

Amber Marlow's Helpful Landscaping Tips

A brief overview on my personal perspective and experience in world editor with nature and landscaping.

I was recently asked for some landscaping tips and thought it would be valuable to share my responses with everyone here for anyone interested in learning landscaping but hasn't fully convinced themselves to start yet.

Here are some things that help me when I landscape:

1. World Editor is cold. You need layers.

Build everything in layers. Each type of object gets its own layer. World editor doesn't have a system for layers, it's something you just conceptualize in your head while you build. If you've ever used Photoshop, it's like that. So rocks get a layer, trees get a layer, structures and buildings get a layer, furniture is its own layer. Just break everything into layers, and do the layer that makes the most sense first. When you finish the first layer, the second comes naturally.

2. Prototype. Create a landscape palette. Fail fast, fail hard.

If you're trying to build terrain, the best way I've found is to make yourself a flat surface to walk on, reasonably big like a 20x20 square, make it grass texture, and bring in all the trees and nature things you want to try. Build a small 20x20 landscape scene. It doesn't have to be perfect. It shouldn't be perfect. You're just forming shape. Doing this exposes everything that's available to you at once, and you can test for yourself what you like and what you don't, or curate to a certain vibe or theme. If it looks good in a 20x20, it looks good any size.

3. If you didn't know. Now you know. =)

Some terrain objects have interesting properties that others don't have. For example, the mountain-looking objects. When you submerge them underwater they change to a sand texture where it's submerged but the grass remains on the surface. Great for quick and cheap terrain. But you could also take 5-10 rock objects grouped together to make an uneven, natural looking ground surface, make them the size of an island, submerge half of it, then add more details as other layers to blend it in like a shoreline. This isn't "quick" by any metric. Trying to do it quickly will show in the work without anyone pointing it out. People can tell if it was rushed. If you get discouraged, trust the process, trust yourself, and see it through anyways. I get discouraged all the time with doubts like "I don't know if this looks right. This feels off. I don't know if I would accept this. Is there a better way?" That internal dialogue is normal, but it's just noise. Ignore all that and just stick to the plan. 80-90% of the time, it works itself out. Nothing is permanent until the world is public, so don't rush, you can always go back and change something.

These change texture when submerged under water:



These can be used to create natural uneven natural ground:

