

Principles of Landscaping

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1. Definition of Landscaping

Landscaping is a branch of horticulture and is an important field in which architecture, art and knowledge are combined to achieve beauty and utility.

It also defined as the use of space, plants and inanimate objects outdoors to fulfill the aesthetic and functional purposes.

2. Goals of Landscaping

In fulfilling aesthetic and functional purposes, landscaping may be used to accomplish the following:

1. Increase the aesthetic appeal and property value of an area
2. Mix the concrete and architectural creations into the natural scenery
3. Provide privacy of selected areas
4. Control vehicular and pedestrian traffic
5. Hide unsightly conditions in the area
6. Modify environment and provide places for relaxation
7. Provide hobby activities for home owners
8. Improve and conserve natural resources
9. Provide mental relief
10. Reduce noise and environmental pollution

3. Categories of Landscaping

In terms of users and their needs landscaping may be four categories:

3.1 Residential Landscaping

It is designed for home owner's needs. Developers may think a theme for a residential project and landscape the area accordingly. It often has a personal touch, reflecting the taste and needs of the home owner.

3.2 Public Landscaping

Cities are more than brick and mortar. They are designed to look beautiful, and accomplished by blending effective architectural design. It may also take the form of a recreational park and designed for a broad spectrum of people with broad backgrounds and preferences.

3.3 Commercial Landscaping

Commercial landscaping has a public element and businesses are open to the general public. Its often have lots of space for parking and found in places such as, shopping malls, hotels, banks, and restaurants.

3.4 Specialty Landscaping

Specialty landscaping is the places such as zoological and botanical gardens, where formal designs are often used. It has strong educational component, plant species with their common and scientific name.

4. Landscape Design

A landscape design should be prepared before the installation of the components. The environment, area's topography, soil, and climate must be understood carefully. On a large scale, four professionals, the landscape architect, landscape contractor, landscape maintenance supervisor and nursery man work together to execute a landscape project.

4.1 Elements of Landscape Design

Plant species have certain features that influence how they are used in a landscape. They are called elements of effect because they create feelings in the viewer and provide the aesthetic source.

4.1.1 Color

People respond differently to color. The attributes of color are hue, value, and intensity. Red, orange, and yellow are warm colors and appear to advance. Blue and green are cool colors and tend to go back in a landscape composition. Flowering plants have solid and multicolored flowers, leaves and bark which are affected by light. So, it should be kept in mind when locating plants in the landscape.

4.1.2 Texture

Texture refers to an object's feel with respect to the sense of touch. It may be a smooth or coarse feeling to the viewer. Texture effect will be prominent when contrast exists in the display. Texture may change with the season. While a deciduous tree has its leaves, it presents a smooth texture and when the leaves fall, the bare branches present a coarse texture. Texture in the landscape is not limited to plants. Gravel is fine in relation to rocks, and sawdust is fine when compared with tree bark. Texture is also modified by distance. A coarse textured plant viewed at a distance may not appear as coarse.

4.1.3 Form

Form is a three dimensional attribute. The outline of a plant depends on the structure and shape. For example, trees may be conical, columnar, spherical, and so on. Plants of different forms may be grouped and arranged in a certain fashion. The art of topiary is a way of creating artificial form in plants.

4.1.4 Line

Line is a boundary element in design and accomplished through the arrangement of objects. Shape and structure are defined by lines and has the capacity for drawing emotional responses. Form is a three dimensional attribute, but it can be interpreted as one dimensional by line. Line is the means by which form guides the eye.

5. Basic Principles of Landscape Design

Landscape design belongs to the arrangement of objects to accomplish a purpose in the landscape. These objects may vary in color, form, and texture. The quality arrangement depends on creativity and successful application of the five basic principles- simplicity, balance, focalization, rhythm and line, and scale or proportion.

5.1 Simplicity

It employs a number of plans to reduce excessive variation and distractions in the landscape. Too little variation is monotonous and unattractive, but too much is confusing and reduces viewer's enjoyment. Repetition or massing can enhance simplicity of the existing variety in the landscape.

5.2 Balance

Balance represents an equal distribution of the elements around a central axis. The two halves of the design should be fairly equal and identical. When the design materials are identical to the opposite side, it is called symmetrical and formal; when the materials are different, it is called asymmetrical and informal. Most designs are asymmetrical.

5.3 Focalization

It creates interest and accent for a particular arrangement. It is employed to satisfy an expectation of the viewers while fulfilling the "vanity" of the designer. Designs are composed around central pieces on which viewers focus first before looking around. Fountains, sculptures, exotic or uniquely attractive specimen plants emphasize the focal points.

5.4 Rhythm and Line

Rhythm is achieved when the elements of a design create a feeling of motion. Color, line and form can be repeated to attain rhythm. Rhythm reduces confusion and visible on avenues and in parks where the same kinds of trees are arranged in long rows. Straight lines tend to be quick, structural and stable point to see faster than curved lines.

