add points. Press **Backspace** to remove the last point. Press **Esc** to cancel.
3. Click the starting point to close the edging. Or, for edging that remains open instead of closed, right-click at the last point.

Once you have added edging, you can easily change its shape. See *Editing Points* on page 24 for details.



*The edging around the flower bed was added using the Edging object*

## Adding a Retaining Wall



Retaining walls are often used on steeply sloped lots and terraces to provide support and prevent erosion. They can also be used as decorative partitions between areas of your landscape.

### To add a retaining wall:

1. Click **Add Retaining Wall**.
2. Draw the retaining wall's outline by clicking to add points. Press **Backspace** to remove the last point. Press **Esc** to cancel.
3. Right-click at the last point when finished.

Once you have added a retaining wall, you can easily change its shape. See *Editing Points* on page 24 for details.



*This retaining wall's middle point has been elevated, creating a curved wall*

## Adding a Landscape Light



Realtime Landscaping Photo includes a wide variety of landscape lights such as traditional garden lights, spotlights, and Japanese lanterns. The lights will automatically turn on when viewing your landscape at night.

### To add a landscape light:

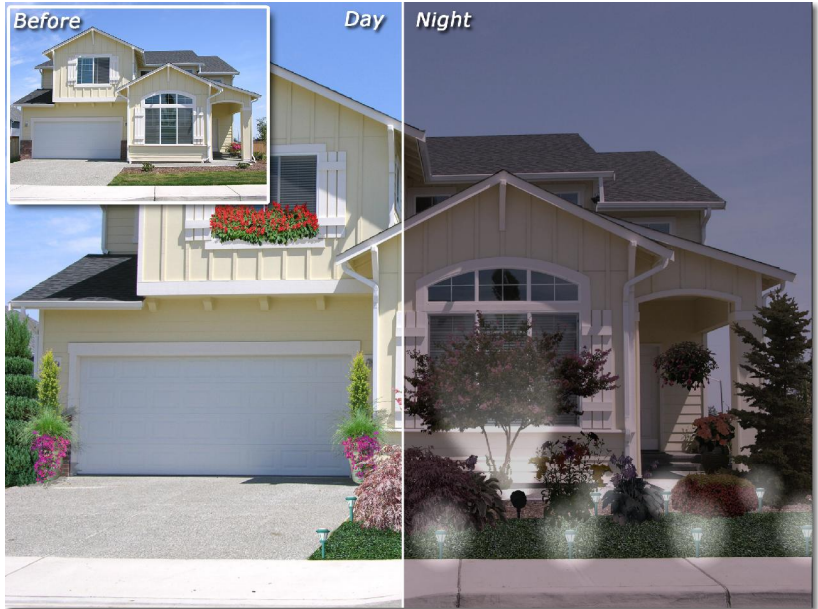
1. Click **Add Light**.
2. Select the desired light by clicking the picture in the property window.
3. Click to add the light. Hold **Ctrl** while you click to add more than one.
4. Using the property controls, adjust the light's size, rotation angles, and perspective to match your landscape design.

## Nighttime Viewing



You can toggle between day and night viewing of your design by clicking the Night button.

To configure how your landscape appears during the day or night, click **Settings > Environment Settings**.



*Example of day and night viewing*

## Adding a Mask



A mask is an area that prevents objects in front of it from obscuring what's behind it. For example, suppose you have a fence in your background picture and want to add trees behind it. By adding a mask over the fence you can prevent the trees from drawing on top of the fence.

### To add a mask:

1. Click **Add Mask**.
2. Draw the mask's outline by clicking to add points. Press **Backspace** to remove the last point. Press **Esc** to cancel.
3. Click the starting point to close the outline. Or, right-click to automatically join the last point to the first.

Once you have added a mask, you can easily change its shape. See *Editing Points* on page 24 for details.

In the following example, notice the trees that have been added behind the fence. A mask was used to prevent them from drawing in front of the fence, which is part of the original picture.



*This design uses the Mask object to prevent the background trees from drawing over the fence*

## Adding Text



You can add text to your landscape design. This is useful for labeling plants, identifying the designer, and other information.

### To add text:

1. Select **Add Text**.
2. Click where you want to add the text.
3. Click the text box in the property window and enter the desired text.
4. Move, size, and rotate the text as needed.



*This landscape design uses text to identify the client and designer*

## Editing Objects

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Realtime Landscaping Photo includes several easy-to-use tools for selecting and editing your objects.

### Selecting Objects

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To move, rotate, or scale an object, or to change its properties, you must first select it. There are several ways objects can be selected, depending on what you want to do.

#### To select objects one at a time:

1. Position the cursor over the object.
2. Click to select the object. All other objects will be automatically deselected. If you click over multiple overlapping objects, the closest object will be selected first. If you continue clicking, then the next closest object will be selected, and so forth.
3. If you want to select an additional object, press and hold **Shift** while clicking the object.

#### To select objects using a selection rectangle:

1. Pan and/or zoom until the objects you want to select are fully inside the view.
2. If you want to add to your current selection, press and hold **Shift**.
3. Click and drag to draw the selection rectangle. The rectangle must fully surround the objects you want to select. When you release the left mouse button, the objects will be selected.

