A new roof is exciting, but the first few days of a project can be rough on the rest of your property. Old shingles are heavy, nails go flying, and a lot of foot traffic moves around the house. If you have taken years to grow a garden in Centerport, a tidy lawn in Greenlawn or a long paver driveway in Dix Hills, a little advance planning goes a long way. Here is how to protect your landscaping and hardscape during a full roof replacement.

Walk the Property With Your Contractor

Before the job starts, walk around the house with whoever is running the crew. Point out the things you care about most: foundation plantings, new sod, irrigation heads, outdoor lighting, a koi pond, a stone wall or a prized hydrangea. Ask how they plan to protect each one. A crew that does this kind of work regularly will have a system, and you will learn a lot from the way they answer.

Ask for the plan in writing, or at least have it included in the scope. Details such as debris containment, protection of plantings and magnet sweeps are signs of a careful contractor.

Understand How Debris Is Handled

Tear-off is the messiest part. Old roofing is removed and needs somewhere to go. The common approaches are:

- **Dump trailer or dumpster:** Placed near the house, often on the driveway. Debris is tossed or chuted into it.
- **Tarps on the ground:** Spread around the foundation to catch falling material.
- **Plywood or boards:** Laid across planting beds or over vulnerable surfaces.

Ask where the container will be placed and what will go under it. Heavy equipment on a driveway can cause damage, so ask about protection.

Protect Plantings

Plants are surprisingly vulnerable. Falling shingles can break stems, and ladders can crush shrubs.

1. Cover foundation beds with heavy canvas tarps or plywood, not thin plastic that can tear.
2. Prune back branches that touch the house ahead of time.
3. Tie up tall ornamental grasses or low-growing branches gently.
4. Move potted plants and garden furniture well away.
5. Water beds before the job, since well-watered plants cope better with stress.

If you have specimen plants, such as mature rhododendrons or a Japanese maple, consider shielding them with a frame of boards or screens in addition to tarps.

Protect the Driveway

Driveways take the weight of trailers, trucks and heavy foot traffic.

Driveway surface Main risks Typical protection Asphalt Soft spots in summer heat, gouges from equipment Plywood sheets under heavy loads Concrete Staining, chips from dropped debris Plywood or tarps, careful

placement Pavers Shifting, scratches, nails lodged in joints Plywood and thorough magnet sweeps Gravel or crushed stone Nails mixed into stone Multiple sweeps with a magnet, plus a visual check

If your driveway is fairly new or has decorative edging, ask the contractor to keep heavy vehicles off it if they can.

Pools, Patios and Outdoor Features

If you have a pool, cover it well. Granules and small bits of roofing can end up in the water and clog filters. Cover patios and outdoor kitchens, and move grills and furniture. For fountains and ponds, ask whether a cover or cover board is an option, since nails and debris in water are a real hazard for filters and pets.

Do a Nail Sweep

Roofing nails are the main enemy of tires and bare feet. A proper cleanup includes a magnetic sweep across lawns, driveways, planting beds and the street in front of the house. Ask the contractor to do a second pass at the end of the job, and walk the property yourself afterward. A rolling magnet is common, but a visual check in the grass and mulch is also worthwhile.

Think About Weather and Timing

Damp ground is easier to damage, so heavy equipment is better on dry days. Spring plantings are often tender, and fall is a time when leaves complicate cleanup. Near the water in Eatons Neck, Huntington Bay and Lloyd Harbor, wind can scatter lightweight debris further, so containment matters even more. In neighborhoods with big trees, such as Northport and Cold Spring Harbor, overhanging limbs may need trimming before the job to give the crew safe access.

Pets, Kids and Neighbors

Keep children and pets indoors or away from the work area. Tell neighbors about the schedule, noise and where the crew will park. A small courtesy in advance prevents frustration later, especially on tight village streets.

Know Who You Are Hiring

Protection of property is part of professionalism. When you speak with a provider of **Long Island Exterior Co. Long Island Exterior Co.** , ask how they protect landscaping, what their cleanup routine looks like and whether they have a plan if something is damaged. Verify that they hold the required Suffolk County Consumer Affairs license for home improvement contractors, and ask for proof of insurance.

Permits are another early step. Properties in unincorporated hamlets such as Huntington Station, Dix Hills and Greenlawn work with the Town of Huntington Building Department, while incorporated villages such as Northport, Lloyd Harbor, Huntington Bay and Asharoken have their own building departments. Confirm which office applies to you.

Final Walk-Through Checklist

- Walk the lawn, beds and driveway for nails and debris.

- Check gutters and downspouts for shingle bits.
- Look at plantings for broken stems and replace or trim if needed.
- Inspect the driveway for new cracks, gouges or stains.
- Photograph any damage right away and tell the contractor before final payment.

Taking these steps costs little and can save you a lot of cleanup. A new roof should leave your property looking just as good as before, and often better.

About the Author

Elena V. has managed residential roofing crews across the North Shore of Long Island and has seen firsthand how good preparation protects a home's grounds. She writes simple, practical guides for homeowners about to start a major exterior project.