5.5 Scale or proportion

It creates proportionality among design elements. It is not only desired with respect to the plants but also related with other structures and the general functionality of the design. In choosing plants, it is important to consider their size at maturity.

6. Plant Arrangement in the Landscape

According to the outdoor room concept plants are carefully selected and strategically arranged in four ways for maximum aesthetic and functional effects.

6.1 Corner Planting

It starts with creating a bed in the corner of the building or an area. This bed contains the tallest plant in the back. Specimen plants are located in the corner created by the intersection of the two walls.

6.2 Foundation Planting

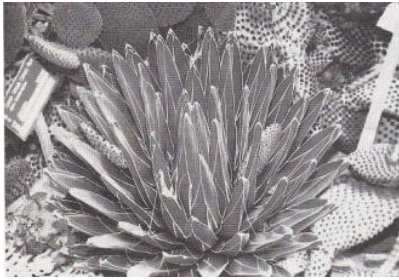
Certain plants are located close to the foundation or walls of the building. The tallest plants should be located in the corners and the shortest below the window, so the view is not obstructed. Generally, low growing plants are used as foundation plants.

6.3 Line Planting

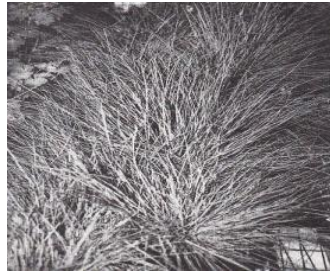
It is done in beds to create a screen to provide privacy. A variety of shrubs are usually used to provide the walls to the outdoor room.

6.4 Accent Planting

Plants enhance the area by its attractive color of blooms, leaves, form, or some other unique features. Specimen plants and nonplant materials (e.g., statues) may be used in combination. It also be created by massing flowering herbs in a bed.



Succulent



Broadleaf



Grass

Figure: The occurrence of texture in leaf form

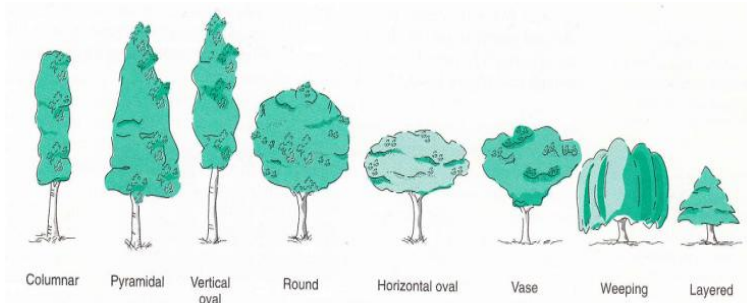


Figure: Tree forms

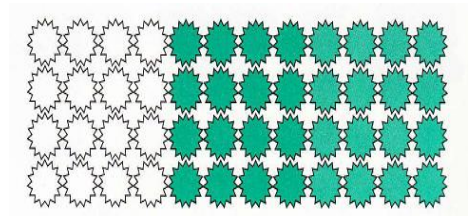
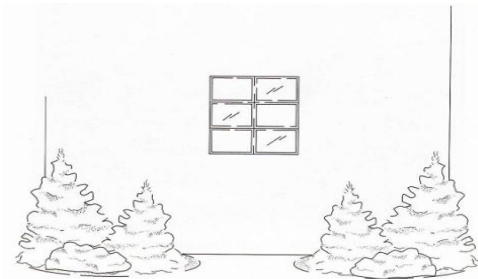
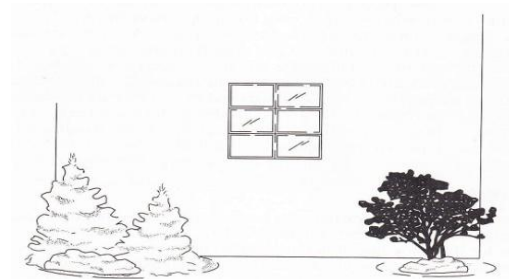


Figure: Repetition or massing enhances the simplicity



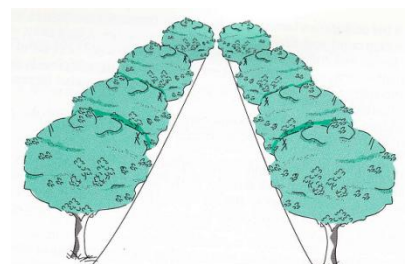
Symmetrical balance



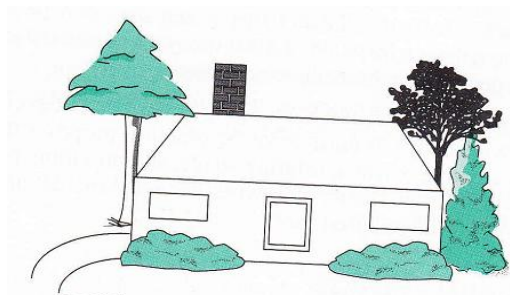
Asymmetrical balance



Using a fountain as focal point



Rhythm and line



Arrangement of plants proportionately



Arrangement of plants not proportionately