When an object is selected, it renders a special shape to indicate the selection. Objects defined by an outline (such as a fill region or edging), render the outline that defines their shape. Other objects, such as accessories and landscape lights, render a rectangle around the entire object.

#### **Tips:**

- Click **Undo** to undo accidental selections.
- You can lock objects to prevent them from being selected, either by type (using **View > Show/Hide Objects**) or by layer (using **View > Edit Layers**). See the program help for details.

## Moving, Rotating, and Scaling Objects



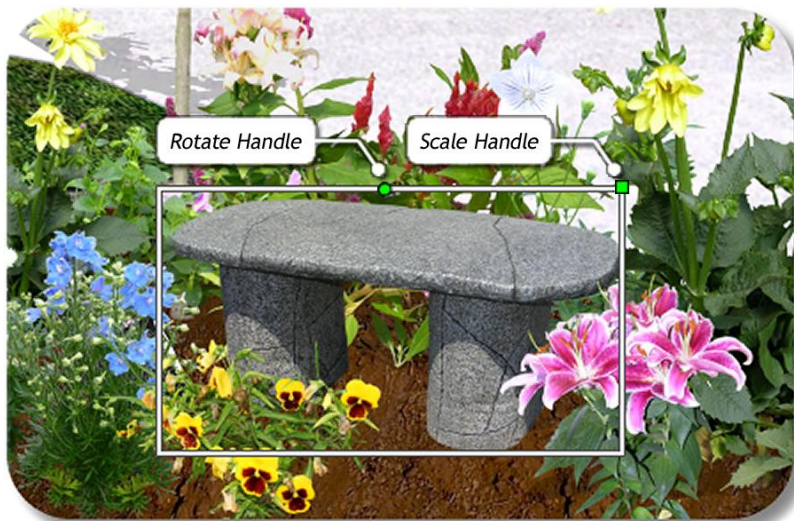
**To move, rotate, or scale an object that is not currently selected:**

1. Click the desired tool, or press **T** to move, **R** to rotate, or **S** to scale.
2. Position the cursor over the object and click to select it.
3. Drag the mouse to move, rotate, or scale the object.

**To move, rotate, or scale multiple objects:**

1. Select the objects you want to modify.
2. Position the cursor over any of the selected objects.
3. Click and drag to move, rotate, or scale the objects.

**Tip:** When using the Move tool, you can also quickly rotate and scale your objects by dragging the green rotation dot and scaling rectangle, as shown below.



*Handles make it easy to rotate and scale your objects*

## Deleting Objects

**To delete one or more objects:**

1. Select the object(s) you want to delete.
2. Press **Del**, or right-click and select **Delete** from the popup menu.

## Cut, Copy, & Paste

---

The copy and paste features of Realtime Landscaping Photo make it easy to create copies of your objects.

### To copy objects to the clipboard and delete them from the landscape:

1. Select the object(s) you want to cut.
2. Press **Ctrl+X**, or right-click and select **Cut** from the popup menu.

### To copy objects to the clipboard:

1. Select the objects you want to copy.
2. Press **Ctrl+C**, or right-click and select **Copy** from the popup menu.

### To paste objects from the clipboard:

1. Press **Ctrl+V**, or right-click and select **Paste** from the popup menu. The objects will be slightly offset from the originals and automatically selected. The **Move** tool will also be automatically selected.
2. Move the pasted objects to the desired position.

## Grouping & Ungrouping Objects

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When working with a large number of objects, it is often useful to group them into a single object to make them easier to select and move. For example, once you're happy with a set of plants, you might want to combine them into a group and focus on other areas of your landscape.

### To group a set of objects:

1. Select the objects you want to group.
2. Right-click and select **Group** from the popup menu.

### To ungroup one or more groups:

1. Select the groups you want to ungroup.
2. Right-click and select **Ungroup** from the popup menu.

## Controlling the Render Order

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When working with overlapping plants, fill regions, and other objects, you can control which ones are rendered first. For example, you can use this to ensure plants appear on top of the lawn.

### To change an object's render order:

1. Select the object you want to change.
2. If you want the object to render on top of all other objects, right-click and select **Bring to Front** or press **Ctrl+F**. Or, if you want the object to render beneath all other objects, right-click and select **Send to Back** or press **Ctrl+B**.

If you want to bring the object one more step towards the top of a group of overlapping objects, right-click and select **Bring Forward** or press **F**. Or, if you want to send the object one more step towards the bottom of a group of objects, right-click and select **Send Backward** or press **B**.

You can change multiple objects with this command. That is, selecting multiple objects and using Bring to Front will cause the selected objects to render in front of the unselected objects.

## Setting Object Properties

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Objects are defined by their properties. A *property* is an option that determines how the object will look or function. The Property Window, shown below, displays the properties associated with the currently selected object(s).



Feel free to experiment – any changes you make can be easily reversed by clicking **Undo**.

## Default Properties

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Whenever you add an object, the object's default properties will be displayed. You can change these defaults any time after you click the object's toolbar button, but before you actually finish adding the object. This does not affect objects already in the landscape, but only new objects that are added from then on.

## Editing Properties for Multiple Objects

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A powerful feature of Realtime Landscaping Photo is its ability to edit multiple objects of the same type. For example, suppose you want to change multiple plants to the same flower. Instead of having to select and change each one individually, you can select all of them and make the change just once.

When you select multiple objects of the same type, any of the properties that are different will appear blank. See the program help for details.

## Undoing & Redoing Changes



Realtime Landscaping Photo has a very powerful undo system, giving you the freedom to experiment and try new things. The number of undo levels is unlimited, so you can backtrack all the way up to the point where you last opened your landscape. If you decide you want your changes after all, you can redo your changes as far as needed.

## Editing Materials

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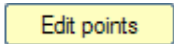
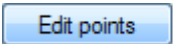
You can customize the appearance of plants, accessories, and other objects after you have added them to your landscape design:

### To change the materials of an object:

1. Select the object.
2. Click the options button to the right of the model, material, or picture.

A menu will then appear with your choices. Options include changing materials of 3D models, editing color and brightness, and editing using the Realtime Picture Editor. See the program help for detailed instructions.

## Editing Points



Objects such as fill regions, pictures, and masks are defined using an outline, called their *shape*. The **Edit Points** option enables editing of the points that define the shape.

### To enable point editing:

1. Click **Edit Points** in the object's property window. The button will turn yellow and the object's points will appear in the view.
2. Edit the points as desired (see the following topics for details).

### To move points:

1. Select the point(s) you want to move.
2. Click and drag any of the selected points to move them all.

**Tip:** Sometimes you want to move edges, not individual points. To do this, click and drag the edge. The two points that form the edge will be automatically selected and moved.

### When you are finished editing points:

1. Click **Edit Points**. The button will turn blue, and the object's points will disappear from the view.
2. You can then select and edit objects normally.

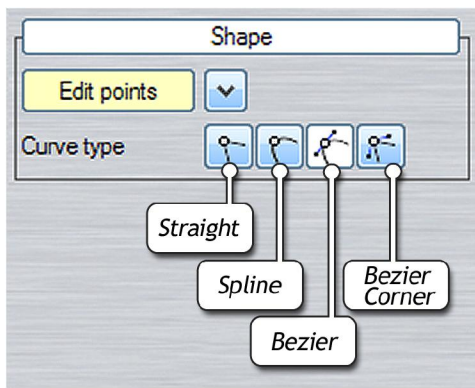
You can also scale and rotate points. See the program help for details.

**Important:** When editing points, the move, rotate, and scale tools will only affect the selected points, not the entire object. Also, you will only be able to select points, not other objects. To exit point editing mode and return to normal editing mode, click the yellow **Edit Points** button.

### Changing the Curve Type

You can use straight lines, curved lines, or any combination in your shapes. This helps you create fill regions, edging, and other objects at exactly the size and shape you want.

Four types of curves are supported: *Straight*, *Spline*, *Bezier*, and *Bezier Corner*.



### To change the curve type:

1. Select the points you want to change.
2. Click the desired curve type button shown above.

See the program help for a description and example of each curve type.

### Editing Bezier Curves

When points are selected that use the Bezier or Bezier Corner curve type, two blue dots will appear, called *handles*. You can drag these handles to adjust the shape of the curve. Unlike normal points, the Bezier handles cannot be selected; you can only drag them using the mouse.



*Bezier curves give you precise control over your shapes*

## Inserting & Deleting Points

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You can insert and delete points as needed to obtain the desired shape.

### To insert points:

1. Click **Edit Points** to enable point editing (if needed).
2. Press and hold **Ctrl**.
3. Position the cursor over the edge where you want to insert a new point and left-click.
4. Repeat for each point you want to insert.

### To delete points:

1. Select the points you want to delete.
2. Press **Del**.

**Tip:** If you need more control over the shape you're editing, you can insert additional points. You can also change the curve type as described on page 25.

## Technical Support

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Have a question about a feature, or a suggestion for how we can make the software even better? We'd love to hear from you. Please email [support@ideaspectrum.com](mailto:support@ideaspectrum.com) or call toll free 1-866-894-4332 (Mon-Fri 9-5 Pacific Standard Time). Outside the U.S. call 253-862-2678.

## CONTROL QUICK REFERENCE

### FILE

---

New	Ctrl+N
Open	Ctrl+O
Save	Ctrl+S

### EDIT

---

Cut	Ctrl+X
Copy	Ctrl+C
Paste	Ctrl+V
Delete	Del
Undo	Ctrl+Z
Redo	Ctrl+Shift+Z
Bring to Front	Ctrl+F
Send to Back	Ctrl+B
Bring Forward	F
Send Backward	B

### VIEW

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Pan	Mouse middle-click and drag
Zoom	Mouse wheel, or mouse left+right click and drag
Zoom to selection	Z

### TOOLS

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Move tool	T
Rotate tool	R
Scale tool	S